



◆ FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE ◆

William Murchison on
JOHN T. NOONAN, JR.: A HUMANE PERSONALITY

John T. Noonan, Jr. on
ABORTION IN THE AMERICAN CONTEXT

◆ SYMPOSIUM: WHOLE LIFE V. PRO-LIFE? ◆

Mary Meehan • Nicholas Frankovich • David Mills • Jack Fowler
Fr. David Poeking • Rebecca Bratten Weiss • Brandon McGinley
Kathryn Jean Lopez • Kristan Hawkins • Charles Camosy • Anne
Hendershott • Aimee Murphy • Kevin Williamson • Matthew Schmitz

Roland C. Warren on
WHY WE SHOULD BE PRO ABUNDANT LIFE

Mathew Lu on
THE MORAL WRONGNESS OF SUICIDE

Ellen Wilson Fielding on
HUMAN PERSONS IN WESTERN LITERATURE

Chris Rostenberg on
THE DAY SOCRATES MET A PRO-CHOICER PART II

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Booknotes: Brian Caulfield reviews Racketeer for Life

Maria McFadden Maffucci reviews God's Wild Flowers

From the HLR Blog: Anne Sullivan

Appendices: Mene Ukueberuwa • Noemie Emery

ABOUT THIS ISSUE . . .

. . . As soon as we heard of Judge John Noonan's death in April, we set aside space to reprint "Abortion in the American Context" (page 11), originally published in our Winter 1977 issue. Other work by then-Professor Noonan had already appeared in the *Review*, including "Why a Constitutional Amendment?" in the debut issue (Winter 1975). In early May our senior editor William Murchison called and asked me if he might do an appreciation of the late judge, whose "remarkable achievement," Murchison writes in these pages, "was lifting to public notice . . . the God-to-man connection; humanity as special . . . and therefore due unremitting government protection." ("A Humane Personality," page 5). In this issue, we also remember Mr. Thomas Bolan, our former board member and legal counsel, whose unremitting commitment to protecting unborn life was manifest in his longtime pro-bono work for the Human Life Foundation (page 20).

For over four decades, editors of this journal have monitored the abortion debate. Several years ago, when I was researching our archive to compile the anthologies *The Debate Since Roe* and *The Reach of Roe*, I realized that the essential elements of that debate were present from the beginning. However, as you will see in the symposium featured here, the arguments are rediscovered and, to use a popular term, reimagined by subsequent generations. Many thanks to all of those who participated in this lively discussion, which we have titled "Whole Life v. Pro-life?" (page 21). And then there is "Why We Must Become Pro Abundant Life," an article submitted by Roland C. Warren which fit perfectly here. Mr. Warren, a new contributor, is President and CEO of Care Net, one of the nation's largest networks of pregnancy resource centers. Other newcomers include these symposium contributors: Fr. David Poeking, a Pennsylvania pastor, Rebecca Bratten Weiss, an Ohio academic, Aimee Murphy, who heads Rehumanize International and journalists Kevin Williamson (*National Review*) and Matthew Schmitz (*First Things*). Welcome to you all.

The Foundation's EXPECT initiative, an outreach to college students and young professionals, is now in its second year and receiving high praise. In "Loving Them Both: Being Pro-Woman and Pro-Life," Mene Ukueberuwa reviews EXPECT's most recent event: an evening with Serrin Foster, president of Feminists for Life, on June 1. Our thanks to *National Review* for permission to reprint Mr. Ukueberuwa's article (*Appendix A*, page 93) and to the *Washington Examiner*, where Noemi Emery's "Vogue, the Fashion Victim" first appeared (*Appendix B*, page 95). Finally, kudos to Ifeoma Anunkor, EXPECT's young director, for successfully getting the *Human Life Review*—print issue as well as digital—into the hands of a younger, but no less committed anti-abortion audience.

ANNE CONLON
MANAGING EDITOR



the HUMAN LIFE REVIEW

Summer 2017

Vol. XLIII, No. 3

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Published by THE HUMAN LIFE FOUNDATION, INC. Editorial Office, 353 Lexington Avenue, Suite 802, New York, N.Y. 10016. Phone: (212) 685-5210. The editors will consider all manuscripts submitted, but assume no responsibility for unsolicited material. Editorial and subscription inquiries, and requests for reprint permission should be sent directly to our editorial office. Subscription price: \$40 per year; Canada and other foreign countries: \$50 (U.S. currency). ISSN 0097-9783.

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INTRODUCTION

This past spring, we learned of the death of one of the original editors of our *Review*, the brilliant Judge John T. Noonan, Jr. (October 1926-April 2017), who is remembered in William Murchison's sterling tribute as "one of America's most thoughtful and generous-minded federal judges." Noonan "surprised," because his convictions did not line up into an agenda, "offering voice (and naturally) vote to constituencies of one kind and another." The *New York Times* obituary said Noonan "defied ideological pigeon-holing on profound issues like assisted suicide, the death penalty, civil liberties and illegal immigration." Funny, the *Times* didn't mention abortion, the subject of his 1979 book, *A Private Choice: Abortion in America in the Seventies*. On that subject, writes Murchison, Noonan "felt in his soul, and did not scruple to suppress the feeling, that abortion was—is—a moral horror." And he "most plainly set forth his thinking" in our own pages, in his 1977 article "Abortion in the American Context," which we reprint next.

Re-reading this decades-old essay brings a kind of shock: it's *all there*, already: The horror of *Roe* ("An alligator in Avocado Creek, Florida, is entitled to more protection than a five-month old fetus anywhere in America"); the injustice of federal funding ("As American citizens we are compelled by court mandate to support, to finance this slaughter"), and even the debate over infanticide. Noonan writes about the case of abortionist Dr. Edelin, convicted of manslaughter in 1975 for "negligence in the care of an aborted child born alive"; who was made a "martyr" by abortion advocates: they "want the right to kill the child who is mature enough and strong enough to escape the homicidal movements of the physician." (Edelin's conviction was subsequently overturned by the Massachusetts Supreme Court.) The Roman Catholic Noonan also minces no words here about Catholics who won't take a stand against abortion: "How shameful is the conduct of those Catholics who resent the leadership of their bishops and out of fear of being considered cloddish peasants" take the "opposite position . . . How pharisaical is the speech of those Catholics who reprove the excesses of the 'pro-life' movement while keeping themselves aloof from the involvement in the struggle."

Again, how much has changed? The debate over the perceived "excesses" of the pro-life movement, and about how Catholics ought to protest abortion is not only still relevant but has heated up considerably since the 2016 elections. These issues are powerfully present in the wider scope of our new symposium, "Whole Life v. Pro-Life?", pp. 21-47. We asked our participants to respond to one or more of three questions (you can read them on page 21); their responses . . . well, as one editor quipped, "I would not want to have them all in the same room!" There are fierce convictions here about the future of the pro-life movement, and how best to

defend and protect human life going forward.

Expanding the moniker discussion further is our next article, about Care Net's "Pro Abundant Life" messaging. Founded in 1975, Care Net is a nonprofit organization that supports one of the largest networks of pregnancy centers in North America. Its president, Roland Warren, starts off with another debate often played out in the movement and in our pages: Should pro-life messaging focus on the unborn child, or the mother? *Neither* is sufficient, he warns: even pro-choice activists admit that the fetus is a "person," but now say his or her life is one "worth sacrificing"; and, although there is overwhelming evidence that abortion is bad for women, getting this message out is an "uphill battle" because the "news media and the entertainment industry have perpetrated the deception that abortion empowers women and those who oppose abortion oppose women's rights." He points out that framing abortion as a "women's issue" isolates the woman; whereas abortion is not solely about a woman's immediate choice, but about all that led to that decision and all that will come after. Abortion not only does not solve the poverty, relationship issues or sexual abuse that may lead to it, but also harms marriage and families, and undermines fatherhood. Indeed, abortion is "an attack on the sanctity of marriage and family as God designed." Care Net's "pro abundant life" message is a "holistic" approach, which emphasizes marriage as "both a deterrent to abortion *and* a source of hope after life is chosen."

We shift now to end-of life issues: professor of philosophy Matthew Lu asks why polls show that while most Americans morally oppose suicide, almost half of Americans accept "doctor-assisted suicide." He guesses that "they simply don't consider doctor-assisted suicide to be a type of suicide at all," but an "entirely different sort of act." And he sets out here to explain why they are wrong. He argues that the wrongness of suicide—and thus of assisted suicide—is better expressed in the "older name" for suicide: self-murder. Murder is "the intentional killing of an innocent person"; Lu argues that suicidal persons are still morally innocent unless and until they commit the act of killing. While acknowledging the role compassion must play in end-of-life debates, Lu nonetheless insists that "reason and the demands of justice" constrain emotions, and protect innocent lives. The current moral confusion is a symptom, senior editor Ellen Wilson Fielding might say, of our culture's increasing distance from the concept Western civilization has from the classical era "almost to the present" developed: an understanding of the "uniqueness and value of the individual human person," as well as his identity as the "capstone of God's creation." In "Human Persons in Western Literature," Fielding points to the essential elements found in the great classical epics, in the tragedies of Shakespeare, and in the 19th century domestic novels of Jane Austen and George Eliot. Common to all are themes of individual bravery, self-sacrifice, and the importance of moral choices—life and death decisions that matter not just to the individual but to humanity itself. Modern literature, she writes, because of the social upheavals of recent decades, largely reflects a "shrinking—a trivialization—of our understanding of human choice, destiny, or purpose." It is

INTRODUCTION

fitting that Fielding is followed by Chris Rostenberg's "The Day Socrates Met a Pro-choicer II," an imaginary scene where pro-choicer "Diane" engages in a dialogue with the great Socrates himself. Part II is a masterful illustration of how deep the deceit is, and how ignorant many average Americans are about the breadth of *Roe v. Wade* and how its accompanying *Doe* decision made abortion on demand, throughout nine months, the law of the land. You will find out whether Diane, who gets quite the education here, accepts the truth or recedes back to emotionally fueled blindness.

