

Dear All,

There is a sharp difference between what is known as *homo sapiens* and *homo technicus*. Sapiens asks first and last *What is necessary?* Technicus asks *How can I get what I want?* Sapiens studies the universe and studies himself to find the spot of harmony and interactive resonance. Technicus consults his own will and confronts the world as it is as if it were an obstacle, rather than a home or a partnership.

It can seem sometimes that Sapiens seems to be stuck in a world of biologism and wives' tales and last-century science. Technicus knows only the limits of his tools; are they strong enough, fine enough, efficient enough. Sapiens values cooperation. Technicus lays out plans for operations. Sometimes those operations are medical; sometimes, military.

Pope Francis has frequently pointed out that Technicus, bent on the fulfillment of his own desires, ignores entirely the important matters of 'waste' and 'unintended consequences' and 'collateral damage' and 'human cost' (*homo economicus* worries about the financial implications).

Sometimes, Technicus views even his own flesh as a reality hostile to his will, his appetites.

If you examine the position of the Catholic Church on almost every issue of reproductive rights and procedures; if you take a look at the church's current position on such 'technical' solutions to societal in international interaction as capital punishment or nuclear warfare, or such agonizing medical matters as end-of-life care or care of the unborn, you will discover that those positions are always taken in favor of harmonization, mutuality, hospitality, reconciliation. It is true that the Church occasionally agrees that the 'ways and means' to these goals are not immediately clear and that time is against the survival of those who prefer those values to a merely technical solution to a problem. But the Church's agreement does not amount to an endorsement of the expedients so loved by Technicus; rather, the agreement is but a recognition of the frailty of human creativity in the face of seemingly insoluble contradictions.

Prop 5 (you knew that I would not leave that alone or ignore it!) espouses a 'technical' approach to enlarging a woman's freedom – abortion. It clearly does not ask about the 'waste' issue – the life of a child. Nor (even as it admits that such a cost is real) does it ask about the societal cost – shrinking birth rates and the eugenic cancellation of any life deemed 'not worth living'.

It seems a pity that this generation's liberty can be had only at the cost of the life of the next one.

Prop 5 will probably pass all the necessary steps to become part of the constitution of Vermont. That is too bad.

But that does not let us off the hook in the tug-o'-war between Sapiens and Technicus. Human thriving, at any level, is impossible where there is no value but self-will, no agency but that that of technology, any flourishing belongs only to those who start out with all the advantages.

Christ whom the Advent hymn addresses as *Sapientia*, warns that 'whatsoever you do to the least and last you do to me'.

But more than his warning, we must heed his promise and seek the 'technological' means to achieve it: Blessed are those who make peace; they are the children of God.

Really and truly blessedly yours,
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