

BULLETIN -- NOVEMBER 12

Believe It or Not!!! At its Seventh Lambeth Conference in 1930, the bishops of the Church of England voted to adopt certain proposals that had to do with moral and ethical behavior regarding sex and marriage. Reading the text of certain of its resolutions 87 years later is very revealing.

Resolution 15 allowed “in those cases where there is such a clearly felt moral obligation to limit or avoid parenthood, and where there is a morally sound reason for avoiding complete abstinence, the Conference agrees that other methods may be used, provided that this is done in the light of the same Christian principles.”

Resolution 16 expressed "abhorrence of the sinful practice of abortion."

Resolution 18 reckoned "sexual intercourse between persons who are not legally married" to be "a grievous sin."

As you can see, the moral prohibition of artificial contraception, or birth control, was the first ethical domino to fall. Fornication and abortion were not far behind, even though in 1930 the Anglican bishops still agreed that they were sinful actions.

The response of Lutherans, Methodists, and Presbyterians to the 1930 Lambeth Resolution 15 was swift. They all denounced it in no uncertain terms, seeing in contraception one of the “most repugnant modern travesties,” and a return to morally ruinous paganism. Yet, one by one, these churches and others began to turn a blind eye on their own pronouncements.

In December of 1930, just months after the Lambeth resolutions, Pope Pius XI issued his encyclical *Casti connubii* (“On chaste marriage”), beginning a series of doctrinal pronouncements on what the Church had consistently held and taught about the sanctity and integrity of the sexual relationship in marriage. Subsequent popes have reiterated that teaching, most notably Bl. Paul VI in *Humanae vitae* (“On the transmission of human life”) in 1968, and St. John Paul II in his magnificent *Theology of the Body*.

In retrospect, perhaps the most amazing denunciation of the 1930 Lambeth Resolution 15 appeared on March 22, 1931: “Carried to its logical conclusion, the [Lambeth] Committee’s report, if carried into effect, would sound the death-knell of marriage as a holy institution by establishing degrading practices which would encourage indiscriminate immorality. The suggestion that the use of legalized contraceptives would be ‘careful and restrained’ is preposterous.” Those words were nearly as resoundingly prophetic as those of Bl. Paul VI some 37 years later. Where did they appear? **BELIEVE IT OR NOT:** *The Washington Post!!!* One wonders if there are any *Post* (or any other secular) journalists alive today who could even follow the moral argument to which the editorial wisely referred. So drenched are we in situation ethics that the vast majority of people do not consider any *actions* in themselves right or wrong; only *motives*, which of course, are highly subjective, conveniently flexible, and NEVER to be judged.

Well, here’s another nice moral mess we’ve gotten ourselves into!

No offense taken. It seems that every day, we’re hearing about one or more public figures who are being dragged before the public to apologize for some thoughtless

or candid remark made in haste or anger or humor, to which one or more people have melodramatically taken offense. In so many ways, I long for the days such as the morning in the early 1960's when our neighbor lady across the street was surprised to hear the familiar stop-and-start sound of the city sanitation truck coming down the street at 7:30 a.m., about an hour earlier than usual. She raced around the kitchen, gathering up the scraps and waste which she had intended to set out. Without a trace of makeup, hair up in curlers, wrapped in a really ugly kimono, and wearing her bunny slippers, she came out the side door of her house waving a large grocery bag full of the mess just as the truck was pulling up at the neighbor's house past hers.

"Yoo hoo!!" she called out with her shrill, screechy voice. "Am I too late for the garbage?"

Without missing a beat, the young sub sanitation man yelled back cheerily, "No, ma'am, jump right in!"

Our neighbor later told the story on herself, laughing wildly and recounting how she congratulated the young man for such a snappy comeback to a once-in-a-lifetime opening line. No real offense intended, and none taken. How different it would be today. The worker would be fired and sent off to mental health professionals for reprogramming, the City would be sued and settle out of court for a tidy sum, and the neighbor would be on the *Today* show with lawyers and reps from the National Association of Whoever is Offended by Anything telling us why we should all be perpetually outraged by such callous behaviors. Parents and former friends of the young man would be interviewed and tell us they never knew him to be such a monster, and that he had always been such a polite boy, just like in his First Communion photo.

Aren't we ridiculous? Don't we make much more of such incidents than they deserve? Have we become such a nation of snowflakes that we have a meltdown at the slightest hint of provocation, without ever taking into account the fact that thoughtlessness, humor, malice, benevolence, sarcasm, cleverness, and a host of other soothing and jarring qualities are all part of the human condition?

What about the seminary? The annual road trip for the Vianney Visit to St. John Vianney College Seminary in St. Paul, MN, will take place on Thursday-Saturday, November 16-18, 2017. The Visit is open to young men ages 16-24, and will give them an opportunity to take a closer look at the priesthood by experiencing a few days in the life of a seminarian. Interested? See Father Den, or place a call directly to Father Ron Hutchinson, our Vocations Director, at 475-1254. God bless you!

Fr. Den

Thought for the week: "The very silence of a church or sacristy should be a school, drawing all who enter it into that silence of heart, mind and soul which is so necessary if we are to receive all that Almighty God wishes to give us through the Sacred Liturgy" (Robert Cardinal Sarah, Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship, to an international Colloquium on September 14, 2017). PLEASE BE THOUGHTFUL OF YOUR FELLOW WORSHIPERS.