In Booknotes, Brian Caulfield reviews the memoir of a living "iconic pro-life figure," Joseph Scheidler: *Racketeer for Life: Fighting the Culture of Death from the Sidewalk to the Supreme Court*. Next is your editor's review of Dr. Pia Matthews' *God's Wild Flowers: Saints with Disabilities*, a different kind of saints book, about the men and women who found meaning and achieved great holiness in spite of physical or mental disabilities. Our "From the HLR Blog" selection is a beautiful reflection by Anne Sullivan, "Trusting Ourselves to Trust God;" her personal story about difficult pregnancies and how she learned that the value of her children "did not lie in their health but in their mere existence." We wrap up the issue with two appendices: first, Mene Ukueberuwa's report on the *Human Life Review*'s EXPECT event, June 1st, at which president of Feminists for Life Serrin Foster spoke about "Loving them Both: Being Pro-Woman and Pro Life"; and then, Noemie Emery's snappy column on *Vogue* and how the magazine has become a glossy propaganda tool for the abortion lobby.

Finally, on page 20, we remember a dear friend and colleague, Thomas Bolan, who died on May 12 at 92; a man who embodied the kind of bravery, perseverance and virtue worthy of one of Ellen Wilson Fielding's literary heroes.

MARIA MCFADDEN MAFFUCCI
EDITOR

John T. Noonan, Jr.:

A Humane Personality

William Murchison

I'm not sure how he got away with it, actually—Catholic, smart, and, so much of the time, gloriously right.

That's the modern definition, you sometimes gather, of "unconstitutional"—the kind of thing that throws Ivy League law professors and *New York Times* columnists into states of fury: their notion being that "sectarianism" is a patch of ground lying dangerously beyond the fence posts set out by the founders to protect the sheep from mitred wolves and polyestered preachers.

And what is "sectarianism," apparently? The religious view of human life, as embedded in our laws and ways and modes and habits: mindful of human obligations to God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

All this notwithstanding, the Hon. John Thomas Noonan, Jr. did sort of get away with functioning as one of America's most thoughtful and generous-minded federal judges. That was possibly in part because he surprised. He felt in his soul, and did not scruple to suppress the feeling, that abortion was—is—a moral horror. "The issue," he wrote for the *Human Life Review* in 1977, "cannot be compromised. It cannot be solved by dollars. It will not go away. It is a test of character and a litmus test of hypocrisy for candidates for public office." And yet he spoke from the bench on behalf of refugees and antiwar protesters.

There was a strangeness to all this. The discrete moving parts never, by modern standards, clicked into place, making plain as day what he was up to. A judge is presumed to have an agenda, opening the way ahead or shutting down a way abandoned due to New Events; offering voice and (naturally) vote to constituencies of one kind and another. A modern judge is as likely as not to have constituencies, in the same way lawmakers have them: one more proof of the constitutional tremors that have undone in part the functional distinctions among the branches of government.

We need to look at the matter with attention. First, some background. It is possible, if not wholly likely, that various readers of the *Human Life Review*

William Murchison writes from Dallas for Creators Syndicate and is a senior editor of the *Human Life Review*. He is currently working on *Moral Disarmament*, a book examining the consequences of our moral disagreements. *The Cost of Liberty*, his biography of John Dickinson, an influential but neglected Founding Father of the United States, was published in 2013 by ISI Books.

lack acquaintance with the career of Judge John Noonan. Well, then. He was born in Boston in 1926 and graduated from Harvard 19 years later, Phi Beta Kappa. Lord Almighty! What would most of us have had to say to him at the watercooler? See the Big Game last night? Er, umm . . . And yet (though I never laid eyes on him), the sense is strong that Noonan's intelligence was just one feature of a remarkably integrated personality, long in human sympathies, deep in human understanding. It was a humane personality—of which more in a moment.

Noonan, who took degrees from Catholic University of America (M.A., Ph.D.) and Harvard Law School, came to general attention as a law professor, first at Notre Dame, and a few years later at the University of California-Berkeley. Notre Dame, despite his defection to the West Coast, bestowed on him in 1984 its Laetare Medal for distinguished service to the Faith, carried out in one's professional capacity. Notre Dame's flexibility as to the definition of "service" drew startled attention in 2016 when the school chose as medal recipient the country's unapologetically, almost boastfully, pro-abortion vice president, Joe Biden, "for honest engagement with contentious issues, vigorous debate, and responsible compromise." Biden, in a wonderfully political moment, shared the award, and the commendation, with former House Speaker John Boehner, a Catholic of Noonan's pro-life cut. Which is enough material for us to note here by way of illustrating the moral complexities of which John Noonan was keenly aware.

In 1985, President Reagan appointed Noonan to the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals—a bench often regarded as the loosest and least restrained, judicially speaking, in all the land. He served there with distinction, taking senior status in 1996. He wrote 1,080 times in behalf of the court or in dissent. He created no scandals through feuding, fussing, or fighting with the court's dominant liberals. Indeed, you could say he surprised. He took the side of a Salvadoran woman seeking asylum to escape a military rapist and political antagonist. He temporarily blocked the execution of a murderer, questioning the competence of his psychiatric defense. In an illegal immigration case, *U.S. v. Arizona*, he deplored the state's unilateral attempt to set immigration policy. "For those sympathetic to immigrants to the United States," he wrote, "[Arizona's law] is a challenge and a chilling foretaste of what other states might attempt."

Noonan weighed in, at the same time, on more explicitly moral and cultural issues. In a 2011 case, he rebuked the exponents of assisted suicide. Washington State had passed a law banning the increasingly commended idea of securing medical aid in ending your sufferings. A U.S. district judge said the law violated due process guarantees. Noonan and another judge

overruled the lower court and reinstated the ban, with the trenchant observation that compassion for the dying could not “be the compass of a federal judge.” A unanimous U.S. Supreme Court subsequently agreed. In a 1988 case, *EEOC v. Townley Engineering and Manufacturing Co.*, Noonan sailed downwind from the Ninth Circuit’s course on the religious rights of business owners. The court disallowed the requirement of attendance at prayer meetings for employees as somehow violative of employee rights. The firm had to exclude religion as a factor in workplace participation? Not as Noonan saw it with some clarity: “Just as a corporation enjoys the right of free speech guaranteed by the First Amendment, so a corporation enjoys the right guaranteed by the First Amendment to exercise religion.” In the 2014 case of *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby*, the U.S. Supreme Court would make just that point.

His moral convictions ran deep. Not that he sought to impose them by fiat. He sought their recognition by the larger society as part of the once-normative acknowledgement that society is more—far more—than an ill-assorted collection of desires. At the bottom of it all is Something, not Nothing. John T. Noonan, Jr. spent energy and mental acuity, of which he seems to have possessed bottomless supplies, in attempts to discover what we were all about as a tribe, a people, a collectivity. He wrote books about bribes and usury and slavery and lawyers and contraception and abortion. It is hard to imagine he ever stopped thinking, inasmuch as the great number of public topics wanting analysis admitted of no rest in turning them over for examination. Was there during his judicial time a less arid, more fertile mind on the bench?

When it came to abortion, as it so often does in our era, contrary to the practices and thinking of his young manhood in a very different Boston than today’s, Noonan came to know the lay of the land. I hope it will be written down somewhere, and published, what he may have said on January 22, 1973, when the *Roe v. Wade* court made short work of religion’s and American culture’s claims as to the special nature of human life. He was clearly aghast. Aghast and not even a judge yet; with no word to put in with an authority approaching that of Mr. Justice Harry Blackmun.

He most plainly set forth his thinking, so far as I know, in the pages of this journal, in his 1977 article, “Abortion in the American Context.” Three paragraphs in, he had voiced the conviction that “Until the child in the womb is viable, the Supreme Court”—we will wish to recall this was barely four years after *Roe*—“has determined that it is to be treated as a thing, as a zero, as entitled to less protection against destruction than a bird or a blade of grass in a national park. An alligator in Avocado Creek, Florida, is entitled to more protection than a five-month-old fetus anywhere in America.” That

would be putting it about as baldly as is possible.

“Our legal situation then,” he continued, “is abortion on demand as the law of the land and killing after birth as a legally disputed practice. Meanwhile the advocates of outright infanticide grow. . . . The massive lifetaking assault, now constitutionally protected, constitutes only a portion of the situation in which we live. As American citizens we are compelled by court mandate to support, to finance this slaughter. . . . If abortion is a constitutional liberty, if abortion on demand is the law of the land, Congress cannot chill the liberty or frustrate the demand by a discriminatory prohibition.” This was getting near the heart of the matter—and of the problem.

Our highest court, on which had sat the likes of John Marshall, and on which the founders had depended for the arbitration of deep grievances, had struck off its balance wheel and declared suddenly for the Spirit of the Age. The people, it seemed, would have it so. Or anyway didn’t care deeply enough to object to what the justices had done in *Roe*. Noonan’s corrective enterprise, that of “making the Constitution unmistakable in its protection of the unborn,” seems in reflection a sort of classroom exercise designed for exegesis. We were to amend the Constitution and restore state power to protect unborn life. Yes? How was that going to be done? Constitutional amendment no longer happens. It’s dead. Too many devices and expedients stand in the way: the political process most of all. We tried the amendment route with regard to abortion. Nothing made it past the congressional roadblock, any more than amendments to allow voluntary school prayer made it past in slightly earlier times. The people had ceased to care. They were not up to the task of telling their lawmakers to get something like this done. Abortion, from the national perspective, was no big deal. Prof. Noonan, as he was in 1977, was talking like a law professor.

And in another way he was not.

I suggested earlier the presence of something different in John T. Noonan Jr. as public advocate: a quality not on display in the attitudes of his fellow Laetare Medal winner Joe Biden. Genial Joe’s attitude as a practitioner of politics was, Let’s get some kind of deal done here; I’ll give you a little, you give me some (if not more), and we’ll see whether we can’t move along to a place of mutual fulfillment. So politics works now and always has. However, working things out isn’t the same thing as working them with the highest aim in mind. You do get the impression of a qualitative difference between writing off the unborn as objects of indifference and, on the other hand, embracing them and their prospects, acknowledging them as constituents, like ourselves, of the human enterprise.

The human enterprise, so to call it, is a thing we only randomly and with

some pain require our lawmakers and judges to take note of. Personal identity, especially the sexual kind, is what we have decided counts in place of older kinds; chiefly, identity as children of God.

The remarkable achievement of John Noonan as judge and scholar was lifting to public notice—not always successfully, witness abortion—the God-to-man connection; humanity as special in a way the Avocado Creek alligators might not be called special and therefore due unremitting government protection. In Noonan’s thinking and writing, the civic and citizenship essentials seemed to convey moral truth and legal truth; companions on the journey; self-reinforcing agents. You look on man, you look on woman (now that we tend to see the two “genders” as distinct from each other) and you see, if you are really looking, more than a set of body parts and anxieties. You see, if you are wearing spectacles with an Rx like John T. Noonan’s, what the Church sees: the work of God. Seeing it, you see also what you must do. You must work for the protection of the weak and the helpless. You must show mercy to the poor and the oppressed. You should have a special care for immigrants and refugees.

