

IF YOU EAT ANIMALS YOU ARE VIOLATING THE PLAN OF GOD. YOU SHOULD BE A VEGAN AND EAT NO ANIMAL PRODUCTS, INCLUDING EGGS, MILK, YOGURT OR MEAT.

IS THIS GOD'S PLAN?

MY RESPONSE TO A VEGAN CRITIC

My son recently put up a thought-provoking post on my blog about the killing and eating of a lamb and tied it into the sacrifice of Christ as our Passover Lamb and the blessing of the Sacrament of Confession. You can read it [here](#) along with the comments posted below it.

Upon reading the article, one Jean-Francois Virey fired off an intemperate and hostile letter criticizing my son in what I thought was ridiculous terms. I said so in my Comment to the [blog](#).

In response someone who did not identify himself but whose email implies his name is Stephen, wrote to defend the "Professor." He failed to identify himself or his association with the "Professor" Jean-Francois Virey who also failed to introduce himself). I thought it was proper to response for the matter of discussion and the education of thoughtful Catholics. So I have written this response.

Stephen's words are in **black**; my words are in **blue**. My full list of reasons against the vegan position are at the end of this response.

Stephen "No-Last-Name" writes: Jean-François Virey like yourself ranks among the brightest and most intelligent converts

to the Church in recent years. Professor Virey is not 'FANATICAL AND IDIOLOGICAL ILLOGICAL...ONE OF THE "ANIMALS ARE PEOPLE TOO"... 'ANIMALS HAVE EQUAL HUMAN RIGHTS WITH PEOPLE...FALLACIOUS AND FOOLISH' and so forth.

Thanks for the compliment. I do not know who Jean-Francois Virey is (referred to as Virey from this point on). My son put up a blog about butchering a farmer's lamb for Easter dinner. He showed the parallels with the Passover Lamb and the joy of confession of sins in the Sacrament of Reconciliation instead of through the killing of multiple thousands of lambs each year as was required by God by the Jews.

My "introduction" to Virey was his hostile and judgmental comment which he left on my blog. He gave no introduction to himself and spoke very intemperately. So, what was I to think? I immediately associated him with the radical PETA-kind of people. I don't know if he is or isn't. My response was based on the vitriolic short comment he posted and unless I learn otherwise I stand by what I said, how I said it, and what my son wrote.

If Virey wants to make "converts" to his vegan diet and world view, he should be more temperate and less harsh and vitriolic. As the saying goes, "You get more flies with honey than with vinegar."

Firstly, I assure you Prof. Virey is completely faithful to the magisterium and his 'Vegan Catholic' Facebook group explores a profoundly Catholic veganism entirely devoid of New Age falsehoods. Nowhere in his comment above or elsewhere has Virey asserted animals are people or have human rights.

Whether he is or is not faithful to the teachings of the Church, I don't know. I will take your word for it. The way he wrote — in my mind or opinion, since he did not introduce himself or set himself

apart from the fanatical left — he seemed to fall right in lock step with them. Based on his initial comments, I consider him way off balance and holding an unbiblical and irrational position. Maybe he is very orthodox and solid on everything else with this as his only deviation. I don't know. But I do know that happens all the time.

The following points are worth considering:

Scripture is fairly clear that in the Garden of Eden, mankind in his state of original justice, was vegan. Adam is likely to have shared Virey's concerns about slaughtering one of the animals he was given charge over. There was no death before the Fall/curse. Indeed, there are prophetic verses showing that God's ultimate intent for his Creation will be a return to how it was in the beginning.

I am glad you use the phrase “fairly clear” since we are not given great detail about life in the idyllic state in the Garden of Eden. We do not know that there was no death before the fall. Do you have proof of this? Did ants live forever? Did one season's grass not die making way for the new season? Did birds never fly into a tree trunk and or shiny surface and break their neck like they do today? Do you have proof they did not?

Even if we give you the benefit of doubt and accept for the sake of argument that there was no death to animals in the pre-Fall era and won't be in the final state — what does that have to do with today? We are not in the pre-Fall era or the final stage of blessed redemption. We are in the current era and therefore NOT in the vegan imposed state.

