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ABORTION: MURDER OR MERCY

Their Opinions ......

The mini-seminar on Abortion, organised by the Guild of St. Luke, SS. Cosmas and Damian, Hong Kong, in association with The Catholic Marriage Advisory Counsil, was held at 8.30pm on 25th February, 1971 at the main hall of Ruttonjee Sanatorium. The seminar was convened by Dr. Ramon C. Ruiz, and the principal speakers included: Dr. Ramon C. Ruiz, Master of the Guild.

Rev. Fr. Peter Brady, S.J. Wah Yan College
Dr. George Ou, Psychiatrist specialist and medical superintendent of Castle Peak Hospital
Mr. Leo F. Goodstadt, deputy editor of the Far East Economic Review.

The seminar was attended by doctors, nurses, medical students and people from other walks of life.

GENERAL PRACTITIONER'S VIEW
Dr. Ruiz, a catholic himself, held the opinion that abortion is essentially an act of murder and is inexcusable. Medicine is meant to save life and not to kill it. There is no essential difference between born and unborn life, both being equal rank in God's eye and should also be in man's eye. He argued that the risk of giving birth to either mentally or physically defective children, the chief reasons put forward by those advocates of abortion, was indeed not sufficiently high to warrant this act. In the case of rubella, he quoted only 2 out of 10 of those babies born of mothers infected during the first trimester of pregnancy are affected either mentally or physically. Therefore if abortion is indicated in all cases of 'rubella risks' 8 out of 10 'innocent' babies would be unjustly murdered. Besides, the defects in those babies affected may be very minor. He furthered the argument that if we are justified to 'kill' these 'untitl'd babies' then we might as well advocate euthanasia for the senile, the insane and the handicapped and so on.

A MISSIONARY'S VIEW
Fr. Brady commenced by discussing the rationale for prohibition, in which the intention is to expel a non-viable foetus from the womb either as an end or as a means from infanticide abortion in which case there is no intention of doing but this occurs as the effect of a procedure undertaken for some other purpose. It is the direct abortion that is strongly condemend by the Church. However the Church might permit indirect abortion only under certain circumstances such as when the mother's life might be saved through therapeutic abortions. Fr. Brady considered that God is the creator of human life. The Lord of life on whom man depends completely. Man therefore has no direct right to destroy his own life or that of other innocent people. To expel a non-viable foetus is to deprive him of the right to live and is committing a crime equivalent to murder. For the minor mental and physical sufferings and afflictions that might be brought forth by the birth of a normal or abnormal child, Fr. Brady urged the parents to be patient and accept it as the will of God. The claim of right by man to take innocent life in order to avoid moral or physical evil is not necessarily justified since it is never necessary to take life in order to avoid moral evil and it is not clear that God wishes men always to avoid great physical evils e.g. suffering, loss of reputation, even death, since men may profit by accepting these patiently and giving good example to others. The argument that the foetus before birth is not yet possessing life and may therefore be removed without fear of committing homicide was disputed by Fr. Brady. He considered that, since to the best available knowledge, the moment when the foetus begins to possess human life is not yet settled, one must follow the latter approach. He therefore hold that DIRECT ABORTION for any foetus at any stage of development should not be regarded as automatically providing grounds for termination of pregnancy. The chief reason for abortion in these mentally deficient mothers is that they cannot be adequate parents and that the child lacks the mental and affectional care to which they may thus tend to become mentally disturbed and are probably going to behave in an antisocial manner.

The need of abortion must be viewed in the total context of the woman's individual, family, social and life experience. If the woman's emotional health or her capacity as a mother would be severely over-strained by the care of child, or of another child, this would constitute grounds for abortion. Examples cited included the premature death of an unmarried girl or of tender age a victim of rape, and a woman beset by very disturbing or family conflicts. Dr. Ou pointed out that these recommendations are subject to the proviso that the therapeutic abortion should always be voluntary and at the request of the pregnant woman herself, and in the case of a married woman, also her husband's consent.

Following this Dr. Ou went on to discuss post-psychiatric illness. He agreed that an abortion represents psychological trauma on many levels, however, the type of illness that would occur depends on the perimorbid personality and susceptibility of the patient rather than solely on induced abortion. In fact from large-scale follow-up studies in Sweden, England and the United States only a few and mild psychiatric sequelae following abortion have been found. The presumed danger of suicide is not supported by large-scale studies of women denied abortion.

Lastly he commented that

(Cont'd on page 3)

EDITORIAL

During the recent Urban Council elections, a group of students were present, but the number failed, in so far as they were unable to reduce the number of voters this year in the elections.

