



THE OPEN WINDOW  
Fr. Louis Hohman

Dear Father,

I am a faithful reader of your column and I have a question — is masturbation a mortal sin? I will be waiting for your answer with interest.

Yours respectfully,  
Faithful Reader

Dear Faithful Reader,

Your letter came in May but I have hesitated to answer it because it is a question of five words but an answer of volumes. If I were to answer "Yes" my answer would be so incomplete as to be false. If I were to answer "No," not only would I be flooded with violent protest, but I would be unfair in seeming to write it off as having no importance. Let me quote a bit from Father Eugene Kennedy's book, "What A Modern Catholic Believes About Sex."

"There is no doubt that masturbation has been considered a sin almost throughout the history of the Catholic Church. It has been considered a sin, or at least a shameful action, by many men outside the Church as well. I believe that this tradition of the Church is rooted in a concern for man and for the proper integration of sex into his personality. I do, however, believe that, while this concern is laudable, it has been based on an underdeveloped appreciation of man's sexuality and the overall patterns of human growth. I think we understand man better now and we also have some new opinions about sin. It is not all quite as simple as it once was."

IMPEACHMENT MEETING

Rep. Paul McCloskey (R-Calif.) will speak here Monday, Nov. 26, under the auspices of the Committee to Impeach the President. The public meeting will begin at 7:30 p.m. in the auditorium of Benjamin Franklin High School, 950 Norton. The sponsoring committee is a coalition of local groups including Action for a Better Community, American Civil Liberties Union, FIGHT Political Action Corporation, Metro-Act and Rochester Area Women for Peace.

Elsewhere Father Kennedy says, "Theologians and others have felt that once you take away the label of sin, you have excused man of any responsibility at all. Declaring something as not being sinful seems always to be interpreted as issuing a license for all kinds of wrongdoing that we excuse on the basis of psychological theory. This is the outlook which we feel must in some way or another be held on some moral standards or everything will collapse. If masturbation is indifferent, if we do not keep some kind of check on it, then serious consequences may arise. The problem is that we do not have to dismiss masturbation as if it were of no significance when we put aside the categories of sin. Masturbation is important and it is not something we advocate, as some presumably liberated social scientists do, as a 'healthy outlet' for sexual tension. This latter attitude betrays a lack of comprehension of the meaning of masturbatory activities in human growth and development."

Some conclusions: 1. masturbation cannot be simply described as a sexual mortal sin; 2. it can be an important symptom of negative emotions the individual is not coping with (fears, depressions, boredom, insecurity) in which case it is these emotions which should be dealt with more rationally; 3. it could be a sign of inability or unwillingness to relate to other human beings as we should, hence an act of selfishness betraying a selfish attitude; 4. often it produces terrible guilt feelings which only make the situation worse, the person more helpless, and destroy the sense of self-worth and make the person unrealistically feel like a moral degenerate. Then you have a vicious circle.

Having now left myself open to the charges of being unclear and evasive, I highly recommend seeking the counsel of a priest who has had some training in psychological counseling to sort out the individual problems which are there. Your question — five words! My answer — about four hundred! Please talk with a priest counselor.

State Death Penalty Struck Down

Washington, D.C. [RNS] — New York State's narrowly defined death penalty was struck down here by the U.S. Supreme Court in a brief announcement without comment.

The high court refused to hear an appeal from the State's Court of Appeals which declared the capital punishment law unconstitutional last June.

As amended in 1965 and 1971, the statute allowed the death penalty in only three types of convictions: killing a police officer in the performance of his duties; murder by a life-terminer in a state prison, and the slaying of a prison guard or other jail employe.

The New York Court of Appeals, reflecting the U.S. Supreme

Court's ruling of 1972, said the law violated the Eighth Amendment prohibition on "cruel and unusual punishment."

According to the state court, only a mandatory death penalty for specific crimes would meet the high court's objections to the arbitrary manner capital punishment has been administered in the past.

Attorney General Louis J. Lefkowitz of New York and Oneida County District Attorney Richard D. Enders appealed the state court ruling in the case of Martin J. Fitzpatrick, convicted of killing two policemen in September, 1969.