In Genesis 9, God specifically gave men animals to oversee, control and to eat: “The fear of you and the dread of you shall be

upon every beast of the earth, and upon every bird of the air, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea; into your hand they are delivered. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you; and as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything.” (Gen 9:2-3).

Jesus is the New or Last Adam (1 Cor 15:45) coming to begin a new spiritual order and humanity. As such, I'd expect him to make a huge push to get us back to the Garden and to stop eating meat and animal products. Yet he never gives even a hint at this.

Jesus ate lamb, fish and other animal foods. He told parables which included the incidents of killing the fatted calf or a father feeding his son a fish or egg (Luke 11:11-12). He did so with no implication that such activity was wrong, cruel or frowned upon.

There is an established tradition of Hebrew and Christian respect for animals. Unnecessary cruelty to animals is utterly alien to the mind of Christ. Many Catholic saints were vegan ascetics; I simply could not imagine St Francis of Assisi killing an animal and then waxing lyrical about the spiritual allusions.

You say “unnecessary cruelty to animals.” Does this imply that there are times when there is “necessary cruelty”? I agree we should have a respect for animals. Jews were not allowed to muzzle an ox while threshing, although Paul says, “For it is written in the law of Moses, ‘You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain.’ *Is it for oxen that God is concerned? Does he not speak entirely for our sake? It was written for our sake, because the plowman should plow in hope and the thresher thresh in hope of a share in the crop.* (1 Corinthians 9:9–10 RSVCE)

Paul says that God did not write this out of concern for the oxen but to teach that ministers should be paid when they serve. No one, most of all my son, would agree with torturing or abusing animals. A quick death for the purpose of food is not torturing, abusing, or cruelty to animals. We all oppose such inhumane activities. Starving animals, hurting them or causing them pain or discomfort for the sake of cruelty, is wrong. We all agree with that.

Unfortunately Stephen “No-Last-Name” and Virey seem to clump the two into one group: those who kill an animal quickly and painlessly for the purpose of eating and those who abuse, torture, maim, or destroy animals for sadistic or commercial reasons.

You are unjustly and falsely accusing my son as an animal torturer which he is not. He has often cared for a wounded bird or a baby bird fallen from his nest. He has helped a dog hit by a car. He is one of the most gentle and humane people you’ll ever meet. In your rash rush to make judgment you and the “Professor” have misjudged my son and owe him an apology for your comments and unfounded assumptions.

To say my son is “waxing lyrically” about killing animals is quite unfair as he was using a real life experience to make several very valid and astute spiritual conclusions, much the way Scripture does.

I would be interested in any proof you might have that St. Francis never ate meat or fish or any animal product such as eggs or milk. I doubt you can produce such evidence but rather play off the typical picture of St. Francis with birds eating out of his hands and deer unafraid to approach him. I am currently in Jerusalem and just ate lamb chops with some good Franciscan priest friends of mine.

Today there is widespread concern about animal exploitation, factory farming and animal cruelty. Many ordinary people now pay a little extra for free range eggs or ask questions such as should dogs be made to smoke tobacco until they get cancer or chemicals forced into rabbits eyes to test the latest cosmetic. Virey is right to ask will this gory article and accompanying bloody photography help the cause of Catholic evangelization. Does this technicolor killing broached in Temple and NT motifs present the right image to the lost post-modern humanists we are trying to reach?

This has absolutely NOTHING to do with what my son wrote which shows how irrational you have become in this argument. My son killed a lamb quickly with no torture or pain.

We are not arguing about animal exploitation or torture. I do not support cruel to animals. If you associate my son's killing of a sheep for food for a family with cruel testing of animals and torture of stock, you are way out of line, irrational in your argument and obviously desperate to find an argument which alludes you and the audience.

My son simply showed how a lamb is slaughtered and skinned and prepared for food. It is done a million times a day. It is something done a thousand times in the Bible, and it is something that Americans hide from their eyes, and there is nothing wrong with showing it.

