

GRIST

Diocese of New Ulm Social Concerns Office November, 2008

IX. Blessed Are the Pure of Heart

He that is good is free, though he is a slave;
he that is evil is a slave, though he be a king.
St. Augustine

There's always a little bit of extra curiosity
left in you somewhere for anything to do with
smut...Pleasure pretty soon becomes hard work.
Celine

After certain nights, one should change names,
since one is also no longer the same man.
E. M. Cioran

Jesus said, "The light of the body is the eye."
Through the mouth we inhale air that is not
ownable, air that we share with every being on
earth. And out of our mouths we send words –
our personal reshaping of that same communal
air. Seeing, I have come to feel, is the very
same kind of process. Through our eyes we
inhale light and images we cannot own – light
and images shared with every being on earth.
And out of our eyes we exhale a light or a
darkness that is the spirit in which we perceive.
This visual exhalation, this personal energizing
and aiming of perception, is the eye's speech. It
is a reshaping of light as surely as words are a
reshaping of air. I therefore feel responsible for
my vision. My eye-speech changes the world.
David James Duncan

All philosophy lies in two words:
sustain and abstain. *Epictetus*

Our sexuality is not frightening or
uncontrollable; it is not an idol or a slave.
It is a mystery at the heart of our familiar selves;
it is ourselves as we live with other people we
love – parents, friends, children, lovers,

husbands, wives – in individual relationships
and in groups and communities.
Rosemary Haughton

The basic test of freedom is perhaps less in
what we are free to do than in what we are
free not to do. *Eric Hoffer*

Three smiles are worse than grief: the smile
of snow melting, the smile of your wife when
another man has been with her, the smile of a
mastiff about to spring. *Anon. Irish*

It is a good thing Heaven has not given us the
power to alter our bodies as much as we would
like to and as much as our theories might happen
to require. One man would cover himself with
eyes, another with sexual organs, a third with
ears, etc. *Georg Christoph Lichtenberg*

Desires are either natural and necessary,
like eating and drinking; or natural and not
necessary, like intercourse with women; or
neither natural nor necessary. *Montaigne*

Disrespect for women has invariably been the
surest sign of moral corruption.
Montesquieu

Pornography and sentimentality and anything
else in excess are all sins against form.
Flannery O'Connor

Nine-tenths of that which is attributed to
sexuality is the work of our magnificent ability
to imagine, which is no longer an instinct, but
exactly the opposite: a creation...Tell me to
what you pay attention and I will tell you who
you are. *Jose Ortega y Gasset*

Lust is the source of all our actions.
Blaise Pascal

One might say that the main difference between an adult and a child is that the adult knows about certain facets of life – its mysteries, its contradictions, its violence, its tragedies – that are not considered suitable for children to know. As children move toward adulthood, we reveal these secrets to them in ways we believe they are prepared to manage. That is why there is such a thing as children’s literature. But television makes this arrangement quite impossible. It requires a constant supply of novel and interesting information to hold its audience. This means that all adult secrets – social, sexual, physical and the like – are revealed. Television forces the entire culture to come out of the closet, taps every existing taboo. As a consequence of all this, childhood innocence is impossible to sustain. *Neil Postman*

The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes. *Marcel Proust*

We have grown so accustomed to nakedness that we barely see the naked allure of the Calvin Klein ad on the side of the bus anymore. At a time when Americans have lost the gift of intimate life – embrace, secrets, touch – public exposure is all. There are no secrets in America. There is only gossip. What was once the realm of the private has become only public. Promiscuity is easy. Sex with a stranger is easy. In the pages of fashion magazines, naked bodies are everywhere selling perfume. Perfume for her, cologne for him – the scent becomes the only piece of clothing on the otherwise naked body. There is often in the advertisement a disturbing neo-fascist glamour to the muscular, self-enclosed, stolid figures. With nakedness has come a fetish for tattoos and for body piercing and theatrical muscles. People who undress in public suddenly display a need to clothe their bodies with cartoon designs or swirling lines, or the body is pierced, bejeweled, or at Gold’s Gym the body is loaded with layers and layers of muscle. It is as though we Americans cannot stand our nakedness. We yearn for clothing. We yearn for shadow, for secrets. We yearn for a private life. Without a private life, we are surrounded in public by

nakedness that we more and more do not bother to see. *Richard Rodriguez*

Look everywhere with your eyes;
but with your soul never look at many things,
but at *one*. *V. V. Rozinov*

Love does not consist in gazing at each other
but in looking together in the same direction.
Antoine de Saint-Exupery

It is easier to make a saint out of a libertine
than out of a prig. *George Santayana*

Show me a man who is not a slave.
One is a slave to lust,
another to greed,
another to ambition,
and all men are slaves to fear...
No servitude is more disgraceful
than that which is self-imposed.
Seneca

Prudery is a form of avarice. *Stendhal*

We do not see things as they are,
we see them as we are. *Talmud*

Books have the same enemies as man:
fire, moisture, animals, the weather –
and what’s inside them. *Paul Valery*

Two monks were once traveling together down a muddy road. A heavy rain was still falling. Coming around a bend, they met a lovely girl in a silk kimono and sash, unable to cross the intersection. “Come on, girl,” said the older monk at once. Lifting her in his arms, he carried her over the mud. The younger monk did not speak again until that night when they reached a lodging temple. Then he no longer could restrain himself. “We monks don’t go near women,” he told the older monk, “especially not young and lovely ones. It is dangerous. Why did you do that?” “I left the girl there,” said the older monk. “Are you still carrying her?”
Zen Parable