

Bishops' Stand On Abortion

The following statement, signed by the Bishops and their auxiliary bishops in the eight dioceses of New York State, is the official position of the Catholic hierarchy on the abortion issue:

The implementation of the regressive abortion repeal law on July 1, 1970 begins a tragic chapter in the history of New York State.

We strongly affirm that the change of the civil law on abortion does not alter God's law. The law of God and the law of our Church remain unchanged. To take human life is gravely wrong. This taking of human life is particularly heinous because that life is innocent and defenseless.

In the Christian Tradition and as human beings we totally reject abortion. We endorse the action of those hospitals which will not permit abortions to be performed or advised. We support those doctors, nurses and other health professionals who will not participate in this grave evil of abortion. We unite with the multitudes of people of other religious beliefs in the defense of human life.

Many institutions and individuals, including our Catholic hospitals and our Catholic people have given witness to this respect for human life by their absolute refusal to be involved in any way in abortions.

We plead that all hospitals and other employers maintain and develop policies to respect the conscience of their employees who refuse to participate in abortions.

We are most concerned that the poor not be pressured into submitting to abortions for the sake of lower welfare costs.

We call upon all people of good-will to join with us in a campaign to reverse the life-destroying trends in society which abortion and euthanasia represent.

We live in a world filled with violence, malice and selfishness of which abortion is an example. In this hour of sadness we urge the people of New York State to have the courage and strength to reject abortion, and uphold the sanctity of human life.

Doctors are Upset

Last April 10 after a few days of debate that was notorious for impassioned dramatics and absence of reasoned facts, 107 votes in the State Legislature gave approval to killing an unborn foetus. It seemed like a callous, but a simple decision. Theoretically it permitted any woman who wanted to rid herself of the cost or the burden or the fear or the inconvenience or even the shame of a pregnancy simply to request any doctor in any hospital to remove the unborn life she was carrying. Like having a tonsillectomy, it seemed.

But this week, in every city of the state, medical men, hospitals, health departments and welfare officials are confused, unhappy and a bit frightened. The expected wave of women who will begin demanding the termination of unwanted pregnancies has created social and medical issues the Albany legislators never thought of.

Doctors and nurses find themselves in an emotional and intellectual dilemma that is especially vexing and even poignant. They have been trained to revere and preserve life. Now they worry that in many of the abortion cases they will be asked to serve clients who are not acting in fear of their own lives or in dread of a deformed child, but women who find themselves with an unwanted inconvenience. The distaste and disrespect these applicants will show for the life-within-them cuts across the professional and moral grain of the dedicated doctors and nurses.

Hospitals are finding difficulty in scheduling the operations because so many staff people are not as willing to serve the public for this business as they are for other types of what they call "non-emergency elective surgery". Professionalism or morality aside, the distasteful aesthetics of destroying what they know to be a potential human personality is not liable to become an easy-to-stomach procedure.

Even Dr. Robert E. Hall, professor at Columbia University and long a promoter of abortion-repeal, admits the challenge to the long-ingrained medical attitudes about tampering with God's creation. He said recently: "When delivering a baby the doctor feels he is part of the process of creation. It's a God-like role and we like to play it. Doctors do have a God-image." —Fr. Richard Torney

Courier-Journal

On the Line

Survival Technique

By Bob Considine



Our prescription for staying alive over the holiday weekend (it's worked for me in the past):

Remain in bed.

Sleep right through it.

If this is not practical, stay indoors. Watch the ballgame on TV. If things really get trying, read a book. If they get unbearable, write one.

Assuming you are forced to leave the house, stay in your backyard. Of course, certain grave risks are involved here, particularly if you fancy yourself as an outdoor chef. No less an authority on the culinary arts than Dave Chasen, owner of the famed Beverly Hills restaurant of the same name, was badly burned some years ago when a gush of barbecue fire zigged instead of zagged. Under no circumstances accept your wife's invitation to mow the lawn. Dangerous, those mowers.

If circumstances insist that you leave home and hearth:

Go to church and stay there until Tuesday morning (or Monday, depending on your boss). Check in at an old folks' home and order a Geritol on the rocks. Have tea with a

maiden aunt and look at her stereopticon slides.

