NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

Eradicating smoking as a model for action

Peter Feuerherd | May. 21, 2009 NCR Today

'Tis spring and those of us who suffer from allergies recoil from all that green growing stuff out there.

Even in the concrete jungle of Manhattan, the onslaught of nature attacks our eyes and makes life miserable.

This time of year in particular, as my eyes water and I sneeze (my family can attest to going as far as a dozen loud snorts, all in rapid-fire succession), I notice, walking behind cigarette smokers on the streets, how much their smoke bothers me.

The combination of allergens and cigarette smoke is a nasty combination. Duh, seems pretty obvious. But I wonder why I am more bothered than ever by cigarette smoke. And I think the reason is that we are all a lot less use to the whiff of tobacco in public places.

Think about the old days: smoke in subway cars, movie theaters, airplanes, Humphrey Bogart glamorizing the habit on screen, doctors enlisted to extol the virtues of Camels in magazine ads. What were we thinking?

Which brings me to President Obama's speech at Notre Dame in which he called for common ground on abortion. The whole societal shift on tobacco indicates that attitudes can change by the force of public pressure, sanction and support (think of nicotine patches and smoking cessation clinics). The result is a substantial shift in attitudes and a public health commitment to eradicate smoking.

The model is there, visibly successful. Would it be possible to find common ground on a similar campaign regarding alternatives to abortion?

Source URL (retrieved on *04/01/2015 - 22:16*): http://ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/eradicating-smoking-model-action