We fully agree that the number of qualified voters (a franchised one-tenth of the population) in these elections is regrettably small, and that the Urban Council (with only 30% of its members being elected) is lamentably limited in its jurisdiction power. And all these together is enough to make any attempt to hold an election a contempt of democracy. We, therefore, fully support a boycott of the Urban elections — in principle, at least.

However, we must also admit the fact that we have an excessively apathetic electorate here: this year, only one-tenth of the franchised registered as voters, out of which only one-third finally turned up at the polling stations.

Thus a full boycott of the elections cannot be achieved by just distributing a few posters. The most important thing is to be able to drive away the prevalent apathy towards politics among the public.

We might as well start with the post-secondary students (a majority of which being qualified voters), draw their attention to the political set up in Hong Kong and the wretched elections we are having, urge them to register as voters, and then - cast a BLANK BALLOT when the polling day comes.

This would not only be a protest against the manger democracy we have here in Hong Kong, but also our enthusiasm for social and constitutional reforms.

And we have two years to do this.
OBITUARY
The Caduceus Editorial Board records with regret the untimely death of Mr. Michael Lai, Lecturer in Biochemistry, on March 1, 1971. Our deepest sympathy goes to Mrs. Lai and her family at this time of grief.

INTRODUCING . . .
The Chief Delegate and the Official Observer of the Medical Society to the 5th General Assembly of ARMSA and the 20th General Assembly of IFMSA:
Chief Delegate: Mr. Tung Chiu Wah
Official Observer: Mr. Wan Ho Yue

Health Officer of the Medical Society: Mr. Fong Chin Wan
Student Representative to the Library Committee of the Faculty of Medicine: Mr. James Pang

Scrape those sanctimonious displays of gratitude!
THE examination season is approaching. Indeed, for some, it is even passing. I do not propose to waste my readers' time by dwelling in the depressing subject of examinations. Instead, I will imagine myself—and everybody else—having passed our examinations, for I love to imagine things. Perhaps imagination is the only province where one can afford to be extravagant without incurring any debts. Or perhaps it is a lack of enthusiasm in me, in the things that most other people are interested in that makes me so singularly suitable for doing nothing but daydreaming, aside, also, from criticizing perhaps. Well, having survived the extremely trying period before the examination any, having passed it—hopefully—one usually being to think of thanking our teachers in a more than inward way—so that everybody else can see, I suppose. I am meaning, of course, those extravagant dinner classes which those of us who are fortunate enough to have passed our exam give every year, often reluctantly, in honour of our teachers. I have always considered this a most unworthy indulgence. Perhaps now is the time when we should all seriously reconsider the worthiness of this tradition of giving dinners in honour of our teachers. Perhaps now is the time when we should all decide that such sanctimonious displays of gratitude and respect should be scraped. My readers must not, however, construe me as instigating disloyalty among the students, lest I can't help feeling guilty of sedition. The reason why I think this tradition, which our predecessors have upheld with almost religious fervour, not worth perpetuating is that I feel these events, for all the excitement and gaiety that often go with them, are so tragically lacking in sincerity. And when it comes to a thing called gratitude it is a true sense of sincerity deep in one's heart that counts more than anything else. I still remember the embarrassing experience I once had in my secondary school days when somehow the onions fell on me to give a speech of thanks to my teachers on an occasion of somewhat similar nature. It is fun, but pathetic on second thought, to recall how, the evening before that important event, I exhausted all my limited vocabulary, and then ploughed through all the old and not-so-old dictionaries I had at home in order to find some words of thanks that I might use in my speech. I ended up with a score or so of synonyms all meaning gratitude. The speech I gave was, needless to say, contrived, full of grandiloquence, lacking in spontaneity, and empty, too, on reflection. And when I was only half through the ordeal of delivering it, I suddenly had the suspicion that my teachers were all saying to me in their hearts 'You wicked, crooked hypocrite, saying things that you don't at all mean!' Nearly went dumb. I also seemed to hear drowned in the laughter everybody present was saying to his teacher sitting opposite you wicked, crooked impostor, presuming to teach me what you don't really know all these years? And at the end of it all I was left with a feeling of disillusionment in myself: Why had I been standing around these years, doing things that meant nothing to me? Still, everybody talked; everybody laughed, in an atmosphere of a miasmic atmosphere. That is diplomacy, I suppose, and that's how life should be lived, I have been told, always with a bit of hypocrisy. Or, was it the overabundance of my imagination that had been at play all the while?