If you must venture onto any highway, let me suggest that you assume a certain state of mind. Assume that the whole blinking driving public, with the great exception of yourself, has gone batty. They are plainly out to kill one another. You are the only normal person left in the world, and you are out to prove it to yourself and your precious passengers. You are absolutely certain that the flakiest drivers in the world lurk in every sideroad, are ready to pounce on to the throughway from the nearest cloverleaf, are ahead of you, behind you, beside you.

There is much to be said at this season of the year not only for sit-ins, but also for slow-downs. Both have ugly meanings in regular usage. But not around July 4. The slow-downer is going to live a lot longer than some of his friends who feel that if they don't get to Flea Bite Beach by 4:03 they'll miss all the fun.

"All the fun" could well turn out to be another cocktail party given by Biff and Buffy Muckenfuss, whereat Biff tells all his stories all over again, serves

warm martinis, purple appetizers, and does his dance with the lampshade on his head.

One good way to greet the weekend is to accept the National Safety Council's morbid predictions as gospel. There is livelier reading to be found in your newspapers, but you're likely to find that the most factual story in the whole paper will turn out to be the council's estimates on just how many Americans will die before the smoke clears. There is something eerie and terrible and disheartening about the way those people can predict in advance the scope of something as sheerly accidental as auto catastrophes. Perhaps the reason is that few of the accidents are accidental. Most, surely, could be avoided.

Ralph Nader's premise is wrong. Cars are not unsafe at any speed. They are safe at almost all speeds, if the fellow in charge is safe. They are but the extension of the mind, heart, spirit, mood, temperament, sobriety, horse-sense, decency, awareness and — yes — godliness of the driver. Regard your car as your humble servant. But abuse your authority and, well, welcome to the accident statistics.

The Word for Sunday

Unbelief Is a Fault

By Father Albert Shamon



The common theme of Sunday's readings is rebellion. "I send you to a nation of rebels," was what God said to Ezechiel. Jesus' words were, "A prophet is not without honor, except in his own country, and among his own kin." And why is this?

Familiarity breeds contempt. The fellow townsmen of Jesus took offense at Him. And for what reason? He was one of them. "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?"

There is a similar danger today of contemning Jesus' mystical body, the Church, and for the same reason. She is using our language in her Liturgy. She is letting laymen read. She is even allowing them to distribute Holy Communion.

And shall we, like the Nazarenes, take offense? We shall if we judge only by appearances. Familiarity breeds contempt only when men do not have the X-ray eyes of faith to burrow through surfaces. Some saw Jesus as only a man; and some see His Church as an organization only. Those who saw Jesus as God took no offense at Him. And only those who see the Church as His mystical body, Spirit-filled, are never scandalized by her actions.

However, there is a far more profound reason why men contemn God and His prophets. Everything goes to the source of its life. A child goes to its mother's breast, for she is the source of its life. The sunflower turns to the sun, the source of its life. The roots of the tree grow toward the hidden springs, for water nourishes its life. Only man turns from God, the source of his life. Man alone contemns God. Why?

Consider the world in its length and breadth, its various history and its many races. Consider the hates, the wars, the disappointments of life, the defeat of good, the success of evil, physical pain, mental anguish, the prevalence and intensity of sin, the corruptions, the hopeless irreligion, the godlessness in the world. What is our conclusion?

If I looked into a mirror and did not see my face, would I not surmise something was wrong? If man alone turns against the source of his life, if he can look into the world and see no reflection of It's Maker, if he can deny without absurdity the very existence of God, then what are we to think? Either there is no God or man has been alienated from Him.

Since there is a God, man must have been implicated in some terrible primeval calamity which has thrown him out of joint with God. Thus the theolo-

gical doctrine of original sin becomes almost as certain as the existence of the world. It is this which explains one of the most striking and painful facts of history, namely, that God is conspicuous in His own world by His absence. It is as if others have got possession of His work.

God's plan made a hopeful beginning, Man spoiled his chances by sinning.

We hope that the story Will end in God's glory, But at present the other side's winning.

Again we ask why. Because of unbelief. Christ implied unbelief to be a fault. Because with good disposition faith is easy; without good disposition it is not easy. Good disposition means following one's conscience. Since conscience does not have all the answers, the conscientious man will become a religious man — that is, a man on the look out for the truth.

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