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WHY NOT SEXUAL HEDONISM?

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It may be the rare person among us who has never entertained the vision of living in a world of unrestrained sexual opportunity. Does it not seem attractive to be freed from unnecessary social strictures and religious hangups so that we can be assured of sensual bliss and satisfaction? The college years are the period in most people's lives when the challenge exists to integrate various erotic and interpersonal drives with long-range commitments and responsibilities. In this light sexual hedonism can seem a daring philosophical alternative, a coherent rationale in terms of which we can seize control of our personal possibilities for a contented life.

(cont.)

Nevertheless, there is something fundamentally deficient about the perspective of sexual hedonism. It can succeed only at the level of fantasy or sexual imagination. Once we attempt to recreate our fantasies in the world of other human beings we begin to discover that there are at least three problems with such a view.

First it fails to portray adequately the nature of the human person as enlashed spirit. One of the results of being historical creatures is that there are limits to our control over our corporeal existence. We are not angels or agents of sheer spirit. Our love must entail more than whispered lies or games played between consenting adults. There ought to be some correspondence between our intentions and our practices.

Secondly, sexual hedonism deliberately rejects the most satisfying form of personal human encounters. It settles for fleeting and arbitrary liaisons. A deeper understanding must include relationships which are open to voluntary, reciprocal exchanges of affection, friendship and love. Such primary interactions require sufficient time and a conducive social context for true revelation to take place. Out of such experience can promises and covenants be established.

Finally, sexual hedonism abstracts from the specific details that are inseparable from each person's history, those factors which restrict the range of self-

determination, including the area of sexual fulfillment. Some of us are more physically attractive, have a better self-image and are more socially experienced than others. Each of us knows various degrees of economic dependence, familial support, personal health, and educational or work skill. All of these matters influence our freedom and ability to pursue projected pleasures. All of this makes a difference and must be taken into account if happiness would be achieved.

Because sexual hedonism arises from the domain of sexual fantasy it is both alluring and deceptive. It easily begets a distorted view of human happiness that trivializes the notion of person by picturing fleshly pleasure as an ultimate goal rather than a singular expression of reciprocal sharing. Because this outlook misses the higher levels of human interaction it inclines the individual to employ manipulation, technique and pretense to prepare the other person for complacent assent to his or her pleasure. In the prospective fantasy there is no regret, guilt or failure. No one ever gets pregnant or jealous. There are no acts of violent revenge. There is no responsibility for children and no accountability to the broader society.

In the end, the pursuit of sexual hedonism is self-defeating. What we can imagine easily with regard to unrestricted sexual pleasure turns out to be humanly impossible.

The Spirit of Notre Dame

Mr. Francis P. Kaiser from Southampton, Penn. visited Notre Dame on the weekend of the Colorado game. "The spirit of Notre Dame" was so compelling that he wrote and shared with Fr. Hesburgh his experience and reflection:

"...the spirit that is Notre Dame comes from those who have the Faith. Each Saturday home game this scene at the Grotto is repeated. This tells me that there is a large amount of Faith associated with Notre Dame from the heralded spirit flows...It strikes me, at this moment, that the Grotto is the lowest piece of land among all the buildings including the church. So, we can say that Notre Dame truly rests on the Blessed Mother physically and spiritually." he continues, "...Whenever I spoke to a student to ask directions, I received generous, full and polite answers..." He concluded the 5-paged letter, "If Grantland Rice doesn't mind I'd like to say that I saw a new set of Four Horsemen-Confidence, Enthusiasm, Quietness and Happiness as I watched the faces and heard the voices of the N.D. students and adults on the campus..."

Thank you, Mr. Kaiser for your kind letter.

Thank you for your generous response to Bishop McManus' emergency request for help for the starving in Ethiopia. Please continue to be generous.



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OF
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What Catholics Should Know

The Office of University Ministry is offering a Catholic Faith Program for all undergraduate and graduate students interested in developing a deeper understanding of what Catholics should know about Prayer, the Sacraments, Scripture and Tradition, Morality and the Church. These five topics will be discussed on:

Sundays, January 20 - February 17, in Grace Hall

Tuesdays, January 22 - February 19, in Keenan -
Stanford and Walsh Halls.

All sessions will be 7 - 8:30 P.M. Registration is limited. Registration forms may be obtained at the Office of University Ministry (Memorial Library or Badin Hall)

Deadline for Registration is December 3.



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On Sunday Nov. 18, there will be a campus-wide collection at participating dorm Masses and at Sacred Heart Church. The money collected will be used for distributing food at this Thanksgiving time to the South Bend area residents. This is sponsored by the N.D. World Hunger Coalition and your generosity is greatly appreciated.