

OVERPOPULATION

Ladies and gentlemen—I am a dues paying, card carrying, regular Mass attending communicant of the Roman Catholic Church.

And now for a word to all of you second class citizens, each of you human chattels: LADIES, your heart may belong to daddy, but your womb apparently belongs to the State Legislature.

Abortion

While I personally believe that abortions are morally wrong, and I personally counsel against them, nevertheless I will defend to my death the right of any woman to the integrity of her own uterus. The choice must belong to the mother whether to abort or carry to term. It is a hard choice, one I am glad that I will never have to make, but it is a woman's choice.

If, indeed, women are first class citizens, fully sharing the rights of all free men, then they are entitled to make the choice of what will go on inside their own bodies.

You are constantly told that maybe next year or the year after, women might see some expansion of the grounds for abortion to include the health and well-being of the mother. Of course this will require a great deal of political action on the part of women united all over the several States and a great deal of luck in minimizing of the organized, opposition of at least one major Church.

Today, women march for peace. Before the time of Christ the women of Carthage held off the Roman Empire for a decade. Women have nurtured our greatest statesman, politicians, scientists, and indeed all of our priests, yes, even Pope Paul were of woman born.

Yet you women have pledged your wombs to the State Legislature. You have given over the integrity of your bodies to the State Legislature.

The demographers cry loudly of the dangers of overpopulation and predict impending doom. All plead for more education, yet most of these highly educated proposers of population control fail to recognize the simple lessons of history, or to look at the data provided by our advertising and marketing experts, that it is necessary to reach a broad cross section of our population with the message immediately.

But how can we reach these people in the face of laws on the books of a number of States which make it a crime to distribute birth-control information.

Challenging laws prohibiting personal efforts at population control.

It is time for all of you who worry about overpopulation to challenge these archaic

and—if you are right in your predictions—dangerous, laws.

You must make my Church show cause in a public Courtroom rather than the smoke-filled back-rooms of the political clubhouses of the Catholic Wards of our great cities, why their particular moral principles (to which, by the way, I adhere) should be imposed on large numbers of unbelievers. Was not one Inquisition enough?

When are those of you who worry about family planning, overpopulation and women's rights going to confront some of the superannuated hierarchy of my Church in a witness chair and demand to know how they reconcile their insistence on criminal sanctions against abortion or criminal sanctions against the distribution of birth control information with the teachings of the Angelic Doctor the Great Scholastic, St. Thomas Aquinas who, drawing on the Talmudic wisdom of Moses Maimonides recognized that LAW is the ordering program of Society and that not every private moral wrong should be prohibited by public law—and that only those actions which directly affect the order of society should be the subject of public law. Interference of public law with private personal actions which do not directly affect the public order breeds disrespect for law itself.

Either ABORTION is INFANTICIDE and should be treated as a degree of murder or it is a matter conscience to be resolved by the mother.

The motives underlying population control.

And now a question to those of you who cry loudest about overpopulation and its dangers. Are you really worried about the Biosphere? Are you really worried about the people in the underdeveloped countries?

Are you really worried about the poor in our city ghettos?

Are you really worried about the tenant farmer and the sharecropper?

Or are you only worried about yourself and your own personal standard of living? Isn't it always the primitive wilderness that is being destroyed? Isn't it always the loss of open space?

Isn't it always some exotic species of wildlife in danger of extinction?

Isn't it always the loss of that which is precious to you—bought with your affluence at the price of the exploitation of the poor that you mourn?

Isn't it always the loss of those things that the children of the ghettoes will never see that worries you?

Look into your own hearts.

Isn't it always really THEY who have too many children? The poor, the black, the yellow, the uncultured (by your standards), the uncivilized (by your criteria)!

Have you ever tried to justify the preservation of wilderness for the sake of wilderness to a man who knows his children will never see anything but the asphalt jungle?

Have you ever tried to justify the ban of DDT to a country wracked with malaria and insect ravaged agriculture because the Bermuda petrel might become extinct?

