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Opt out of animal cruelty in factory farms -- Go vegan!

Carol Meyer | Feb. 9, 2011 Eco Catholic

I doubt if any of you readers are inherently cruel or approve of cruelty. I?m sure you would intervene if you saw someone being cruel to another person or to an animal. And if you did nothing out of cowardice, indifference, or selfishness?and you easily could have?I?m sure you would consider this wrong, a sin of omission. What if I were to tell you that you have just such a choice right now?

As I write this, billions of animals on U.S. factory farms are suffering physical and mental pain. Considered mere commodities and ?things? to satisfy the palate of meat-loving Americans, they receive no humane treatment (no matter how much smooth-talking PR agents of the industry deny this). Never mind that they too are created in the image and likeness of God, that they feel pain just as much as we do, or that they suffer mental anguish over separation from their offspring or never being able to romp freely.

You may be thinking, ?Oh, it?s really not that bad.? I can assure you that it is, and even worse than you can imagine. Virtually all of the cows, pigs, chickens, and turkeys on factory farms live in overcrowded conditions, hardly able to turn around, many of them in cages. They are routinely dehorned, debeaked, de-tailed, and castrated?which are terribly painful procedures --without anesthetics. Unwanted baby chicks are thrown alive into grinders or in bags to suffocate. Milk cows, forced to remain pregnant and producing unnatural quantities of milk, their udders dragging and sore, their feet swollen from constant standing on concrete, their bones weak from calcium depletion, give out in a mere four years. One egg represents 32 hours of suffering for a chicken. Veal calves are chained at the neck, never able to move or see the light of day. Cattle are prodded with electricity and ducks and geese have tubes thrust down their throats to force feed them for the sick delicacy of foie gras. Need I go on?

You owe it to yourself to find out all the facts about the animal industry, no matter how horrific or upsetting they may be. You don?t want to be in collusion with this corporate nightmare by complacently eating the flesh of these tortured animals. Jesuit Father John Dear puts it bluntly, ?If we?re eating meat, we are paying people to be cruel to animals.? Which of us wants that on our conscience? Fortunately, there is a simple way for us to sleep peacefully and guilt-free at night, knowing we are not part of this widespread violence to animals. We can become a vegan and adopt a plant-based diet.

Hundreds of thousands of Christians have done it throughout history and more are embracing it every day once they know the truth. I urge you to read an enlightening booklet called *Christianity and Vegetarianism: Pursuing the Nonviolence of Jesus*by Fr. John Dear. You can call PETA at 757-622-7382 for a free copy. Once you make the spiritual connections, your food choices will become clear. Feeling self-satisfied in eating meat because Jesus ate fish (which we have no way of knowing for sure) will no longer work.

Making the switch to a vegan diet can be easy and joyful with God?s grace. It?s the right thing to do. God and the animals will love you for it.

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