

FROM OUR DIRECTOR OF FAITH FORMATION

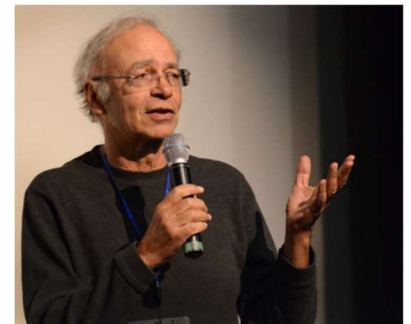
June 25, 2023

The Importance of the Gut Check

Last week we talked about the importance of checking your work and not getting caught up in abstract ideas. This week I promised to discuss a particular case of this.

During my junior year at Fordham, I had a unique opportunity to attend a pro-life/pro-choice conference at Princeton University. Princeton is home to a notable philosopher named Dr. Peter Singer. Dr. Singer was a brilliant man, but also a clear example of how sometimes our intellects can lead us into territory that our common sense tells us is wrong.

During the conference, Dr. Singer spoke for the pro-choice position but what he had to say horrified even the pro-choice side. He held that logically it was permissible to “abort” children up until the age of two. You might expect that a man who advocated infanticide would be angry, mad, or consumed by evil passions. He was none of those things. He had simply followed a few ideas to their conclusion. Dr. Singer believed that there was no significant difference between human beings and animals other than their degree of intelligence. A dolphin was sufficiently intelligent to merit dignified treatment. A two year old human being was not. Thus you could morally kill cabbages, sheep, and toddlers, but not dolphins, chimpanzees and forty year olds.



While there was something admirable about the willingness of Dr. Singer to own the logical consequences of his own position, there was something disturbing about it as well. Most people when hearing Dr. Singer advocate infanticide got a little queasy. Some people would write this queasiness off as the results of social conditioning that we just have to get over. On the contrary, such queasiness is there for a reason. We call it natural law.

When God created human beings, he wired human nature in a very particular way. When we live according to our nature, we thrive. When we violate the natural law, our nature rebels, things feel off, and we shrivel up as human beings. Our intellect can lead us to imagine all kinds of logical possibilities, but when we hit a conclusion that our gut tells us is wrong, we should pay attention. As admirable as it is to be logical, our gut reaction is a good test that we would do well not to ignore.

—Joe Moreshead