Well my friends—those of you who worry about overpopulation—start trying, but BEWARE that you are not behaving like the first class passengers on the Titanic who were more interested in their own comfort than the lives of the passengers in steerage.

Overpopulation, politics and the economy.

The ecologist Larry Slobodkin who couples Academic interest with a social conscience points out that overpopulation is a symptom of social malaise.

In all my litigation against those immediate problems of environmental degradation which are capable of immediate alleviation by appropriate legal action or enlightened, but politically feasible and ecologically sophisticated legislation, I am accused of ignoring the “ultimate” problem or the “real” problem or the “important” problem or the “primary” problem— **overpopulation**.

While it is obvious that continued increase of world population without limit will cause the problems of social injustice, lack of public care and environmental degradation to grow even faster, nevertheless it appears that the problems of population growth and environmental degradation have been co-opted by basically evil political forces for their own objectives which have little or nothing to do with human welfare.

For a number of ecologists to state that “feeding a starving child exacerbates the primary problem of the world—overpopulation,” is to ignore the fact that environmental degradation is in large measure caused by the selfish actions of a disproportionately small segment of the world's population.

The justification for the continued use of DDT in America is the need for perfect, unblemished vegetables in suburban super markets.

The justification for the use of high sulfur fuels is the maintenance of cheap suburban electric rates.

Are you doing a coal miner with pneumoconiosis or black lung disease or silico-tuberculosis any good by buying his coal because it is the cheapest fuel in terms of cash outlay rather than recognizing it is the most expensive fuel in terms of social cost.

Insistence on treating overpopulation as the “primary” problem while classifying environmental degradation as a secondary consequence of overpopulation is an

insidious and pernicious campaign. It leads immediately to the argument already being advanced by some of our most unprincipled industrial polluters and waste-makers, that “if the population problem can only be solved by Zero Population Growth (ZPG), and this can only be done by a totalitarian interference with human rights or a change in the hearts of men, then there's nothing we can do about pollution, is there?”

They go further and treat most of the social problems of America —and of course the rest of the world—as merely secondary symptoms of the primary problem, overpopulation.

Highways are too crowded because too many people drive cars.

Schools are overcrowded because too many people have too many children.

Slums are crowded because too many people live in them.

Underlying all our social problems are too many people.

Overpopulation is more than an insurmountable social problem.

The conclusion to them is obvious. Direct attempts to solve social problems are hopeless unless population growth is reduced and since this requires either totalitarian interference with human rights or a change in the hearts of men; then we can cut back all our social reform programs until we either give up our freedom or reform.

If the primary source of the problem is in the hearts of men, then society need not take any action on its secondary manifestations, hunger, poverty and disease.

Consider the allies that the movement to limit population, which in and of itself is a commendable cause, picks up.

Consider the strange bedfellows who are all interested in limiting population growth. Snobs, racists, reactionaries, isolationists and yes, ecologists, liberals, and even radicals. All of them join together to applaud whenever the argument is made that the root of all of our problems is the increasing rate of population increase and all of our social problems are only secondary symptoms of this increase.

Honorably and equitably limiting population growth — the ultimate solution.

The population problem and the ecological crisis are in fact inexorably intertwined and any attempt to limit the rote of population growth must be accompanied by, at the very least,

- adequate social security, and old age assistance programs in order to eliminate the need of the old to depend for survival on the magnanimity of their children.
- equality of opportunity for women—opening of all professional fields to women with equal pay for equal work, and respect for women's rights.

- the absolute right of women to the integrity of their own bodies and control of their own reproductive faculties.

Any advocate of population control who does not advocate its co-requisites, social security and equal rights for women, is inviting political, social and ecological disaster regardless of the good will, scientific expertise, political power or charismatic personality of the advocate.

If ladies, you will be the masters of your bodies, assert your fundamental human right to control of your own reproductive faculties. Challenge any law which denies you the freedom to choose what will go on inside your own uterus. Go to Court and assert your fundamental human right to the integrity of your bodies, or else don't weep for your second class status as State encouraged brood mares.