

# The 'fig-leaf' mentality behind gender inclusiveness

By Father Paul J. Cuddy  
Catholic Courier columnist

Have you ever heard the English vernacular Scriptures being bowdlerized in the pulpit by some sex obsessed persons to satisfy their enthusiasm for "gender inclusive language?"

"Gender inclusive" means that instead of speaking or reading normal English, we take a generic noun like "mankind" and in sex anxiety for inclusiveness, we bowdlerize traditional English to come up with such as: person kind for mankind; person hole for manhole; fire person for fireman; personikin for manikin; person slaughter for manslaughter, etc.

In February's *Homiletic and Pastoral Review*, Father Paul Mankowski addresses this subject. He is hardly a slouch in linguistics. He has studied classical languages and philosophy at the University of Chicago and Oxford. He is currently a doctoral student in ancient Semitic philology at Harvard University. He is a young Jesuit in his early 30s, which gives some hope for the Jesuits.

In a graphic analogy, he compares the "gender inclusivists" to some pre-World War II religious communities in Europe where a seminarian about to take a bath would be given a box of black powder to darken the bath water so he would not behold his natural naked body. In concern about the virtue of chastity, a perfectly normal mentality regarding sex became a source of anxiety, and temptations unthought of by normal males were to be allayed by the darkened waters. He writes: "It never even crossed my mind heretofore that the bath was a sink of moral hazards." (p. 39).

Father Mankowski proceeds in his analogy about the inclusivist anxieties: "The prohibition to use exclusive, i.e. normal English, may incite morbid attraction to what was devoid of interest earlier. A healthy sexuality has been gratuitously replaced by a diseased one."

He continues: "I now urge the consideration that the 'need' for the dark powder finds a precise parallel in the 'need' for

gender inclusive language. What is the good which this practice seeks to protect? Recognition of women as human beings. Is this a value which deserves protection? Yes. Is inclusive language a sane approach to preserve this value?"

Hardly.  
"An allied objection to inclusiveness is the damage it can wreck on established treasures of our language: no poem, no hymn, no element of liturgy is safe from this particular kind of vandalism — a vandalism which flourishes in the name of self-righteousness.

"... The fig-leaf mentality lives on in the inclusivists who remove whatever they happen to find offensive in the text before — or if that is impossible, install a verbal fig-leaf so everyone can escape the occasion of sin." (p. 49).

## Pro-life rescue missions appeal to a higher law

By Father Albert Shamon  
Catholic Courier columnist

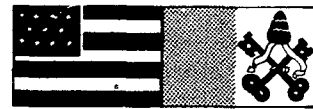
Sunday's readings: (R3) John 21:1-19; (R1) Acts 5:27-32, 40-41; (R2) Revelation 5:11-14.

When the apostles were hauled into court for preaching the resurrection of Jesus, their defense was, "Better for us to obey God than men!" William Calvin, a participant in Operation Rescue, said, "I am willing to be arrested for breaking a law, because I am obeying a higher law, the law of God. We are saving human lives."

The law he and other members of Operation Rescue were purportedly breaking is the law of trespass. Laws prohibiting trespass are neutral and just laws. But when those trespass laws are applied to prevent the rescue of the unborn, they are unjust, not inherently, but as applied in that case. They forbid one to exercise the natural right to defend another person under unjust attack.

If you were walking down the street and saw a mugging in progress, you would have a legal as well as a moral right to intervene forcefully to protect the victim.

## ON THE RIGHT SIDE



"Just as the skeptical bather was charged with unchastity, the opponent of inclusive language is almost reflexively accused of sexism. But to assume at the onset that the contempt for the means (inclusive language) can only mean contempt for the end (sexual equality) argues a defect of intellect or of character or both." (p. 50)

Father M. concludes: "If someone finds it natural to say 'A creator or creatrix of a work of art should look to his or her audience,' I uphold his right to say it, and my own to wince. In return, I ask the freedom to doubt, to question and most of all to speak my own mother-tongue without ipso

facto incurring the charge of injustice. Pluck thy pronouns, if they offend thee, but include me out." (p. 50)

It will be a terrible distraction for me when I hear the Sacred Scripture being proclaimed from the pulpit by a person using inclusive language. Henceforth, I will be visualizing the reader deep in a bathtub of darkened water, protecting me from the sin of injustice by his or her twisting of my mother-tongue.

Readers who want a copy of Fr. Mankowski's article, just send a self-addressed long envelope with a 45-cent stamp to me at: 10 Lewis St., Auburn, N.Y., 13021.

## A WORD FOR SUNDAY



Legalized abortions are estimated at about 1.3 to 1.5 million a year. But early abortions caused by intrauterine devices and so-called contraceptive pills have been estimated at between 6.4 and 8.8 million each year in this country. As long as this contraceptive mentality remains, most unborn babies will be killed privately.

Abortion, therefore, is a religious problem. The root cause is the loss of faith in God and in His Providence. To whip the abortion problem, what is needed is the re-conversion of the American people. Consequently, the pro-life movement must have a double objective: to save lives and to advance the conversion of America from its contraceptive mentality.

Even if you had to take the life of the attacker to save the life of the victim, you would still be in the right. Likewise, if you saw a mugging going on, not in the street, but inside a house and visible from the street, you would have a legal as well as a moral right to commit trespass in order to enter the house and save the victim.

The right to defend ought to apply to the abortion rescue situation, so that the rescuers of unborn babies denying access to abortuaries would be held not even to have violated civil law.

Whether or not to engage in forcible rescues is a matter of prudential choice. It is fair to say that Operation Rescue tends to focus on abortuaries and surgical abortions as if they were the whole problem.

Abortion is only a symptom of deeper problems. If the pro-life movement focuses primarily on a constitutional amendment to prohibit abortion, it misses the point. Such an amendment is an essential objective. However, the greater bulk of abortions each year are not the legalized abortions done in abortuaries or surgically.

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