

We are the only living creature that doesn't have to eat. Since survival depends on eating, this means we're the only living creature that doesn't have to survive --i.e., can choose not to survive, i.e. prefer something else to survival. Our distinctiveness is not in reason, as Aristotle thought, or in tool-making/using, as Darwin thought; it's in our power to decide, "consciously" and in "rational conscience," against eating. Fasting, therefore, is the primordially human act; avoidable crucifixion [Jesus choosing not to eat the Last Lunch] is the consummate human act....These thoughts went through my head as two weeks ago in court for seven hours I was the religion expert for a welfare family of six unable to get welfare--unable to get food--because of a religious conviction against submitting the children to Social Security numbering....This thinksheet is about the control-effectiveness of "the principalities and powers" ["the Beast" of Rev.13, in the court case] vis-a-vis food, which has always been a human problem and has become in our time a global biospheric problem.

1. Since the RCC has never been a threat to my mouth in either direction--words coming out or food going in--some of Hans Küng's great ON BEING A CHRISTIAN [Doubleday/76] seemed distant from me--as would not be true of Roman Catholics in general, and especially not true of Roman Catholics whose food supply is related to Church decisions. Küng is in that general category, but not that special category: his food comes not from the Roman Church but from the German government--as Luther's food supply, which he despised in comparison with his convictions, finally came from the German government: vis-a-vis food and in many other ways, Küng is our century's Luther (and the Church, thank God, is determined not to make the same mistake twice).

2. The humanity of our humanity has always depended on a minuscule percentage of our population. Yesterday [22Dec76] a CUNY divisional head, when I asked him if he'd stand up for what he believes if he weren't tenured [which he is], said "Of course not! You think I'm stupid?" If it takes tenure to give him courage to act like a human being, is he a human being? But if the System can knock off human beings one by one and thus preserve it's inhumanity, isn't tenure a pro-human structure? "P. and p." works on both sides of that, and all other, issues!....Which brings us down to me, who've eaten first off conservative-Establishment ecclesial institutions and then-now off liberal-Establishment ecclesial institutions. As for my mouth, I've watched the outflow of words enough--sometimes barely enough, sometimes not enough--to balance courage with food-intake, and have always been tempted to cynicism when others've done the same ["sociology of knowledge," social sanctions]. [On the positive side, I'm defensible as one who has human and Christian concerns for community and reconciliation, but that's another subject.] If I'm to let the grace of God free me from food-fear, I must violate some class tabus --"class" meaning both socioeconomic and sociopolitical [the latter, for me the left-leaning liberal American-and-world mind, which is certainly basically mine, though my heart is traditional-Christian]....NB: I'm using "food" both literally and tropically: I fear ostracism, losing social food, more than body-starvation.

3. POPULATION MYTHS are examples of what I feel I must come cleaner on than I have in the past. I've kept my mouth shut in the presence of ideological claptrap downing white males in the interest of upping some other class or sector of our species. I hear a South African black [employed by New Jersey!] spewing such antihuman nonsense that I hope the Vorster government doesn't fail--then I feel guilty, or at least uneasy, about my often too easy enemy-identification. I see women prostituting themselves for the fleshpots of male-sick power, and I seldom cry out: I'm sacred of being called "racist," "sexist," "classist," etc.: a lot of my behavior is controlled by slogan-fear. Congress spends 15 times as much to keep infants alive as it does to prevent their conception, and I hold my peace for fear of being accused of favoring "genocide" for nonwhites [today's OpEd, NY Congressman Jas. S. Scheuer]. If a theological seminary is not a place where such matters can be faced honestly [in light of fact] and compassionately [in light of gospel], where is such a place?