The essence of John T. Noonan, Jr. was a mind, as well as a heart, that saw these realities with great clarity. His humanism, said the California historian Kevin Starr, was “enlivened by religion”—religion he could not imagine as distinct from the experience of being a modern American. The hard secular mind, which is generally a political mind—less interested in theology proper than in the exclusion of obstructions to “progress” of a sort—bangs on and on about Mr. Jefferson’s “wall” between church and state, and about the perils of religious incitement. It was Noonan’s gift to understand the irrelevance of preachments about religion’s irrelevances. You take a thing affirmed as true for thousands and thousands of years and you exclude it from debate or even mention? Where does that get us? It gets us to the door of clinics where the origins of tiny future men and tiny future women are inadmissible as evidence of their value to themselves or anyone else.

That the Constitution is not the Holy Bible, nor the Holy Bible the Constitution—this we know very well. We know the danger of trying to impose religious “standards” rarely seen in this country on account of their all-too-great familiarity in other lands. John Noonan was anything but a religious oppressor. He argued for free thought and expression. Religious freedom and religious truth, by his reckoning, walked together. We needed them both—handled with care and delicacy.

I have said John Noonan, in our perplexed time, got away with things you might not have expected him to get away with. That was part of the surprise

WILLIAM MURCHISON

element in his makeup—his brains, his faith, his good will, combined creatively, not to say with great winsomeness; enough of it to excite admiration and respect. That which he has left behind, in writings, in thought, in inspiration, may come to surprise us in new ways. You never know what the Lord is up to—a proposition to which Judge John T. Noonan, Jr. would likely have assented with open heart and glad mind.



In May of 1979, William F. Buckley, Jr., Malcolm Muggeridge, and then Professor John T. Noonan, Jr. co-hosted a testimonial dinner in honor of our founding editor, James P. McFadden, and his work in defense of the unborn. Here they are, listening to Mr. McFadden's remarks.

Abortion in the American Context

John T. Noonan, Jr.

I mean to set out here the abortion problem as it actually exists in America and I shall argue for the response which should be made to it within the context of the American tradition of pluralism and constitutional democracy.

First, then, the situation as it exists. Since January 22, 1973, the date of *Roe* and *Doe*, abortion on demand has been the law of the land.¹ That is, since that date it has been constitutionally impermissible to regulate by law the practice of abortion in any significant respect. In making decisions the Supreme Court normally balances one competing interest against another and strikes a compromise according some recognition to each. But the balance the Court has struck here has tilted so far in recognition of the abortion-seeker that nothing is left to be accorded the fetus.

Until the child in the womb is viable, the Supreme Court has determined that it is to be treated as a thing, as a zero, as entitled to less protection against destruction than a bird or a blade of grass in a national park. An alligator in Avocado Creek, Florida, is entitled to more protection than a five-month-old human fetus anywhere in America.² So wholehearted, so intense have the Justices been in eradicating protection for the unborn that they have not only invented a right to abortion unknown in over a thousand years of Anglo-American jurisprudence; they made that right absolute, subject to none of the restraints by which even such truly basic rights as the right to free speech are channeled.³ Once a woman has decided to abort her young baby in the womb, no legal power in the United States may stand in her way.

After viability has been reached, after that imaginary point has been attained where the child might exist independently of the mother, the child remains legally vulnerable to the destructive urges of his or her parent. True, the Supreme Court, while not even then recognizing the viable child as a person, said that the State might regulate abortion in that child's interest. But the Court added an important proviso—the State must still permit an abortion for the health of the mother;⁴ and by the Court's own definition, the term "health" includes the psychological and emotional well-being of the mother.⁵ Whoever heard of an abortion being performed which was not at least aimed at the psychological and emotional well-being of the mother? Anyone familiar with the operation of California law before 1973 knows how routinely

John T. Noonan, Jr., a noted legal scholar and judge on the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, died on April 17, 2017. Long associated with the *Human Life Review*, he wrote this article for the Winter 1977 issue.

psychiatrists certified every abortion case presented to them as one where the mother's health required the abortion. The Court's apparent exception of the last two or three months of pregnancy from the rule of abortion on demand is mocked by the standards of the medical profession. If abortion may always be performed legally where the mother's health requires it, we have in fact abortion on demand for every month of the child's existence in the womb.

The advocates of abortion have gone further. They want the right to kill the child who is mature enough and strong enough to escape the homicidal movements of the physician. They want the right to kill the child who is born alive after an attempt to kill has been unsuccessful, after the abortion itself has aborted. Why else have they made a martyr out of Dr. Edelin, who was convicted of manslaughter for negligence in the care of an aborted child born alive? Twenty separate organizations favoring or fostering abortion appeared as "friends of the court" to urge the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts to reverse his conviction. Here is what one of the briefs, filed on behalf of certain medical school deans and professors, asserts on p. 12: Abortion is a procedure for "the destruction of fetal life" and this procedure "cannot be halted, once begun." Here is what the brief on behalf of Planned Parenthood of America, p. 5, proclaims: Dr. Edelin's conviction "will have an unwarranted chilling effect upon all physicians" performing abortions. Here is the statement made by the Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts at pp. 11-12: "The right of a woman is more than the right to physically terminate her pregnancy. It is the right not to be a mother, not to give birth to offspring, not to be forced to raise an unwanted child." To vindicate these rights, these friends of the court have been willing to defend the acts of a physician found not to have cared whether the boy-child he removed from the womb was alive or dead, or lived or died.⁶

Why has the national media paraded this standard type of Anglo-American manslaughter as an abortion case if the advocates of abortion do not see it as falling within abortion logically, emotionally, practically? If you can try to kill the child within the womb, why can you not finish the job if you bungle the first attempt? If you have set your heart on destroying your offspring, why should you be embarrassed by the offspring's survival? If a certain percentage of attempted abortions result in live births—they do—should not the abortionist have the security of knowing that he always has a second chance to complete his work?

Such is practice. Legally, the issue is unresolved. For over a thousand years Anglo-American jurisprudence has extended to the child outside the womb all the protections it has given the adult. Yet for the past six months the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts has failed to decide the *Edelin*

case—an ordinary case of manslaughter by gross neglect if traditional standards are applied, but an abortion case if the advocates of abortion are correct. While this respected court has hesitated or divided, the Supreme Court of the United States in *Planned Parenthood v. Danforth* has held it unconstitutional to require the physician to give the same care to the child in the womb who is slated for abortion as to a child intended to be brought forth alive.⁷ The law, it is implied, may not constitutionally respect the mother's interest in having an abortion by providing that a physician must take care that the child, delivered by abortion, live. Justice Blackmun's reference to other criminal statutes protecting the "liveborn infant" does not remove from his opinion its terrible preference: better, the Court holds, that the abortion be fatal than that the physician be held to a service to life.

Our legal situation then is abortion on demand as the law of the land and killing after birth as a legally disputed practice. Meanwhile the advocates of outright infanticide grow. Academic philosophers—Michael Tooley, for example—say with reason that there is no difference between abortion and infanticide; and they draw the logical if wicked conclusion that infanticide is to be accepted.⁸ Only recently I was invited to contribute to a symposium on "Permissible and Disputed Means of Infanticide." When our philosophers have become so corrupt as to consider some ways of infanticide disputable and others permissible, it is not surprising that our judges shrink from defending newborn human life by the traditional sanctions of the law.

The massive lifetaking assault, now constitutionally protected, constitutes only a portion of the situation in which we live. As American citizens we are compelled by court mandate to support, to finance this slaughter. We cannot have municipal hospitals providing surgical services for the poor without having these hospitals used for the practice of abortion.⁹ We cannot have state programs of medical services without funding abortions.¹⁰ We cannot have a federal program of aid for medical costs without part of that aid going to pay the costs of abortion.¹¹ Already hundreds of thousands of abortions have been made possible by the employment of federal funds; the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare has reported on them in the manner of the Defense Department giving the body count in Vietnam.¹² Congress in the most recent appropriations measure has banned the use of federal money in the Social Security program to pay for abortion. How long does anyone knowledgeable of the recent judicial decisions suppose that this expression of the popular will will stand? Only as long as it takes for some branch of Planned Parenthood of America or the American Civil Liberties Union to present the case to a federal district judge. If abortion is a constitutional

liberty, if abortion on demand is the law of the Land, Congress cannot chill the liberty or frustrate the demand by a discriminatory prohibition. The Congressional enactment is a paper move.

The advocates of abortion have not scrupled to coerce the consciences of the great majority of Americans who do not want to finance abortion. They have militantly threatened to wrest to their own purposes the hospitals and medical facilities built by the sacrifices of those who find their doctrine most abhorrent. All around the country—in Colorado, in Kentucky, in Wisconsin—they have attacked with lawsuits privately-operated hospitals and sought to force them by employment of the public force to perform abortions.¹³ They have not yet succeeded. But the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals, embracing Pennsylvania and the other Mid-Atlantic states, has ruled that a hospital which has once received federal funds from the Hill-Burton Act is a public facility, compelled thereby to comply with the requirements laid on public institutions.¹⁴ There is scarcely a religiously-sponsored hospital in the country which is not this kind of beneficiary of federal help. We may expect, then, in the Mid-Atlantic states, and in the country as a whole if the Supreme Court so rules, that the institutions founded and staffed by dedicated Christian women will be turned into places where the unborn are processed to their deaths.

Killing inside the womb, killing outside the womb, killing by personal desire, killing as a public function, killing by conviction, killing against conscience—such has been and is now the program of the pro-abortionists. We do not deal now with the nice hypotheticals which once preoccupied the thoughts of moral theologians. We do not deal now with the rare exception, the hard case, so often used to make bad law and bad arguments. We deal with killing on a large scale. We live in a country where over one and one-quarter million children are killed by their parents' desire annually. We live under governments whose public policy, forced upon them by the judges, is to pay for such killings. The country is not Orwell's 1984 or Huxley's *Brave New World*. It is the United States today.

