

Hearings focused attention on age-old issue

By Father Paul Cuddy
Courier columnist

The recent hearings surrounding now-Justice Clarence Thomas and professor Anita Hill brings a pondering about sexual harassment.

What exactly is sexual harassment? When does it occur? Are women to be regarded the same as men? Does it happen equally as much to men as women? What is the difference?

In the 1930s Monsignor James Hartley taught us pastoral theology at St. Bernard's Seminary. He once said to us: "Gentlemen, do not walk down the street with a woman, unless it is your sister. In that case, you might wear a sign: 'This is my sister.'" Was this ultra-prudence?

This counsel was so imbedded in my soul when I served as chaplain at St. James Mercy Hospital, Hornell, in the late 1960s. I was driving home to Auburn, some 80 miles away, when I invited a fellow-

Auburnian, Sister Teresa Mary Kenny of the hospital staff, to ride along. She needed to be dropped off at her home.

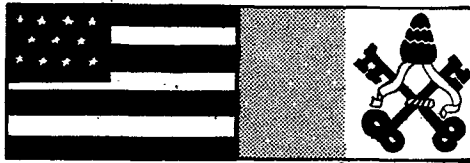
With remarkable discretion I had her sit in the back seat. I smile today to visualize the petite Sister Teresa Mary, alone in the back seat, as her clerical chauffeur sat in the front. Does this seem over-prudence?

The late 1960s was a time when young men were sporting long hair, bohemian dress and a lot of restlessness. One day as I was returning to Hornell from assisting Father Vincent Collins in Canisteo, I saw a youth hitchhiking at the edge of the village.

In addition to looking about 19 or 20 years old, he was neatly dressed with short, trim hair. I stopped and opened the door.

"Hop in. Where to?"
A high-pitched voice replied: "Hornell."

"Why, you're a girl!" I exclaimed.
"Why, yes," she said.



ON THE RIGHT SIDE

"If I had known that I wouldn't have stopped."

A bit aggrieved the girl replied: "Why not?"

"If we have an accident, you know how that would be reported in the papers and over the radio," I said.

"I never thought of that," she giggled. And therein lies the problem. What is the correct attitude between a man and woman?

During the senatorial hearings concern-

ing the nomination of Judge Robert Bork, two feminist women testified mightily against him — not because of sexual harassment, but because of his judicial philosophy.

When they finished, Senator Strom Thurmond expressed his thanks to "the lovely ladies for their testimony." The two women exploded with anger, accusing the senator of demeaning their femininity.

As I watched these women I thought: "So these women think that at the sinking of the Lusitania the men demeaned women by giving life boats to women and children first? Is chivalry so dead that women are not to be considered special? Is it demeaning for a man to open the door for a woman or to tip one's hat in respect for womanhood?"

Equality in all that pertains to justice, yes. But to consider women the same as men, better to ponder over the words of the poet Phyllis McGinley: "Men and women are equal, but different."

Pharaoh changes his mind after the final plague comes

By Cindy Bassett
Courier columnist

"Any sign of those two miserable brothers?" Pharaoh asked the servant who had come to wait on him and his guest.

"As I recall, your highness, you told Moses and Aaron that they would be killed if they ever came to the palace again."

"I didn't ask you for your recollections!" Pharaoh snapped back with such sharpness that even his visitor winced.

The servant was apparently accustomed to such outbursts as routine. "My answer is no," he replied without finching.

"You see," Pharaoh said, turning back to the astrologer who came every week to advise the king. "I am well rid of them and the annoying plagues of their God."

For his part, the astrologer took great care in choosing his words of reply. "I do not wish to appear impertinent, your highness. But there is no error in the signs. A



dark cloud of impending danger is still hanging over this palace and all of Egypt."

Meanwhile, back in Goshen, Moses had called a meeting with the leaders of the Israelites and the head of every family.

They listened carefully to all of Moses' instructions. He ended his long speech to them by saying: "Tonight will be different from every other night. What will happen will be commemorated for all time as the greatest event in our history. For tonight, God will free us from our bondage as

Pharaoh's slaves."

Every family sacrificed a young lamb without blemish in thanksgiving to God. Some of the lamb's blood was taken on a branch and used to mark the top and sides of the door frame of their houses.

The lamb was prepared in great haste with bitter herbs and unleavened bread since there was no time to wait for the dough to rise. Everyone ate this meal dressed in their traveling clothes and with all of their possessions packed for a long journey.

At midnight, the angel of death came through and killed the firstborn son of every family in Egypt. No one was spared from Pharaoh's own son to the firstborn son of his servants. There wasn't a family in Egypt that didn't experience death.

When the angel of death saw the markings on the doors of the Hebrews' homes, it was a sign that these were God's people. And the angel passed over these homes.

At first light, the Hebrews could hear the wailing and lamenting from the Egyptians even in Goshen. It was the worst disaster that had ever struck them.

Before Pharaoh had even summoned Moses and Aaron, the Egyptians went before the king and beseeched him, "Please, let these Hebrews leave before we all die!"

The Egyptians were so anxious that they even loaded the Hebrews with gifts of silver and gold for their journey to freedom.

The Hebrews had lived in Egypt as Pharaoh's slaves for 430 years. To this day, the celebration of their freedom is celebrated on the feast of Passover every year.

Scripture Reference: Exodus, Chapters 11 and 12.

Meditation: "Jesus replied: 'I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.'" (John 8:34, 36).

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