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From the Editor's Desk

John P. Mullooly

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From the Editor's Desk



Human Dignity: God vs. Man

As we contemplate the current medical-moral scene and its chaotic evolution of the past 30 years, it is becoming increasingly clear that modern man completely rejects God, the Creator, and His sovereign dominion over life and death. The underlying philosophy which has brought about this turn of events began in the Western world with the so-called Enlightenment period of the 17th and 18th centuries. During that period and down to our own day, the sovereignty of God over the universe was gradually replaced with the concept that man was center of the universe and that he alone was in a position to determine his own destiny. Lost along the way was the foundation for man's sacredness and dignity which he received from God, his Creator. Into this vacuum has seeped the concept that the state is all-powerful and exercises dominion over all of its citizens. The rights of individuals are derived from the state, God having no powers in this view of reality.

The consequences of this view of man are serious and far reaching on the medical-moral scene. If man is the center of the universe and not subject to a higher power, it is not surprising that anything which may interfere with man's desires or goals can be easily removed as an obstacle to those goals. Following this type of thinking, no objective norms can exist and moral relativism ensues. Under this philosophic outlook moral chaos is established. Since man has no intrinsic dignity or sacredness, he has no essential worth and is only as good as he is useful and not a bother to his neighbor. How else can we explain the current acceptance of abortion and

euthanasia by so many in the world today? On a larger scale, we have seen the consequences of moral relativism in many countries where no respect is given to their citizens, where human life is not respected. The horror of the Holocaust in Nazi-dominated Europe, the elimination of millions in Russia during the 1930s in the name of the State and the genocides in Indo-China in recent times are brute testimony to the consequences of the Enlightenment period in which man replaced God.

The present medical-ethical debates in regard to abortion, euthanasia, fetal experimentation, etc., can only be understood if we place them in the context of this simple elemental truth: man has replaced God as the center of all created things. If God does not exist, then all that follows from this is perfectly understandable. And yet, common sense rebels at the horrors which surround us when innocent babies are destroyed in the womb, when innocent elderly patients are snuffed out in nursing homes, when defective newborns are not given adequate care. A sense of common decency and concern for our neighbor impels us to fight against these injustices. In the heart of every living creature is the knowledge that these things are wrong and that common humanity knows they are wrong. Implicitly, man knows that each and every human being is sacred. He knows that he receives his dignity from the Creator, his God.

Human nature does not change. Man does believe in his inalienable rights which he receives from God. Every man or woman must treat himself and his neighbor fairly because that is what he wants for himself and he is entitled to this for he is God's creature. To dismiss these common yearnings of all people as religious arguments is to ignore the common desires of all of humanity. The corpus of modern laws regulating society and the sovereign rights of the people for the most part emanates from the values of the Judeo-Christian heritage. These values are being eroded by modern society and are being corrupted by modern trends. If society is to survive where each person is protected from discrimination, harm and death, it can only be done if society returns to its foundations and recognizes that any right an individual has comes from its creator, God. Any dignity an individual has is given by God. If one denies this elemental truth, he has denied any claim to innate dignity and deserves the fate which a godless society deals him. If these reflections seem discouraging, one must always remember the words of our Lord, when He talked with His apostles on the night He was betrayed. He gave His friends warnings about what would happen to them when they proclaimed the truth. They would be persecuted, thrown out of the synagogues, etc. The world would reject them.

“Don't be discouraged,” He said. “I have overcome the world.”

With that hope in our hearts, we must continue to give witness to the truth and never give up. The valiant efforts of such movements against abortion, as “Operation Rescue”, must continue. It is a movement which is jarring the secular world and raising the consciousness of the ordinary

citizen. Americans are basically fair-minded, and in God's good time, such efforts at giving witness to the truth will see this assault on the human dignity of the fetus removed from our land and, hopefully, from the world.

— John P. Mullooly, M.D.

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