Nor is this the end of what has been accomplished by the mandate of the Court which decrees what the law of the land shall be. It has become impossible to maintain this assault on life and still respect the structure of the family. Accordingly the Supreme Court (in the *Danforth* case, decided on July 1, 1976) struck two sharp blows against the family. First, it held that a husband had no right to protect his own unborn son or daughter from being destroyed at his wife's demand.¹⁵ Second, the Court held that a girl—even a child of twelve or thirteen—had a right to an abortion which cannot be denied her by her parents.¹⁶

Consider the sweep of these rulings and their implications for the family.

Under established law, a man has a right to conceive a child which the State arbitrarily cannot deny him¹⁷; he has a right to marry which the State cannot deny¹⁸; he has a right to adopt his own child conceived out of wedlock¹⁹; he has a right to notice and a hearing if his child is to be taken from him by his wife.²⁰ But he has no right to notice, to a hearing, or to anything at all if the child which both have conceived, which both are bound to support, which he may love, is to be destroyed at the mother's wish. With that gift for reading history inside out which has characterized his reasoning, Justice Blackmun held that the State had no power to delegate to a father as if a father's interest in his unborn child arose from delegation by the State.²¹ What idolatry of Leviathan is revealed here! What idiocy in interpreting the demands of nature! Fathers do not love their sons and daughters by delegation of the State. Fathers and mothers do not care for their children by delegation of the State. We do not breathe by delegation of the State.

Are parents not co-progenitors? Are man and wife not a unit in conceiving and in raising a child? Is a woman an atomic entity bearing by herself and destroying by herself? Yet under our law, under our Constitution as determined by this Supreme Court, a woman *alone* is the arbiter of life and death for the unborn child she and her mate have conceived.

As for relations between the generations, the Court has hinted that if a state statute let a judge decide where a minor daughter and her parents disagreed over an abortion, the Court might—might possibly—treat the statute as constitutional.²² But if the statute merely required that the parents consent before abortion on a minor child was legal, then the statute is against the law of the land. Under our system a minor child, boy or girl, cannot go to adult movies without parental permission. He or she cannot leave home against their parents' will; cannot do work they disapprove of; is legally incapable of making a contract, and cannot marry without their permission. At common law a surgeon may not remove tonsils or a mole on the skin or perform a skin graft on the body of an infant—that is, on any immature child—without parental consent.²³ But abortion is treated differently. A girl of tender years, without parental permission, without even telling her father or mother, has an unqualified right to an abortion. The physician may cut her open, remove her child, destroy her child, affect her body, her emotions and her mind for years to come, and do it because she wanted it. The natural interest of her father and mother in their grandchild is treated as nothing. The natural interest of her parents in her physical and emotional health is treated as nothing. The natural interest of her parents in her conduct and formation of her conscience is treated as nothing. Small wonder that the teenage girls seeking abortions in Boston this summer were photographed wearing bags over their

heads. By choice they hid their faces. By law they were the anonymous, faceless creatures which the concealing bags proclaimed them to be.

Second, I turn to what we can and should do now in the America in which we live. Let us look at the shibboleths by which we are confronted, and by which we are urged to refrain from action. We are told that in a “pluralistic society” we should tolerate conduct we personally would not practice. We are told that to press for alteration of the Constitution is divisive. We are informed that we should not be a people dedicated to one issue. Have these slogans any validity except as they are used as excuses by the timorous and faint-hearted?

If abortion is killing—I do not say murder for that is a term traditionally reserved for the taking of more mature human life—but if it is the killing of human beings, how can we tolerate it in the name of “pluralism”? No one doubts that the child conceived by two human parents is not a rock, a plant, a cow or an ox. That child is human because that child’s parents are human. That child is alive. When someone takes that human child’s life, we cannot be content to say, passively, “That is your privilege.” No one accepts cruelty to a child as the privilege of the parent. How can this atavistic return to the parents’ power of life and death over children be accepted? The unborn child is our brother or sister. We cannot, without closing our eyes to reality, treat that child as a thing or let him or her be so treated.

Do we divide the country when we ask for justice to the unborn? For almost two centuries the country gave that protection. In 1967, in some state legislatures, the protection began to weaken. Then, on January 22, 1973, it was taken away altogether by a decision which the most astute and most devoted students of constitutional law have found incomprehensible. It is *Roe* and *Doe* and their *sequelae* that have divided the country. It is they which have put into contention the most divisive of moral questions, “Who is a human being?” Because seven men in Washington have chosen in the exercise of raw judicial power to deny what our civilization has held, must we quietly accept their fiat? Who was guilty of dividing the country in 1858—those who tried to stop the expansion of the slave power or the seven men in Washington who decided *Dred Scott v. Sanford*?

When we respond to the abortion problem as decisive, as fundamental, we are responding no less to a great human issue than the abolitionists. We are scarcely more committed to a single issue than those millions of Americans who made involvement in the Vietnam War their criterion of political choice. The abortion issue cuts across the usual ideologies of Left and Right. It is troublesome to the party politicians who are used to compromises, worked out in dollars. The issue cannot be compromised. It cannot be solved by

dollars. It will not go away. It is a test of character and a litmus test of hypocrisy for candidates for public office.

Even the pejorative description of abortion as a single issue is misleading. The abortion issue has multiplied. It is the issue of the function of the physician: Is he a healer only or should he also kill? It is the issue of the role of the government: Should the government's task be to protect life or to take an active part in reducing the population through programs of abortion? It is the issue of the status of the family: Are married persons a unit specially recognized by the law or are they two individuals with no more rights and privileges than the single person? Do parents have particular responsibilities for the mental, physical, and moral welfare of their children, or are minor children free to make their own decisions about procreating offspring? These questions go to the roots of our society. To take a stand in answer to them is to participate in the shaping of our country. Shall we stand aside and let those with narrower goals and less humane aims be the shapers?

In this contest which has now gone on for a decade, Catholics have had a special part to play. In part it has been thrust upon them by the advocates of abortion, anxious to make it appear that the common Anglo-American heritage of respect for life was the peculiar tenet of a single religious body. But this tenet which Orthodox Judaism shares with the great Protestant churches, with Mormonism, and with Catholicism, has been defended with particular conviction by Catholics aware of their Church's historic concern for the sanctity of marriage, the goods of family life, and the holiness of procreation. How shameful is the conduct of those Catholics who resent the leadership of their bishops and out of fear of being considered cloddish peasants—I quote the *National Catholic Reporter*—take the opposite position. Like the immigrants of a century ago, they want to be taken for good Americans; but, unlike the immigrants, they have not the excuse of being strangers and, unlike the immigrants, they chose their path at the expense of the most basic principles of their religion. How pharisaical is the speech of those Catholics who reprove the excesses of the “pro-life” movement while keeping themselves aloof from all involvement in the struggle. Amateurs in politics will often make mistakes that more experienced hands know how to avoid. Persons dedicated to principles will often seem severe to those who are unaroused. How many mistakes the abolitionists made before they extirpated slavery! How many persons they offended by their seeming churlishness. But better to have been with them than standing on the sidelines fastidiously deploring their manners while swallowing the enormity of the expanding slave power.

How frightened is the conduct of Catholics who will not enter the fray

because the outcome is not assured! They want to know that their allies will win, or they will do nothing. Was victory assured in the great battles of the sixties for civil rights? Why do these persons sit idle when the stakes are higher for human dignity and the risk of defeat through apathy greater?

How deluded are those Catholics who say, "Let the government be neutral. That is all we can ask." In the American context, the government cannot be neutral. In the American context of belief, what is legal is taken as what is right. In the American context of constitutional law, what is a constitutional liberty must be secured by the state. As long as a woman has a right to abortion services, the government, if it provides medical services at all, must provide abortions. In America the government must be either for abortion or against it.

What, then, must we do? If we are to believe the most recent appointee to the Supreme Court, Justice John Paul Stevens, *Roe v. Wade* is "now part of our law."²⁴ But we do not have to accept it as part of our law. The Court is free to change its mind. While we wait for that necessarily slow process to occur by means of retirements and new appointments, we are free to amend the Constitution; and here we have two routes. We may act through Congress by a two-thirds vote of the Senate and the House proposing an Amendment to the States, which three-fourths of the States then pass. Or we may take the more democratic route afforded us by Article V of our Constitution: Through action by two-thirds of the State legislatures we may require Congress to call a Convention for the very purpose of proposing Amendments. As I contemplate the procrastination, the political complexion, and the history of the past three years in Congress, I reluctantly conclude that it is this second route we may have to take. I am reluctant because of the fears a constitutional convention engenders among many lawyers; but I am not reluctant because of fear of failure. The strength of the forces favoring life has been in the grassroots. They can most effectively work upon the state legislatures to call a Convention and upon the Convention once it is called.

The method of Convention, however, is not free from problems. It has never been tried.²⁵ The State legislatures must act within a reasonable time of each other's action in their call upon Congress.²⁶ The President would probably have to join in the call upon Congress.²⁷ The lawyers and the liberals—who distrust the people—will be in opposition. It is a last resort, to be tried only if the appropriate congressional committees remain deaf to entreaty.

Everything short of an Amendment has been tried and has failed. The States have tried to define the unborn child as a person and been told by federal judges that such definition is not only unconstitutional but actually *frivolous*.²⁸ The States have tried to require care from the physician attending

the unborn chosen for abortion. They have tried to respect the rights of husband and of father and mother.²⁹ Nothing has suited the Supreme Court, whose members have sat as men wiser than all the legislators. The Court tells us what the Constitution means. We can only escape the Court by making the Constitution unmistakable in its protection of the unborn.