Five persons were on New York's death row when the Supreme Court refused to hear

the appeal. Officials expected that the death sentences would be commuted to life imprisonment.

In addition to limiting the types of cases in which capital punishment could apply, the New York law also required a separate "penalty trial" and unanimous jury recommendation of death.

Since the Supreme Court ruling last year, there has been considerable confusion on what if any death penalty laws can be constitutionally enacted by the states.

Some 20 states have passed new laws, most of them attempting to overcome arbitrary imposition of capital punishment by requiring death for certain stipulated crimes.

Get ready for holiday cooking by learning to use your range more efficiently

To help all the women and men who spend hours in the kitchen getting ready for the holidays, the November Consumer Information Center is providing instruction on the efficient use of ranges. By stopping in at our Consumer Center any time between 8 A.M. and 5 P.M., Monday through Friday, you can learn how to use your range efficiently, safely, and in a manner which will save you time while you save energy.



Oven Meals

Cooking an entire meal in the oven, what we call an oven meal, is an important energy-saving and time-saving technique. It saves you time because once in the oven, the meal is relatively carefree. It saves energy by the fact that only the ovenburner is required in the cooking process. The time and temperature on most casseroles and oven-baked vegetables can be adjusted so that an endless variety of oven meals can be created.

Other Time-saving and Energy-saving Techniques

When guests have arrived for holiday celebrations, you don't usually want to spend a lot of time in the kitchen. One time-saving technique is cooking food ahead of time and freezing it. Do as much of your holiday baking at one time as you can. This is also an energy-saving technique.

Or, while you are cooking a casserole, to be used now or frozen and used later, why not put some of your holiday baking in the oven at the same time, and freeze it for later use?

Range Features

One of our Home Service Representatives can help you learn how to use your range, with all its time-saving features, more efficiently. If you have a range which turns on the oven automatically but you haven't had enough confidence to use it, stop in. We'll show you how to use it.

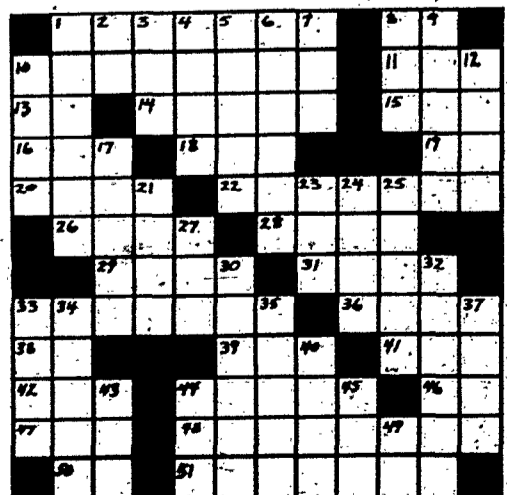
Range Booklet Offered

To help you get the most out of your range, our Home Service Department has prepared a booklet, "Know Your Range." It describes range features, ways to make your range more useful, such as in thawing foods, and has 56 recipes which can be used in the creation of oven meals. Stop in at our Consumer Information Center on the Main Floor at 89 East Avenue, and pick one up.



Crossword

- ACROSS 38. International language
1. Bring back
8. Belonging to me
10. Likens
11. Roman money
13. Musical note
14. Gather
15. Companion
16. Wine cup
18. Greek letter
19. In like manner
20. Persian fairy
22. Raise
26. Cut into cubes
28. Wicked
29. Dispatch
31. Consumes
33. Ironed
36. Allows
39. Period of time
41. Fish eggs
42. Fruit drink
44. Separated
46. Compass point
47. Oriental coin
48. Felt regret
50. Hypothetical force
51. Handled
DOWN 1. Wandered
2. Printing
3. Mineral spring
4. Domesticate
5. Speak formally



Answer To Crossword On Page 16

- 6. Sell again
7. Worm
8. Chart
9. Bread ingredient
10. Applaud
12. Blackthorn fruit
17. Get up
21. Frosts
23. Night before
24. Small bottle
25. Change
27. Abstract being
30. More profound
32. Threw rocks
33. Beseech
34. Wild west show
35. Hang in folds
37. Plant
40. Region
43. Finish
44. Craft
45. An explosive
49. Note of scale