I will not — as you want me to do — cater to extreme liberals and post-modern humanists by being dishonest, denying the real world, refusing to see what really happens when we kill and eat an animal. This is all just mushy American sentimentalism — akin to putting our old people in nursing homes so we don't have to see illness and death. We protect ourselves from the unpleasant

and allow the feminization and queasiness of the modern age to taint the way life is in the real world. I for one want nothing to do with wimpy sentimentalism.

You do Prof Virey a great disservice in your inaccurate and ill thought polemic. Your journey from the baptist sect was long and arduous and you now stand in an entirely different place. Perhaps you should study some of the Catholic literature supporting Mr Virey's thoughtfully held and sincere beliefs.

No, Virey does everyone a disservice by attempting to force everyone into an unrealistic view of the world according to his design. He wants to cater to the PETA-minded modern, mushy-minded liberal and impost his skewed view of the world on everyone else. People like this often become loud bullies.

Now for a few additional thoughts:

- 1) Consider that in the Garden of Eden the first animal slaughtered was not killed and skinned by men but by God himself to provide coverings for men (Gen 3:21). It was God who set the standard for the current age.
- 2) God drowned all the animals in Noah's flood without seeming concern for their agony of drowning.
- 3) God specifically gave men animals to oversee, control and to eat: Gen 9:2-3: "The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every bird of the air, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea; into your hand they are delivered. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you; and as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything."
- 4) Never are we told in Scripture or in the teaching of the Church that we can not, or even should not kill and eat animals.

- 5) Jesus ate lamb, fish and other animal foods. He told parables which included the incidents of killing the fatted calf or a father feeding his son a fish or egg (Luke 11:11-12). He did so with no implication that such activity was wrong, cruel or frowned upon.
- 6) John the Baptist ate locusts. Would these be considered part of the ban? What about fish? The disciples would be dismayed to find they were going contrary to God's wishes.
- 7) I find it interesting that the Eucharist is the changing of a vegan diet of bread and wine into a carnivore's diet of flesh and blood. I would have thought Jesus could have been more sensitive to the post-modern sentimentalist. Rather, he tells us we must eat the Flesh and the Blood to have eternal life.
- 8) Meat and fish and animal products (milk, yogurt, cheese, eggs, etc.) are a main source of the world's diet and protein source. Can you imagine what would happen if we suddenly mandated that no one in the world ever again eat anything from an animal? I shudder to think.
- 9) In India, where 1 billion Indians are Hindus, they avoid eating meat because they think it is sacred — even that animals are gods — and therefore *their* veganism is a form of idolatry. I don't think Virey would condone that, but such is the ideology of the world's largest population of morally-imposed vegetarianism.

The assertion was made that Christian ascetics were often vegans. To which I reply *they were not*, at least not in the modern use of the word. In modern terms, they were not vegans. Veganism today is usually not simply a simple diet but an ideology which says that eating meat is cruelty, exploitation of animals and is morally wrong.

Christian ascetics ate a simple diet as a form of fasting and penance. They did NOT avoid eating because they thought eating an animal was immoral. To do so would be to say Jesus had

acted immorally. They avoided meat because it was an extravagant pleasure.

Just as they would not wear a mink coat because it was an extravagance, so they did not eat meat because it too was considered - not a sin or immoral act - but an extravagance. For most of history meat, like a fur coat, was an expensive indulgence of the rich.

This distinction is important in the discussion of Christianity and veganism. The ascetics were not vegans in the same sense or for the same reason as most modern ideological vegans. They simply ate a simple diet which avoided luxuries like meat (and fur coats)."

I could go on and on but find no need to do so. The vegan position as imposed by extremists, whether Catholics or not, is contrary to Scripture, the Church, reason, the real world and more.

If Professor Virey came to my house for dinner, I would respect his wishes and sentiments and I would kill some lettuce and sever some tomatoes from their life-giving vines to serve him a vegan dinner. We would crush some grain and smash some grapes and have bread and wine.

I have no problem at all if he wishes to eat in this manner. More power to him. My problem is when he imposes his ridiculous position on others as though it is a moral mandate. My problem is when he criticizes my son for an honest and thought-provoking article as though he is a murderer, animal torturer and sinner for eating a lamb. THAT is what I disagree with and will actively oppose.