NOTES

1. *Roe v. Wade* 410 U.S. 113; *Doe v. Bolton* 410 U.S. 179.
2. See 15 *U.S. Code* sec. 3; *U.S. v. Stokes* 464 F.2d 148 (5th Cir. 1972).
3. *E. g., Kovacs v. Cooper* 336 U.S. 77 (1949).
4. *Roe v. Wade* at 164.
5. *Doe v. Bolton* at 192.
6. See 1974-1975 *Reporter on Human Reproduction and the Law* (hereafter RHRL) I-C-117 (Super. Ct. Mass. 1975).
7. *Planned Parenthood of Central Missouri v. Danforth* 44 (1976) LW 5197 at 5206.
8. M. Tooley "Abortion and Infanticide," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 2 (1972) 37.
9. *Nyberg v. City of Virginia* 361 F.Supp. 932 (D. Minn. 1973).
10. *Doe v. Wolgenwith, 1974-1975 RHRL I-C-4S'* (W.D. Penn. 1974).
11. *Cae v. Hooker, 1975-76 RHRL I-C-17* (D. N.H. 1976); *Roe v. Norton* 408 F.Supp. 660 (D. Conn. 1975).
12. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, "The Effects of General Provision 413 of the Labor-HEW Appropriations Act," *Memorandum to Senate-House Conferees*, September 24, 1974.
13. *Doe v. Bellin Memorial Hospital* 479 F.2d. 756 (7th Cir. 1973); *Ward v. St. Anthony Hospital* 476 F.2d 671 (10th Cir. 1973); *Jackson v. Norton Children's Hospital, Inc.* 487 F.2d 502 (6th Cir. 1973).
14. *Doe v. Charleston Area Medical Center, 1976-1977 RHRL I-C-26* (4th Cir. 1975).
15. *Planned Parenthood v. Danforth* at 5202.
16. *Ibid.*, at 5203.
17. *Skinner v. Oklahoma* 316 U.S. 535 (1942).
18. *Loving v. Virginia* 388 U.S. 1 (1967).
19. *Stanley v. Illinois* 405 U.S. 645 (1972).
20. *Armstrong v. Manzo* 380 U.S. 545 (1965).
21. *Planned Parenthood v. Danforth* at 5202.
22. *Ibid.* at 5204; *Bellotti v. Baird* 44 LW 5221 at 5225 (1976).
23. *Bonner v. Moran* 126 F.2d 121 (D.C. App. 1941); for the nonmedical examples, see *Planned Parenthood v. Danforth* at 5212 (dissenting opinion of Stevens, J.).
24. *Ibid.*, at 5212.
25. See A.E. Bonfield, "Proposing Constitutional Amendments By Convention: Some Problems," *Notre Dame Lawyer* 39 (1964) 659.
26. *Ibid.*, at 665-670.
27. *Ibid.*, at 674.
28. *Doe v. Israel* 358 F.Supp. 1193 (D. R.I. 1973).
29. *Planned Parenthood v. Danforth* 44 LW 5197.

Well done, good and faithful servant

Thomas A. Bolan, who died on May 12, at 92, was a co-creator of the Human Life Foundation. A close personal friend and colleague of my late father, HLR Founding Editor James P. McFadden, he acted as the Foundation's attorney from the beginning and for decades (pro-bono) as well as serving on the board of directors.

Mr. Bolan was, as the *New York Times* obituary quipped, “the quieter half of an odd couple”—his law partner was the “more visible and histrionic” Roy Cohn at the firm Saxe, Bacon & Bolan. He was a founder of the Conservative Party in New York, a board member of *National Review*, and a close confidante of the late William F. Buckley Jr. In his obituary in NR, vice president Jack Fowler wrote that “Among his many roles and duties in his 92 years, the one that most impressed us at the NR offices was that he flew an odds-defying 35 bomber missions over Cologne and many other Nazi citadels in the thick of World War Two . . .”

Bolan headed President Ronald Reagan's transition team in New York in 1980. He represented the Archdiocese of New York in several important cases, and was, since 1966, a Knight of Malta. He received numerous awards for his service to the nation and the Catholic Church.

Tom Bolan is survived by his wife Marie, four children and eight grandchildren. Tom's son Sean, who predeceased him in 2002, was at one time an employee of the Human Life Foundation, and beloved by all, especially my late brother Robert McFadden, who died of cancer in 1994.

Anyone who knew Tom knew he was a devoted Yankee fan—and very close to the late Yankees owner, George Steinbrenner. He also loved to attend our Great Defender of Life dinners (and take photos—here he is with his camera in 2004) but as they take place in October, he sometimes worried the Yankees might have a World Series game the same evening. But he always assured me he'd be with us regardless; his heart was first and foremost with the unborn. *Our* hearts go out in sympathy to the Bolan family, and are filled with gratitude for the life and service of Thomas A. Bolan.

Maria McFadden Maffucci



Symposium: Whole Life v. Pro-Life?

We asked participants to respond to one or more of three questions: 1) Should people who defend the right to life of the unborn and the dying call themselves “whole-life” or “consistent-life” rather than “pro-life”? 2) Does defending the right to life today require particular political commitments? 3) Is the “whole life” movement really a newly fashioned “seamless garment”—Cardinal Bernardin’s “linkage” movement of 1983?—The Editors

Mary Meehan:

The consistent-life movement in the United States goes back at least to the 1979, when Julianne Loesch brought together activists who opposed both war and abortion. Her small but lively group, called Prolifers for Survival (P.S.), did valuable consciousness-raising on the left, but never had much money. In 1987 it morphed into a newer group that is now called the Consistent Life Network. Consistent Life stalwarts such as Bill Samuel, Rachel MacNair, John Whitehead, Carol Crossed, and Lisa Stiller do much educational work, especially at left-leaning conferences and demonstrations. MacNair’s weekly “Peace & Life Connections” e-mail newsletter is striking in its ability to show the links among all life-or-death issues. Consistent Life also focuses on poverty and racism, especially as they contribute to attacks on human life. A newer consistency group, Rehumanize International, appeals especially to young people. Led by Aimee Murphy, it publishes the online *Life Matters Journal* and has a YouTube channel called “Consistently Quirky.”

In the early 1980s, the late Cardinal Joseph Bernardin of Chicago promoted the consistency ethic, adding a strong social welfare component to it. Many of his fellow Catholic bishops liked this addition, as well as his antiwar emphasis. But many pro-life conservatives did not. They disagreed with him on some of the added issues. They also worried that additions would water down the opposition to abortion they had worked so hard to organize. And they were upset because Bernardin and his fellow bishops had backed a 1981-82 anti-abortion legislative strategy in Congress that had deeply divided the pro-life movement—and then had failed.

Robert Christian, writing last February in the online Catholic journal called

Millennial, supported a “whole life movement” that covers even more issues. He wants to include everything from global poverty to protecting the environment to a host of topics under “economic justice.” He suggests this can “purify the pro-life movement of its inconsistencies” and make it “authentically pro-life.” A Ph.D. candidate at the Catholic University of America, Mr. Christian also writes for a website called “The Whole Life Democrat,” a Democrats for Life of America project. So it is not surprising that he favors a very broad approach to life issues.

Yet it seems unfair to attack the pro-life movement because it does not tackle all the issues Mr. Christian is concerned about. People do not criticize antiwar groups because they don’t deal with poverty. Nor do they berate anti-torture groups because they fail to tackle environmental issues. I understand why some people think that use of the term “pro-life” implies opposition to every form of killing humans, but believe that abortion opponents were the first to use it to describe a movement. To use an old term, they had “first dibs” on it. I hope that eventually it *will* mean opposition to all killing of humans.

I doubt, though, that Mr. Christian understands how enormously difficult it is to end *any* kind of killing. Perhaps he does not realize that many people have spent the last forty to fifty years in trying to protect unborn children from abortion. Although they have saved many lives through sidewalk counseling and pregnancy help centers, they had hoped to save far more. People in antiwar and anti-death-penalty groups can also claim some successes, but they have endured many failures as well. The same is true of people who work against euthanasia and suicide.

Given the great obstacles they still face, and the complexity of each issue, it makes sense for some groups to specialize in opposition to abortion and others in opposition to war, euthanasia, violent crime, the death penalty, or another issue of killing. The various groups can learn from one another’s approaches and techniques, and the consistency groups can cheer on everyone’s good work and encourage the various groups to work together on some occasions.

I believe, though, that it is unwise to toss all economic and social issues into the mix, or to suggest that someone is not pro-life because they do not accept the latest government program that claims to help people. Some of those programs work well, but others fail. Sometimes privately funded programs work better.

Ultimately, nearly every issue affects life in some way. But some issues are far more serious than others because they threaten life directly and in a very dangerous way. Years ago, a pro-life doctor remarked that given a choice

between being dead and being poor, he would take poor. Most of us would. The poor whose lives are protected have a chance to work their way out of poverty. But people who are targeted for death cannot work their way out of a fatal bullet, an abortion machine, or a drone-bombing.

As a longtime supporter of the consistent ethic of life, I believe it is best not to expand it beyond life-or-death cases. This means ones where an individual, group, or government severely injures or takes the life of one or more human beings. Listed alphabetically, the life-or-death issues include: abortion, assault and battery, euthanasia, execution, murder, rape, suicide, torture, and war. Three of these practices—assault, rape, and torture—do not always lead to death, but they risk death and sometimes cause it. People who do survive such evils often endure great suffering, sometimes for many years or even a lifetime.

Some consistent-life supporters are pacifists, while others are not. I believe the right to life includes the right of self-defense, which can be exercised by an individual or by a nation that is unjustly attacked. History suggests, though, that many wars are unjust on both sides. And because war involves such great destruction and kills so many innocent people, there is an obligation for strenuous, good-faith negotiations to avoid it and, when it does occur, to protect civilians endangered by it.

It is well to remember this: *If no one killed except in self-defense, no one would kill.* If we could stop all the killing—and all the fear, worry, and misery it causes—this world would be a joyful place.

To all the great people who work to end one, two, or many kinds of killing—those who march in the snow, picket in the rain, lobby in town halls and on Capitol Hill, and rescue those about to be killed—we should say: “Thank you! Carry on!” Then we should ask: “How can we help?”

—*Mary Meehan is a senior editor of the Human Life Review.*

Nicholas Frankovich:

Our movement began as a campaign to protect unborn children. The push to make abortion a legal right for women seeking it both mirrored and helped to shape how leaders of the right-to-life movement defined their objective in those early days, half a century ago. Advocates for the unborn accepted the other side’s “rights talk,” answering abortion-rights rhetoric with affirmations of the right to life.

Their view expanded but lost some of its sharpness and focus when they adopted the anti-euthanasia cause and joined it to the fight against abortion. Some of the arguments for and against the one kind of medicalized taking of

human life did echo arguments about the other kind, as when abortion-rights and right-to-die advocates alike cited the low quality of life that the party in question—an aborted child, a euthanized patient—was likely to suffer had she lived. In cases where euthanasia was voluntary, however, the patient was seen as analogous to the aborting woman, not the aborted child. The patient who asserted her autonomy and elevated it over her right to life complicated the logic on which right-to-lifers could build their case.

The movement slowly began to style itself “pro-life,” as its rhetorical emphasis shifted from a defense of the weak (the fetus) against the strong to the promotion of the sanctity of human life, a principle that commands intuitive respect, though it’s hard to define in legal terms. Prolifers not only persisted in their fight on the two tracks, opposition to abortion and opposition to euthanasia (though they still directed the lion’s share of their attention and resources to the former), but expanded the scope of their concern yet further.