It is not my feelings about these class dinners that are important. Indeed, the reader should do best to dismiss the illustration I have given of myself giving a speech as a joke—perhaps an impudent one too, I am beginning to feel. The important thing—and the point that I want to make—is that treating your teachers to a dinner as an expression of gratitude, like what we have been doing all these years, is superficial and unnatural. If you think that the debt that you owe your teachers can be fully repaid in a dinner you are debasing the immeasurable profit that you have gained from your teachers. Besides, how many of us go to such dinners with a heart of thanks? The little meaning that these class dinners might have originally has been lost through repeated abuse. That, perhaps, is the tragedy of any tradition: once it gets established, everybody forgets the reason for its existence. And when a tradition comes to this stage it is a signal for its passing.

Of course, doing away with these time-honoured class dinners isn't a very attractive suggestion to make. Indeed, I might have unwittingly made myself a hundred enemies by a rash move of my pen: the antiquarians may lament the loss of a noble tradition; then, those ladies among us may grumble of one occasion less to show off their new dresses; still, those wealthier among us may complain of one chance less to throw away their money. To the former I have no advice to offer; but to the latter I have one suggestion to make: throw your money to the Community Chest!

new broad-spectrum cephalosporin
Ceporex (cephalexin)
the better absorbed oral antibiotic
Gives better success rates

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SOME RESEARCHES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SURGERY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

Professor Lowenthal recently paid a visit to Hongkong. He is the Professor of Surgery at the University of Sydney and Sir Arthur Sims Travelling Professor for 1971. He delivered a scientific paper before the Royal College of Surgeons on 24th Feb. The following is a brief account of his lecture.

A. Physiology & Pharmacology: ganglionic blockade

Shock, with its complexity, is a difficult field for experimental research but because of its great importance to man. From the experimental study carried out in the department, no definite conclusions as to its protection can be drawn, yet the results have thrown some doubts on previous conclusions and help to be of some help in the future.

In shock, there is excess stimulation of the sympathetic system. The plasma level of catecholamines is known to increase by fifteen to hundred-folds. This excess sympathetic activation reduces survival rate in stressful conditions. It can be demonstrated that prolonged infusion with the subcutaneous dose of adrenaline for 3 to 4 hours into an animal causes irreversible shock. Therefore, it is possible that the treatment of shock lies in modification of the sympathetic reaction.

Experiments are performed with dogs subjected to haemorrhagic shock. The shock is anesthetized. The femoral artery is catheterized and the animal is allowed to bleed until the blood pressure falls to 45-50 mm. Hg. 3 hours later, the blood is re-infused. The animal is allowed to bleed in the next morning. The infusion of shock blood restores the blood pressure and blood volume. Men with shock depression in all non-medicated animals falls one or two hours later and the animals die within 6 hours in irreversible shock. So severe is the tissue damage in the hypovolemic stage that it is incompatible with life even when the blood volume is restored to normal. Agents of sympathetic blockage are important for their protective value in shock.

b) Effect of a-block.

Catecholamines possess an antihypertensive action in several areas. This may be responsible for tissue necrosis. But this action is neutralized with the specific blocker. For example, phentolamine or phenoxybenzamine is not protective to the animal experimentally.

c) Effect of a-block and β-block.

Catecholamines also possess metabolic effects through stimulation of a receptor. Thus, propranolol a blocker, is given together with the release of catecholamines. It is thought to be caused by the preferential perfusion effect of catecholamines. But in experiments so far, no such construction is detected in the splanchic bed for prolonged perfusion of animals with a drenaline. Preferential perfusion is an immediate response to adrenaline and probably accounts for the significant part in hypovolemic shock of long duration.

In summary, simultaneous predemedication of a and β blocking agents increases tolerance of animals to shock and also provides for abortion if there is substantial risk that the child would suffer from such physical or mental abnormality to be born. The registered doctors directly concerned with the recommendation of abortion are required to maintain their faith and if evidence could be found to the contrary, the doctors might be prosecuted.

