

Theologians Issue New Study of Sexuality

New York (RNS)—A newly published study commissioned by the Catholic Theological Society of America proposes a "personalist" view of human sexuality that would result in abandonment of the traditional "objective" approach to moral evaluation.

The study — five years in the making and focus of theological counter attack even before its June 24 publication date — upholds the principle that "wholesome human sexuality is that which fosters a creative growth toward integration."

This is the standard, the authors maintain, against which acts formerly held to be "intrinsically evil" such as contraception, masturbation, premarital sex, adultery, homosexuality, fornication, sodomy or bestiality should be measured.

The substitution of a "person-oriented" for "act-oriented" evaluation would be more in keeping with biblical, historical and empirical evidence, the society's Committee on the Study of Human Sexuality declares.

At points the study directly contradicts conclusions reached in a 1973 publication of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops entitled "Principles to Guide Confessors in Questions of Homosexuality," the 1976 collective pastoral letter of the bishops entitled "To Live in Christ Jesus," and the 1975 "Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics," issued by the Holy See's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

The study, "Human Sexuality: New Directions in American Catholic Thought," is being published as a hardback book by Paulist Press, which had set a date of June 24 for publication and which had called a news conference with the five authors for June 20.

However, when news stories began appearing based on earlier drafts and a summary of the study, the

publishing firm dropped its embargo and made the book available for quotation and review.

A Foreword in the book by the board of directors of the Catholic Theological Society explains that "the Board voted to receive the report and arrange for its publication. These actions imply neither the approval nor disapproval by the Society or its Board of Directors of the contents of the report."

The 322-page report is made up of five sections. It surveys human sexuality in the light of the Bible, Christian tradition and the empirical sciences in the first three sections.

The authors conclude that "contemporary biblical scholarship makes it clear that we cannot validly abstract statements regarding sexuality out of their biblical context and use them as proof texts to validate any twentieth century theory of human sexuality."

Reviewing tradition, the authors say that Vatican II ushered in a "new appreciation of the personal dimension of human sexuality." They say further that the Vatican's 1975 document on sexual ethics recognized "the purpose of human sexuality in terms of its radical importance for the development of the person and integration into the human community."

The authors continue that the empirical research from the sciences is too "inconclusive" to determine "what, if any, evil consequences to the individual or society necessarily follow upon practices thought of as somehow deviant."

The nub of their case is presented in the fourth section, "Toward a Theology of Human Sexuality," in which they "maintain that it is appropriate to ask whether specific sexual behavior realizes certain values that are conducive to creative growth and integration of the human person."

Among the values which they single out as "particularly significant" are

"self-liberating, other-enriching, honest, faithful, socially responsible, life-serving and joyous."

The bulk of the book is given over to the last section "Pastoral Guidelines for Human Sexuality." Specific sexual acts are considered: contraception, sterilization, artificial insemination, child-free marriage, communal living, swinging, adultery, sex outside marriage, homosexuality, and such special questions as masturbation, sexual variants, sex clinics, transsexualism, pornography and obscenity and sex education programs.

Among the "guidelines" are the following:

Contraception in marriage: "There are times when the decision to use artificial methods of contraception is both morally responsible and justified. In such instances, special consideration should be given to the particular effects a given method may have on the

overall nature and well-being of the persons involved."

Sterilization: "The existence of . . . diversity should make confessors and counsellors aware that the matter of sterilization, like that of contraception, is still far from a universally acceptable and definitive resolution in the Church."

Adultery: Adulterous relationships, in practice, "seem to contradict many of the characteristics of wholesome sexual interrelatedness, and, above all, to compromise the 'covenant fidelity' presented by Scripture as an ideal." The authors remain "open to further evidence from the empirical sciences," but "urge the greatest caution in all such matters, lest they compromise the growth and integration so necessary in all human activity."

Premarital Sex: "Examination of the argumentation . . . would seem to warrant the conclusion that 'moral

theologians have not yet succeeded in producing convincing proof as to why in every case sexual intercourse must be reserved to marriage.' Their difficulties in doing so do not constitute a license for promiscuity, however. Rather, they give us reason to pause and consider each case more carefully, no longer ready to regard every exception to the norm as immoral."

Homosexuality: "A pastor or counsellor should attempt to help a homosexual make a moral judgement upon his or her relationships and actions in terms" of creative growth toward integration. "Faced with the problem of promiscuity, a pastor or counsellor may recommend close, stable friendships between homosexuals, not simply as a lesser of two evils but as a positive good."

Masturbation: "Persons seriously struggling with the task of integrating their sexuality, especially adolescents, should be

encouraged to receive the Eucharist at every opportunity even though occasional incidents of masturbation may occur. The presumption should be that such persons have not sinned gravely and consequently have not lost their right to receive the sacraments. . . ."

CAREERS

Immaculate Conception Youth Awareness Ministry is sponsoring its first Career Awareness Conference on Saturday, June 11 from 9 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. at the Immaculate Community Center.

VESPERS

Vespers and Benediction for the Feast of Corpus Christi will be conducted by Father Benedict Ehmman at 5 p.m. June 12 at the Cenacle, 693 East Ave. The Cenacle Retreat League invites the public to the service and to a reception afterward.

Archbishop Bernardin

Church's Teaching Is Clear

Washington, D.C.—The president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops said here that the Church's clear teaching on sexual morality overrides theological speculation

The statement of Archbishop Joseph L. Bernardin was issued in response to inquiries about

a study on human sexuality commissioned by the Catholic Theological Society of America which would upset traditional Church norms.