Or, rather, some did. Others disagreed with what they saw as a senseless dilution and blurring of the movement’s mission. Under various names—“seamless garment,” rechristened the “consistent life ethic” and now, decades later, resurrected as “whole life”—a movement within the pro-life movement has been advancing the trend toward a maximally comprehensive agenda. The wider the lens, the harder it becomes to explain the cause on a bumper sticker—though, in part for that very reason, it becomes less dismissible for someone whose opposition to anything “pro-life” is reflexive and visceral. In that moment when the locution “whole life” is still new to him and he is trying to figure out what we mean, we have a chance to grasp the open jaws of his mind and hold them open long enough to make our case.

An advantage that the whole-life movement enjoys over more narrowly defined versions of pro-life activism is that it provides a fuller context in which opposition to abortion can be understood. Alisdair MacIntyre in *After Virtue* asks his readers to imagine what sense could be made of isolated fragments of scientific research and knowledge after a civilizational collapse in which our libraries and archives were destroyed. Any shared understanding of the purposes and principles of science would vanish. All that would be left were shards of information for future generations to try to decipher in isolation. Our language of morality, he posits, is in such a state.

Many people intuit that the problem exists. They are reaching higher than they probably realize when they attempt to widen the lens of the pro-life movement. They may think that they are only creating a vocabulary and articulating a philosophy for pro-life liberals, but in the process they also body forth a social movement that fits no current political categories.

The range of public policy that elected officials can affect is vast. To identify

the pro-life and the pro-choice candidate in a given election is easy; it's hard to judge the totality of the many moving parts—the person's character, his party's platform, his positions on everything from health insurance to whether America should intervene militarily in Syria—that constitute any congressional or presidential candidacy. If you oppose, say, a Republican candidate's plan for toppling the current Syrian regime but vote for him anyway because he promises to restrict abortion, tell that to the Syrian Christians who see Bashar al-Assad as the only firewall between them and Islamist militants.

If it succeeds, the whole-life movement will seed pro-life ideas and sentiments on the left. That will be good for the cause and should be especially welcome to pro-life Americans who currently have no choice but to split their conscience at the ballot box, voting for this or that Democrat despite the party's position on abortion. To the list of reasons for which they vote for Democrats, they should be able to add the party's commitment to reducing the incidence of abortion. The party is not committed to that goal, but it could be. The whole-life movement has its work cut out for it.

— *Nicholas Frankovich is an editor at National Review.*

David Mills:

It could almost be a scene from the fifties, with people on one side of the barricades yelling “Commies!” and people on the other yelling “Fascists!” Prolifers and whole-lifers tend to speak of each other, when they do, unkindly.

Some proliferers accuse whole-lifers of trying to hijack the movement to advance leftist political causes, of creating a political “poison-pill” that will some day kill it, of being “astro-turf” organizations for the left, of only pretending to care about the unborn, of supporting the party of death. Some whole-lifers accuse proliferers of using the movement to advance rightwing political causes, of ignoring the unborn after they're born, of only caring about the unborn as props for culture-warring, of letting the cynical Republican leadership use them, of marching not for life but for birth.

Both accuse the other of failing to get anything done. Both suggest the other enjoys a self-satisfying political theatre.

In my reading, whole-lifers speak more fairly, but not always. Yet they rarely speak with gratitude for those Republican proliferers who have kept the issue alive in this country for decades. They complain that too many proliferers support the Republican Party, but they don't admit that a major reason for the ideological imbalance is the Democratic Party's complete—fanatical—commitment to abortion. They don't see how much their movement exists mainly on the internet, in a self-affirming bubble, while the proliferers have a

public presence—and not just in political organizations, but in all the crisis pregnancy centers and other aids they offer expectant mothers.

That said, I think the whole-life instinct a sound response to society and politics as they have developed in the last decades, and particularly the last year.

It seems to be a growing movement among proliferers, not just those who are already politically liberal, but people in the center-left, middle, and center-right. Their commitments to conservatism have weakened as the Right has become more libertarian and social Darwinist.

Many of these new libertarians don't think of themselves as libertarians, but they flatly oppose any actually existing social programs. They talk endlessly of "liberty" and never of solidarity or society or the common good. They do not speak of what happens to the people "liberty" leaves behind. They tend to be pro-choice or only theoretically pro-life.

The Right as a whole doesn't privilege life as an issue any more, if it ever truly did. It privileges the market and the shrinking of the state, positions perfectly compatible with legal abortion. Classic conservatism, rooted in tradition and religion, is the only part of the Right that has been clearly pro-life. Even there, few of its leaders put the life issue at the center of their concerns where proliferers put it. It now represents a minority of the Right.

Against this movement, some proliferers see that more overt concern for the poor needs to be part of their pro-life commitment. Poor pregnant women aren't just pregnant, they're poor. Their children will likely be poor. Poverty increases the temptation to abort their children. A more libertarian and social Darwinist society will inevitably be more pro-choice, in effect and probably in its mainstream ideologies.

What these whole-life proliferers propose depends on prudential judgments, but the positions they take will usually (not necessarily but usually) be "liberal" or social democratic ones. They could in principle take conservative positions, as long as they pushed for a comprehensive vision of the common good. In both cases, the same principles that lead them to defend the unborn will lead them to defend the poor, to speak for the citizens of other nations, to protect the environment, to oppose torture abroad and the carceral state here, to regulate business, to support the social safety net, to expand or even nationalize health care.

My guess is that we are seeing a shifting and rethinking among those—especially Catholics—who had sided with the Republicans mainly over the life issue, and then adopted the politics because you begin to think like your friends. They were never really committed conservatives and definitely not committed Rightists. Now, as the Republicans have become more markedly Republican, they're finding their other political commitments becoming more

imperative. Maybe, they think, we need to do something else, something more comprehensive, more expressive of a concern for human dignity and flourishing, of which our care for the unborn is a part coordinated with the other parts. The concern to protect life (unborn and aged in particular) may be foundational, but it's the foundation of a building that still needs to be built on top of it.

This development the whole-life movement focuses and manifests. It gives these people's intuitions form and roots them in principle. It protects them from sliding into a reactive liberalism or subordinating the defense of the unborn to more popular positions. It gives people a name, and an attractive one, by which they can identify themselves. It gives them a community of similar-minded allies now that they're taking a position that satisfies neither right nor left.

The whole-life movement points them to sources—particularly, for Christians, Catholic Social Teaching—that give a more comprehensive understanding of human life and the common good than the Republican or Democratic parties can give them. People get tired of pragmatism, of deals, of playing the odds, of flying-by-the-seat-of-your-pants politics. Many who had once been just pro-life want to build their political house on rock of a comprehensive principle, not the sand of political compromises. They want a whole-life politics.

—*David Mills, a former editor of First Things, is editorial director of Ethika Politika and a regular blogger for the Human Life Review.*

Jack Fowler:

I prefer the term “anti-abortion” because, let's be honest, this push for a new terminology is motivated by politics. So let us engage by laying down a marker: For one to be truly “pro-life,” one must manifest the courage to tell claimants of a “whole life” label that they are *not* pro-life if they do not:

1. oppose legal abortion, and its funding, and support incremental restrictions (state and federal) on its forms and methods and practices, and oppose any form of support for the act in our nation's foreign policy and in aid programs, and in other ways, such as in employee-benefits packages; and

2. acknowledge as fact that the “seamless garment” construct is not some morally acceptable way of addressing and merging a collection of issues but is an obvious and transparent plot—yes, a plot—to undermine the largely conservative effort to curtail and restrict the abortion right, which was so wrongfully established and promulgated by the U.S. Supreme Court (and by certain state courts) in what Justice Byron White rightly called an act of “raw judicial power.”

Let us remember the very real history. The instigation of this “seamless garment” construct comes from a liberal and leftist-run United States Catholic Conference, the bureaucracy of which, in the early 1980s—distracted that its Catholic congressional and political allies, with whom the USCC was simpatico on a host of other-than-abortion issues, easily located and defined by the Democratic Party’s platform (opposition to SDI, opposition to the death penalty, favoring severe Second Amendment restrictions, a determination to coddle Marxist Central American regimes, etc.)—attempted to undermine the moral calculus that rendered these allies as outcasts, as misfits with the Church’s catechism that taught that their actions in support of abortion-on-demand and its many nasty corollaries were sinful, and sinful in a way that supporting missile defense could never be.

How to undermine?

There *had* to be some new way of profiling, of justifying, of circumventing the verdict-rendering canon law. What could not be tolerated was that abortion, as a political issue, outranked the rest of the platform’s laundry list. What needed to be combated was the fact that abortion had a singular and distinct source of *moral* authority that let Helms and Hyde and Reagan *politically* trump Kennedy and Cuomo and DeLauro and Ferraro (and even the pro-abortion priest-congressman Drinan).

The alternative struck upon was simple and obvious and unscrupulous: USCC hacks and the leftist shepherds who, through the National Committee of Catholic Bishops, oversaw them, moved to unify and thereby equate the issues, to convince voters to see a whole, and thereby, in the equating, to politically absolve abortion advocates—after all, they were “Catholic” (at least the USCC’s de facto version of defining such) on gun control and defense spending and much else that warmed the cockles of Tip O’Neill’s heart.

This new political theology required a new terminology. The perversion bled into imagery, and scandalously used for its catch-all descriptive the tunic of the scourged Christ, the “seamless garment” for which the Roman soldiers cast lots.

This was all a dodge and scam. It was all about partisan politics.

It remains all these things.

New Cuomo, same as the old Cuomo.

It is worth recalling, when this baloney was first sliced, just how very partisan (Democrat) and transparent the American Catholic hierarchy was. After an April 1984 meeting with Ronald Reagan, Youngstown Bishop James Malone, the classless head of the NCCB, met with press outside the White House and issued a statement savaging the president on a range of issues. It caused a huge ruckus, but cemented for many the perception they already

had—that Catholic officialdom was partisan, that it was operating as a front for, and in collusion with, the Democratic National Committee.

“Whole life?” If you’re an insurance salesman, I may talk to you. If you’re a Catholic bishop or a bureaucratic henchman, I wasn’t buying 30 years ago when you called it a “seamless garment.” And I’m still not buying.

I’ll stick with being anti-abortion.