A JUDGE'S VIEW

Judge Li first drew the attention of the audience to the Offences against the Person Act, 1861, s.58 which provides that a woman who uses any means to procure her own miscarriage or any person who unlawfully procures with such an intention is guilty of felony. Any one found guilty of such grave offence is liable to imprisonment for life. He also pointed out that although doctors are obliged to keep careful records about their patients in the face of such criminal offences doctors are relieved by the law to report to the authorities. The law forbids the taking of innocent life but under certain circumstances the law justifies the taking of one life for the other. He quoted the speech of Mr. Justice Macphail in his charge to the jury in 1939. The desire of a woman to be relieved of her pregnancy is no justification but if a doctor, using any means, comes to the opinion that the continuation of pregnancy will endanger the life of the mother or her child, then she is entitled, but it is his duty to base his decision on the operation, and the operation will not be unlawful. By the law the foetus is only a life not in being, therefore, it is sometimes justified to take a life to save a life in being. But since the foetus is a property of the family, the physical and mental health of the mother should not be the only consideration. So, but that of the family and the children, if any, should also be taken into account and also the consent of the husband is essential. Further Judge Li expounded the implications of the 1967 Act for the Chinese in Hongkong. Britain which declared that abortion is legal when two registered doctors believe that the pregnancy would involve risk to the life of the woman or injury to her physical or mental health, and is also provided for abortion if there is substantial risk that the child would suffer from such physical or mental abnormality to be born.

When asked of the feasibility of legalizing abortion in Hong Kong Judge Li answered tactfully that if he is on the jurisdiction side he is not responsible for the legislation of the law. He also revealed that so far not a single registered doctor in this locality has been prosecuted under this Act.

A JOURNALIST'S VIEW

Mr. Goodstadt approached the issue of abortion from another angle. He was sympathetic with the mental afflictions of the families having defective children. He considered that in this respect abortion might help to alleviate these sufferings. At the same time the operations performed in large hospitals will definitely reduce any unnecessary hazards encountered in backstreet practice. But he maintained that as long as abortion is legalized at a public record of the cases should be kept. Since the decision of the termination of pregnancy rests heavily on the judgment of the doctors he suggested that doctors should be trained more sophisticated in the way to handle the study of demography, with the illustrations of large family-size to procure suitable cases. As a result, Mr. Goodstadt regarded man's interference with nature's biological laws over population control as unnecessary and sometimes unwise.

He then went on to dispute on the argument that abortion may serve as a means of population control and help to mitigate the problems of population explosion. With the introduction and improvement of birth control, less densely populated localities, though today nationalism and racism are limiting factors. The fact that in some parts of the globe where people are still on the verge of starvation and the moral, social injustice and uneven distribution of wealth. Some people may argue that abortion may serve as an alternative to contraception to help regulating the size of the family. Mr. Goodstadt then pointed out that the Church does not allow contraception, though only by the 'natural' methods, and there is no point in taking such extreme measures. However he commented in passing that the Church is sometimes lacking in wisdom and really quite obvious of some of the effects of changes in social structure.

He next considered the advocacy of abortion on ungrounded rather unhumanistic. Though still unsuccessful medicine should search for means to cure such genetic diseases as mongolism, rubella children and muscular dystrophy, rather than to kill these innocent children. Though abortion might be kept 'alive' by the medical advance these children are often criticized as useless and uncared for, and are invariably die sadly at a young age. Mr. Goodstadt then remarked that from a more social point of view, many people are unproductive in the sense of the kind of life they spend, and all men must end somewhere, by death too. Therefore he concluded that these defective children present rather a challenge to the whole human society to offer our love and efforts to help our misfortunates counterparts.
維康 妮嘉

VERONICA，好一個詩一般的
名字！

VERONICA，好一個充滿憂鬱
的眼神！

當我給她講第一幾時，我的心
就在那時的想。

我講：「我喜歡安東尼奧尼（好
一個充滿故事的俊）。

我也講：「我喜歡ZABRISKI POINT。

誰問她？

當我們講安東尼奧尼，談ZABRISKI POINT，談兩岸，
精神文明，我講，我講。

誰問這樣一個女孩子，倒不是常
有的事，我想，

但為什麼她的眼睛總是那麼遙遠的，為什麼她面
上只能那樣緩緩的笑。

一張電影完了，另一張又開起，我倆間的笑
了好幾遍音樂，到現在開始抱怨這些玩意。一張超過的
的小露台也沒有。

一個藝術家在舞會中出現，引起一陣子的騷動，
但不久又復平靜。

當我的思緒再次因周邊的訪問而起伏時發覺她重
坐著的椅子已經坐著。在舞會中，她與新聞在正在讀書
的笑話。我站在一個角落的角落邊的看著她每一個。

那對眼睛的鏡頭現在應該跟著快樂的靈魂，面
上也正熾發著笑的花朵。

一個正在入睡在韋爾底的女孩子，我想，

「要，我們要走了，你怎麼？」「一個身旁的聲音
把她喚醒過來。」

「好，一塊兒走吧。」

我發出了另一篇聲音。