

## BULLETIN – JANUARY 22

**The progressive normalization of sin.** Talk about playing into the devil's hands! What ostensibly began as concern for poor women and children quickly enough showed its evil origins in the obvious over- and under-tones of Margaret Sanger's "Planned Parenthood" organization and its political allies. Even P.P. advocates today do not waste a breath attempting to defend Sanger and those who supported her, like U.S. President Woodrow Wilson, against any charges of racism which permeated their "concern" for the poor. As with the Nazis and their racist theories, the only concern that they really had for the poor was that there were clearly too many of them for the rest of "us" to live comfortably. And, since there were proportionately larger numbers of the poor among particular races and ethnic groups, those groups should ultimately be the ones primarily targeted for population control, if not for elimination.

Certainly the Jews of Europe were not among "the poor." Hitler and his racist allies tapped into ancient biases to turn more and more popular opinion among European Christian peoples against their Jewish neighbors. Although the Church never embraced anti-Semitism as a doctrine, it often unfairly allowed all Jewish people to be stigmatized for the participation of individual historical Jews in the passion and death of Christ. As far as the popular mind was concerned, the Church often did not make clear that the Jews who cried out for the crucifixion of Christ were representing all of us sinners, who to one degree or another participate in the rejection of God's Anointed One with every sin we commit. Scripture scholarship failed to adequately explain the passages in St. John's Gospel which refer to "the Jews" as Jesus' adversaries, as though no non-Jews are complicit in that opposition.

Even certain liturgical texts of the Church had their slant, which was readily open to misunderstanding if not taken in the context of all the rest of our prayers. Note the prayer in the Good Friday liturgy which, if taken alone, could well be interpreted as being hostile to the children of Israel: "Let us pray also for the unfaithful Jews, that our God and Lord may remove the veil from their hearts; that they also may acknowledge our Lord Jesus Christ. . . Almighty and everlasting God, who drive not even the faithless Jews away from Your mercy, hear our prayers which we offer for the blindness of that people; that, acknowledging the light of Your truth, which is Christ, they may be rescued from their darkness."

These words might seem harsh and insensitive in our day. We have to remember that they originated in ages when prayers like this one attributed to St. Ambrose (337-397) were common. We'll just provide phrases to give you a taste: "O loving Lord Jesus Christ, I, a sinner, approach with fear and trembling. Both my heart and body are stained with many sins. I, a wretched creature, am unable to face You as my Judge. I lay bare my shame. I know that my sins are many and grievous, and hence I am afraid. I am full of sin and misery." Now, those are just a few phrases from a much longer prayer, which is one of complete confidence and trust in God's mercy; but which smacks of a self-deprecation which most of us find excessive.

In a similar way, we have to situate the above prayer for the Jewish people in its context, and note that 1) it prays for them, a good thing; 2) it asks God to heal unbelief and to grant the grace of belief in Christ, a good thing; 3) it acknowledges that God's mercy can be extended to the Jewish people; 4) in using words like *faithless*, *blindness*,

and *darkness*, it is merely comparing the state of the Jews to the light of the truth of Christ, an apt comparison for any of us sinners; and 5) it prays for the rescue / salvation of the Jewish people, a good thing. I'm not suggesting a return to that dated language, but 397 is not 1600 is not 1960 is not 2017. We slowly learn that we can speak the truth without verbally pasting other people in the mouth, just as we sinners learn that we can pray frankly to God without dousing ourselves in buckets of self-loathing.

All this to get us back to our original point: the Nazi racists got a tremendous, if not intended, boost from the eugenicist theories of early 20<sup>th</sup>-century scientists, which were popularized by early social engineers like Margaret Sanger. Once the evil genie was out of the bottle, its fury and extent knew no bounds. The Jews were all but eliminated from Europe. Many escaped through emigration while they could; most perished in the camps and "showers" of the Third Reich. Those who survived were helped by many in the Western world to realize the Zionist dream of a Jewish nation at the eastern end of the Mediterranean, the traditional "Promised Land."

Something similar has happened in the 90 years since the Anglican church began poking permissive holes in Christian moral teaching about contraception to accommodate the "genuine need" of couples in "desperate situations." The papal encyclicals *Casti connubii* of Pius XI (1930) and *Humanae vitae* of Blessed Paul VI (1968), as well as St. John Paul II's *Theology of the Body* (1979-84), all provide authentic Catholic teaching about living the virtue of chastity in Christian marriage. Paul VI especially notes what can be expected when the contraceptive mentality takes hold of couples and cultures: "marital infidelity and a general lowering of moral standards" (no. 17), lack of "the reverence due to a woman," "public authorities who care little for the precepts of the moral law," a loss of the appreciation of the value of self-discipline, and "depravity in the name of art or culture" (no. 25). Who can dispute that we have seen these vices and many more multiply exponentially in the half-century since *Humanae vitae* was issued?

The actual story of the progressive destruction of traditional moral codes is much more alarming. Sexual morality has never been easy for the human family. It's a clear proof of the reality of our fallen human nature. As St. Paul says, "What I do, I do not understand. For I do not do what I want, but I do what I hate" (Romans 7:15). "Miserable one that I am! Who will deliver me from this mortal body?" (7:24). Anyone who has ever experienced sexual temptations can identify with those apostolic sentiments. But that's a lot different than pretending that there *are* no moral standards, or even worse, elevating them to the level of virtue.

On Tuesday, January 10, over 20 religious leaders (none of them Catholic, thanks be to God!) gathered in Washington, D.C., to "bless" what they called the "sacred work" of the enormous new Planned Parenthood abortion facility in the nation's capital. The same morally warped thinking already glorifies same-sex relations, *in vitro* fertilization, surrogate "parenthood" of any and every configuration, rejection of gender binary (male-female distinctions), trafficking in aborted human infant body parts, and the extension of the concept of marriage to include virtually any type of partnership. A primary goal of these sexual libertines (who ironically claim that the *Church* is hung up on sex!) is to marginalize all who protest their death-dealing actions and attitudes. So, onward, Christian soldiers. all who are participating in any way in the Right to Life march in D.C. this coming Friday, January 27! We salute you! The proponents of the culture of death

must know that we aren't going away. *And* that we are outnumbering them, and raising our children to reject their lies. God bless you!

Fr. Den

**Vocabulary lesson, heard on the radio:** A dad who is even a little bit upset at the thought of his young daughter having to use a public restroom while some dude is using the stall next to her is called a parent, not a bigot.