—*Jack Fowler is Vice President of National Review.*

Fr. David Poeking:

Apologists for abortion employ deceptive euphemisms such as “pro-choice” or “termination,” but they get one term nearly right: “Pro-life” really means “anti-abortion.” Yes, and more specifically, to be pro-life is to be against the legalization of abortion.

Christians have always opposed abortion. Ancient Christians scorned it. Scholastics speculated that “quickening” converts the grave sin of contraception to the graver sin of abortion. In the newly independent United States, lawmakers gradually codified the implications of the new biological sciences, which were erasing the moral relevance of quickening. But until recently, all societies shaped by Christian humanism recognized the murderous moral character of abortion, understood as directly, deliberately killing a child in the womb, and so they needed no pro-life movement.

The pro-life movement arose as politicians attempted to justify abortion by medical or other expediency. The movement blossomed nationally in response to *Roe v. Wade* and subsequent jurisprudence making abortion a mother’s choice. Prolifers rejected that change in moral and legal reasoning. The pro-life movement addresses the novel scandal of our era: the state’s withdrawal from its first responsibility to protect its subjects from violence.

It ought not be a partisan issue. Human dignity precedes the law; the law must recognize and protect humanity if it is to be any law at all. A politics which entirely withdraws the protection of the law from any class of humans is a crime of negligence against humanity.

Being pro-life does not propel anyone into a specific party, major or minor, but it precludes formal support for legalized abortion. We may not do evil that good may come of it, so being pro-life also precludes support for a party platform which formally embraces abortion.

In this context, the “whole-life” movement appears in contradistinction to the pro-life movement. Some whole-lifers say they’re urgently concerned about “life” issues other than abortion, without reference to the pro-life movement. Other whole-lifers say they’re correcting the pro-life movement,

calling it to greater consistency. Many whole-lifers identify with both approaches.

All do more harm than good.

The other-life-issues agenda includes state action against infant mortality, hunger, poverty, climate change, or even overseas atrocities, as well as state action favoring universal healthcare, women's education, LGBTQ rights, prisoner rehabilitation, or the like. From this broadly whole-life perspective, every major political party falls short, and that's the point: Whole-lifers eagerly blur the bright moral line forbidding formal cooperation with evil, apparent here as a platform defending legalized abortion.

The whole-life-as-broad-agenda line of reasoning appeals to a false proportionality, as if all these other "life" positions justify supporting a party that favors legalized abortion. The proportionality is false in part because, at least for this country, the incidence of abortion is orders of magnitude beyond the combined deaths by war, capital punishment, neglect, and illegal violence.

But the proportionality is also false because there need be no commensuration. Our votes may go to imperfect candidates, but it's always possible to advocate for the whole-life agenda without throwing one's voice or money toward a platform endorsing legalized abortion. Consider, via analogy, a country where adult gays can marry each other, but minors suspected of homosexuality are executed before their majority. Does the first condition ever need to be counterweighed against the second?

The other whole-life aim is to correct what it means to be pro-life. In this line of reasoning, whole-lifers may concede that abortion is a high priority, maybe the highest. But they allege that pro-lifers have been inconsistent: Pro-lifers oppose abortion yet still take the wrong side on one or more of the the whole-life issues. Whole-lifers criticize pro-lifers for failing to see how pro-life commitments entail additional commitments to the whole-life agenda.

From within the pro-life movement, it makes sense to promote the whole-life agenda. As "seamless garment" advocates argued in past decades, to neglect the underlying moral principles on a secondary issue might weaken their application to abortion as the primary issue. A whole-life position might also be more persuasive: Perhaps attention to the whole-life agenda wins converts from among abortion apologists. My support for universal healthcare has never seemed to impress my pro-choice antagonists, but maybe others have been more successful.

But criticism from within must be from within. Those who seek to correct the pro-life movement must call themselves pro-lifers. Following our earlier analogy, marriage-equality advocates should be able to identify with those who oppose the execution of gays, even if the latter don't always support the former.

When whole-lifers stand aloof, however, distinguishing themselves as something outside or beyond the pro-life movement, they're seeking more to defeat proliferers than to correct them. Back in the national context of legalized abortion versus pro-life, abortion is still widely legal and children are still dying en masse. From that perspective, posturing as whole-life is political treachery against proliferers.

During the 2016 election cycle, Republican apologists embarrassed by candidate Donald Trump cleverly contrived an “anti-anti-Trump” stance, allowing them to align themselves with him without defending him. For whole-lifers to set themselves against proliferers is no better than to be anti-anti-abortion: It may sound clever, but it accomplishes no good.

—*Fr. David Poecking is the pastor of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church in Carnegie, Pennsylvania.*

Rebecca Bratten Weiss:

What does it mean to be pro-life?

This question can be answered in one of two ways.

We could consider the term's referents: people who call themselves pro-life, and the tenor of the movement itself. In so doing, many find that they do not care for what they see, especially now that the mainstream movement has been tethered to the Trump platform. But, even prior to Trump, it could be argued that it was problematic to affix “pro-life” to a political aggregate committed to hawkish policies, capital punishment, a robust prison system, lax gun laws, and slashing of social safety nets. Thus I understand why some say that the term “pro-life” has become meaningless, or tainted, and why they prefer the term “whole life” or “consistent life ethic.”

But we can also consider what the term implies—what a stance that is “pro” (in favor of, in defense of) “life” (presumably all life, and life as such, not just some lives) would entail. Considering the heft of the ethic that ought to be designated by the term, it is not necessarily a “no true Scotsman” fallacy to argue that many who claim to be pro-life are not truly so—any more than it would be a fallacy to state that many who claim to be just, wise, or modest are not truly so.

I would suggest that terms such as “whole life” or “consistent life” are simply other ways of designating what “pro-life” ought to entail. Does it matter which term one uses? I think not. What matters is that one acts, in both micro and macro politics, to defend all life. If some have unpleasant associations with the term “pro-life,” by all means let them use a different term. The important thing is that we not just talk, but commit ourselves to

creating a holistically just society in which all life is honored, and the responsibility to care for our fellow humans—even when difficult—has priority.

But here I must address another objection, from the opposite side of the aisle. Many spokespersons for the mainstream pro-life movement insist that pro-life has a distinct meaning, not to be confused with consistent-life ethic. Because abortion is, materially, the greatest threat to innocent human life in our contemporary American society, many argue that it must be our main focus. Other issues, they say, fall by the wayside, rendered irrelevant by the monstrous moral evil that is abortion: So pro-life should mean primarily, or even exclusively, anti-abortion, and not be used interchangeably with “consistent life ethic,” or to designate opposition also to war, capital punishment, police brutality, degradation of the environment, gun violence, and rape culture.

The obvious difficulty for right-wing proliferers is that once we expand “pro-life” to mean more than “anti-abortion” (euthanasia being given a polite nod on occasion), it no longer looks especially consistent with Republican affiliation. Even taking abortion alone, apart from other threats to life, once one begins looking at the statistics on abortion choice, instead of envisioning it as a choice that happens in a vacuum, it looks as though leftist policies are far more likely to reduce abortions insofar as they eradicate injustices that lead to abortion demand.

And this is why even if we accept the premise that other evils are rendered inconsequential in comparison to abortion, a whole-life interpretation of the term is preferable, because only a whole-life activism is going to be effective in reducing abortion rates and protecting unborn lives.

Moreover, it is self-defeating to argue that pro-life does not mean pro-all-life. First of all, the belief that unborn human lives have essential dignity and are due justice is not a first premise that one arrives at in a vacuum, but instead a realization and recognition that occurs in the context of a stance of honor towards all life. We are awakened, morally, to the ontological goodness of life itself, and to the essential dignity of each human person. Thus awakened, we realize that all human lives, even the ones we cannot see, even the ones we do not behold with wonder, are similarly sacred, making a claim on our protection.

And the idea that other evils become inconsequential in comparison to abortion is also self-defeating, as it suggests that the value of life exists on a scale, and that in comparison to a large enough number of other lives, the value of a single life is watered down and ultimately dissolved entirely. This is a premise for a form of ethical utilitarianism, and it runs contrary to the

personalist dictum that the value of every human life has a kind of absoluteness, and cannot be diminished by relativity.

A final objection I must consider, to the argument that pro-life = consistent life, is that proposed by critics of Cardinal Bernardin's "seamless garment" ethic. Critics of the seamless garment avow that it gives leftists and progressives a sneaky way to pretend to be faithful to Catholic moral teaching because they support most of the "garment"—just not the abortion parts. One could as easily say that rejecting the seamless garment allows right-wing Catholics to pretend to be orthodox by saying that the rest of the garment just doesn't matter.

But either way, critics of the seamless garment are somehow missing its seamlessness. However people may choose to justify their jettisoning of this or that teaching, the material reality is that the threats to the life of the unborn are linked intimately with other injustices. It is because of prior injustice that abortion is presented, with sad irony, as a "choice" for women who feel that that they are trapped in a corner. How is it a "choice" if there are no other options? Even if abortion is the only injustice that matters, we need a consistent life ethic in order to eradicate the ills—poverty, poor health, homelessness, abuse, discrimination—that make it look, for far too many women, like a grim necessity.

—Rebecca Bratten Weiss is a lecturer in English Literature at a college in Ohio and a co-founder of the New Pro-life Movement.

Brandon McGinley:

It is in the nature of communities and political movements that concern themselves with grave injustices to be fractious, and the movement to end abortion is no exception. After all, if abortion is what we say it is, then our movement is charged with nothing less than the ending of a holocaust. It is not extravagant to believe that the cost of every misstep we make is measured in human lives.

With the stakes so high, every disagreement about rhetoric and strategy and politics threatens to become a quarrel; every quarrel threatens to become a rift; and every rift threatens to become a permanent schism. Perversely, it is the gravity of our cause that makes the unity-in-diversity that is essential to our success so difficult to achieve.

With this in mind, I reject the idea that those who favor legal protections for the lives and dignity of the unborn, sick, and aged should or, worse, must apply any particular label to themselves. Further, while robust debate about rhetoric and strategy strengthens our movement, no person or group should

make adoption of a particular label a prerequisite for trust and standing in the anti-abortion community. To privilege *or* to distrust those who, for instance, opt for the “whole life” or “consistent life” label is to choose factionalism over solidarity.

This plea for goodwill and good faith, however, raises thornier questions: At what point do opinions about matters other than traditional “life issues” begin to vitiate one’s pro-life *bona fides*? Can or should we ever say that positions on issues beyond legally protecting the lives of the unborn, sick, and aged are “not pro-life”? Must the pro-life movement enforce ideological standards beyond our core issues?