"I have not read this document, and therefore I cannot comment directly on it at this time," the archbishop stated, and

continued.

"However, there can be little doubt as to what the Church teaches on questions of sexual morality. This teaching has been stated clearly and often. It is expressed in many places, including recent documents of the Holy See and the U.S.

bishops' conference.

"Theologians have a right and duty to seek a deeper understanding of the Church's authentic teachings. But it is this teaching which is normative, and it is in the light of this teaching that theological speculation is evaluation"

Study Elicits Strong Dissent

Washington (RNS) — The study on human sexuality commissioned by the Catholic Theological Society of America "merits repudiation and rejection and challenges others to creative response," declares a statement of dissent that began circulating even before the new report was made public.

The statement of dissent was drawn up by William May, an associate professor of moral theology at the Catholic University of America, and was based on a draft of the study which had been closely held among a select group of society members, but which Dr. May said he obtained from a colleague


Dr. May's statement, immediately endorsed by five other theologians, criticized the authors of the new study for not carrying on "widespread con-

sultation" with other members of the theological society, and not being representative of their views. Dr. May faulted the study for what he said was uncritical acceptance of biblical interpretation favorable to the authors' views, while they "ignored anything critical."

"The report seems to equate the personal dimension of human sexuality with those dimensions that are consciously experienced and in doing so is guilty of dualism that limits personhood to what is consciously experienced," according to the dissent.

Dr. May declares the report "will be an embarrassment to many CTSA members and to the Catholic laity. No kind of sexual behavior is flatly excluded as morally irresponsible

Life, Liberty and Law



Nancy Murphy

Following the cue from Bernard Berelson, who contacted them on Jan. 24, 1969 "seeking ideas on necessary and useful activities relevant to population policies," Planned Parenthood responded with some imaginative suggestions. They noted in their reply to him that the suggestions would be "limited to the United States" whereas Berelson's were intended for worldwide application.

In a cover letter to me last year, Dr. F. S. Jaffe, president of PP, noted about the proposals that PP "has never advocated measures which are not based on voluntary decisions of the individual."

(How could "individuals" ever voluntarily ask PP for the following? In actual fact, these measures are offered as suggested actions by Governments, not citizens. I wonder if the principals of our Catholic schools who invite PP in to address the students have advised the students beforehand of the depth of the PP commitment. I do not question their right to have PP in the schools; I simply question whether it is prudent to do so without previous and careful research.)


PP's suggestions include: 1) Restructure the family unit. 2) Encourage increased homosexuality. 3) Place fertility control agents in the water supply. 4) Encourage women to enter the labor force. 5) Place a substantial tax on marriage. 6) Place a tax on each child. 7) Remove Parents' exemption. 8) Increase taxes for families with more than two school children. 9) Reduce maternity benefits. 10) Require women to work. 11) Limit federally financed care to families with more than (?) children. 12) Compulsory abortions for illegitimate pregnancies. 13) Compulsory sterilization for all who have two children except for a few who would be allowed three. 14) Confinement of child-bearing to a limited number of adults. 15) Stock certificate permits for children. 16) Discouragement of private home ownership. 17) Payments to encourage sterilization and abortion. 18) Abortion-sterilization on demand.

Why do I bring these suggestions to attention eight years after publication? I do so deliberately to show the pattern of destruction I find so evident in PP's literature, and to note the degree of success they have attained.

I believe we, as educators, are obligated to disclose to our youth the background of any organization we support, or invite into our schools. It won't hurt the students and it won't hurt us to know Planned Parenthood for what it really is . . . warts and all

Next week: a contemporary PP report.

TOWARD TOMORROW



Fr. Henry Atwell

The newest fad is to be an old-style Catholic. Nostalgia is in. The more you like the way it used to be the more people will say how right you are!

There are Catholics these days who will drive ten miles for a Latin Mass, but won't budge down a block to go to English Mass the next Sunday. There are Catholics who complain because their Church doesn't have the vigil light candles, but haven't dropped an envelope in the collection basket since Christmas.

It's time we smoked out these fake "good old days" Catholics. Only those who pass this test 100 per cent can qualify as authentic old Catholics.

• Who said, and in what circumstances, and what was the answer to: "Panem de coelo praestitisti eis"?

• Dispensation means (1) the way New Yorkers say, "This is Penn Station;" (2) a way of getting into or getting out of something the Church thinks you'd better not get into or out of

• Arrange in descending order of importance:

Cherubim, Principalities, Archangels, Powers, Thrones, Angels, Seraphim, Virtues, Dominions. How are they different each from another?

• The Easter Duty must be completed (1) before the eggs are colored; (2) on Easter Sunday; (3) before Christmas; (4) otherwise.

• Circle the correct answer: Hanc igitur (1) played shortstop for the Kansas City Scooters; (2) married Camillus de Lellis; (3) invented Rogation Days; (4) none of the above.

• True or False: Enclosure means a nun who hasn't left yet.

• Privilege of the Faith means (1) 40 years and 40 quarantines off your Purgatory; (2) Five dollars credit to your missionary contributions record; (3) a bishop rides first class on Alitalia Airlines at no additional cost; (4) otherwise.

• Fill in the blanks: Singular Vessel of al . . . Tower of House of

• Non-consummation means (1) refusal to finish your supper; (2) boycotting all special collections (sometimes also called conboycotting); (3) going to bed without doing your homework; (4) otherwise.

• Sing three stanzas of "Mother Dearest, Mother Fairest."

Prizes will be awarded to all who attain 100 per cent