Our consideration of these questions should be guided by two common-sense principles. First, whenever possible we should avoid needlessly excommunicating or otherwise alienating those who share basic pro-life commitments. This isn’t just good “big tent” strategy; it is basic courtesy and charitableness. Second, building a comprehensively pro-life culture *requires* strict legal prohibitions on abortion and euthanasia *but also* further political, social, and economic changes to the status quo that would enhance the effectiveness and moral authority of those laws. Both before and after achieving that final and essential legal victory, there will be work to be done to make caring for the vulnerable not just a *personal legal duty*, but a *shared moral responsibility*.

This second consideration provides a modest limitation to the first. Someone who claims membership in the pro-life movement but who believes that strict legal prohibitions are either unnecessary or sufficient has not given the matter enough thought to earn the trust of the community—or has come to conclusions that bring his or her reasonableness or motives into doubt. Both of these extremes suggest a deeply unrealistic worldview committed more to ideological shibboleths than to the actual work of building a pro-life culture.

Therefore, while I hesitate to suggest that the pro-life movement should enforce any *specific* political orthodoxy beyond our core issues, we should expect and, yes, enforce a high degree of thoughtfulness about what a comprehensively pro-life culture would require. Concerns about, for instance, the importance of government assistance in decreasing the demand for abortion should not be dismissed out of hand as immaterial distractions; rather, those who favor limiting assistance should argue why their position would help to construct the pro-life culture we all long for.

Finally, both in rhetoric and in substance, members and especially leaders of the anti-abortion movement should demonstrate a sincere solicitude for all vulnerable persons. Very little corrodes the reputation of the pro-life cause

more dangerously than the stench of bigotry and hypocrisy that emanates from anti-abortion partisans who speak carelessly about the poor, racial minorities, immigrants, refugees, the imprisoned, and so on. Again, this does not necessarily require taking *particular* positions on contested political issues, but it does require giving the welfare of *all* the vulnerable pride of place in our thinking and speaking about politics.

The pro-life movement is strongest when it is broadest. That means welcoming participants from as many personal, political, and intellectual backgrounds as possible. But it also means recognizing and embracing the full breadth of the implications of organizing our society around the truth of human dignity. We should not worry about violating prevailing political orthodoxies of the left or right in this effort; our distinctive consistency will draw people in more effectively than mimicking the compromising cynicism of contemporary politics.

—*Brandon McGinley is a writer and editor in Pittsburgh.*

Kathryn Jean Lopez:

There's a section in Pope John Paul II's *Evangelium Vitae* (The Gospel of Life) about "the incomparable worth of the human person" that begins:

Man is called to a fullness of life which far exceeds the dimensions of his earthly existence, because it consists in sharing the very life of God. The loftiness of this supernatural vocation reveals the greatness and the inestimable value of human life even in its temporal phase. Life in time, in fact, is the fundamental condition, the initial stage and an integral part of the entire unified process of human existence. It is a process which, unexpectedly and undeservedly, is enlightened by the promise and renewed by the gift of divine life, which will reach its full realization in eternity (cf. 1 Jn 3:1-2). At the same time, it is precisely this supernatural calling which highlights the relative character of each individual's earthly life. After all, life on earth is not an "ultimate" but a "penultimate" reality; even so, it remains a sacred reality entrusted to us, to be preserved with a sense of responsibility and brought to perfection in love and in the gift of ourselves to God and to our brothers and sisters.

I don't know about you but reading this passage makes me want to look up and see the person I might otherwise overlook. It also makes me want to look within myself, to remember that our lives are not our own and that we are made for more than we tend to settle for.

I frequently write about abortion and assisted suicide. Travesties of justice, each hurts the most vulnerable among us, ending innocent lives and leaving trails of misery to poison the lives of those directly involved—and Heaven knows how many others.

At the National Review Institute, where I am a senior fellow, we've been

focusing increasingly on adoption. You can identify as pro-choice or pro-life and still want to help women choose life for their children. There are many ways to do this, from supporting local crisis pregnancy centers to getting behind national legislation making it easier to adopt. There are children stuck in foster care right now who need people to love them.

I also have been wearing a relic of Mother Cabrini—the saint who is the patroness of immigrants—and praying for peace and progress and a humane approach to immigration policies. There are myriad issues, affecting every stage of life, that need to be urgently addressed. Start somewhere. Pray unceasingly, and do what you can to encourage solutions.

I don't think we need to change labels, but rather do more to make sure abortion isn't the default option when things look hard and impossible. Whether ending legal abortion is your thing or not, let's flood the zone with options that will help pregnant women have their babies. It's in keeping with the generosity of our nation and its history of welcoming the stranger.

I'm thinking of initiatives like Students for Life's Pregnant on Campus program, which helps students be able to give birth and stay in school. The wide network of homes and pregnancy centers that proliferate have built over the last four decades, where women find emotional as well as physical assistance. And all the non-profit foundations that help people arrange for adoption.

I am also remembering how Cardinal O'Connor pledged that pregnant women in need would find help from the Catholic Church in New York, a pledge his successors have reiterated. This kind of message should go out far and wide.

Our "throwaway culture," as Pope Francis has put it, doesn't need movement-rebranding but rather an explosion of Christian creativity—all-inclusive and unifying—and a revived commitment to responsible stewardship of God's "incomparable" creation, not just at its vulnerable beginning and end, but at all stages of life.

— *Kathryn Jean Lopez is a senior fellow at the National Review Institute and an editor-at-large of National Review.*

Kristan Hawkins:

Diluting the anti-abortion cause with vague terms like "whole life" threatens our movement's goal of abolishing abortion. The "pro-life" brand is damaged enough without causing further confusion. In the past 11 years, Students for Life has visited more than 1,600 college campuses and now serves more than 1,200 student groups annually. When we go to a campus to start a new group or help recruit for an existing one, we don't ask students if they are pro-life or pro-choice because the most common response we get is, "Huh?"

What does that mean?”

The term “pro-life” has already become almost meaningless for millions of Americans. A survey by the Institute for Pro-Life Advancement found that 53 percent of millennials believe abortion should be illegal in all or most circumstances, with 17 percent saying abortion should never be legal and 36 percent saying it should be legal only in extreme cases. However, only 36 percent of those millennials identified as “pro-life.” Poll after poll of all age groups over the past few years reveal similar gaps between respondents’ opinion on the legality of abortion and their identifying as pro-life.

At the core of what we do is a commitment to ending the greatest human-rights injustice our world has ever seen. Since it was legalized by the Supreme Court in 1973, abortion has taken over 55 million innocent lives. This is a horrific tragedy that rightly deserves a movement dedicated solely to stopping the killing. Respect for the dignity of human life begins with protecting the most defenseless and innocent members of our human family. Winning this argument will have effects that spill over into other debates.

“Whole life” or “consistent life” proponents will argue that merging abortion with other issues like the death penalty, poverty, or nuclear proliferation in one movement is necessary to convince people that we’re really serious about being pro-life. They then demand ideological purity on a whole range of issues that aren’t necessarily connected, an approach that *reduces* the potential number of people who will join our movement. It is hard enough to get people who agree that abortion should be illegal, no matter the circumstance. By bringing in other issues, we limit our ability to build a winning coalition. We should want as many people as possible to feel they can be part of our movement. We ought to expand the tribe, not limit it.

I believe the best way to do that is by being anti-abortion.

To achieve our mission, we need to be completely focused on it, in the same way any successful business or organization remains focused on its mission and what it does best. By giving in to mission creep and trying to do 100 things well, we won’t do anything well.

Just consider the Women’s March movement that began last January. While it turned into a Planned Parenthood rally in most places, there were marchers holding climate-change signs, Black Lives Matter signs, anti-Israel signs, signs demanding criminal justice reform and LGBTQ rights. The Women’s March has since embraced nearly a dozen causes, which they ask their supporters to take action on. But the movement is ineffective because it’s not focused on one, singular issue.

Choosing to focus my resources on abolishing abortion doesn’t mean I

don't care about other issues. Two of my children were born with a genetic disease; their lifespans depend on having access to the best healthcare in the world. My heart breaks for those trapped by human trafficking and modern slavery. I long for the day when there is no more war. To imply that I am indifferent to these and other challenges, as do those who insist on the "whole life" perspective, is demeaning and insulting. Abortion is enough of an injustice that it deserves its own movement, with strategic goals, concise messaging, innovative tactics, and a focused mission. There should be armies of people working in different movements with different specific missions, but all demanding respect for the dignity of all human life. These movements can work in concert, whenever possible, but should not be combined into one.

The term "whole life" was coined to make being against abortion more palatable to political liberals who would never call themselves "pro-life," a term they view as Republican, conservative, and Christian. It was an outreach tactic for bringing more liberal-leaning Americans to our movement.

Sadly, those people who identify with the term "whole life" are focusing less on trying to bring new people in from the outside and more on trying to convince those already in the "pro-life" tribe to switch their membership. Instead of expanding our movement, we are dividing it.

We have seen this happen with "whole life" and other modified pro-life terms before. One notable pro-life feminist posted on Facebook during this past election season that it was impossible to be both pro-life and a feminist, and she was choosing feminism over pro-life in how she voted. I can't tell you how many times—long before the 2016 presidential campaign got underway—I've met pro-life Democrats who, at the end of the day, vote for the pro-abortion Democrat over the pro-life Republican candidate, using the "whole life" justification.

The question is: Why do so many feel the need to qualify the pro-life label? Many millennials I've spoken with say they add something before or after calling themselves "pro-life" because they are afraid to be associated with our damaged brand. If being "pro-life" were socially acceptable, young people wouldn't rush to say, for example, "I'm pro-life—but I'm also a feminist."

At Students for Life, we don't dance around abortion. We don't try to deceive people with fluffy language. So we're using terms like "pro-life" less and less and just getting to the point of exactly what we are: anti-abortion.

—*Kristan Hawkins is president of Students for Life of America.*

Charles Camosy:

Often for reasons related to American secular politics, the Consistent Ethic of Life (CEL) is ridiculed as the product of “liberal” bishops and popes like Cardinal Bernardin and Pope Francis. But in reality, the CEL is simply the teaching of the Catholic Church. Pope St. John Paul II, because he is thought of as “conservative,” might not jump to mind as an advocate of the CEL. But anyone who has read his work—especially his 1995 encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*—cannot help but be impressed by the CEL’s strong influence on his thought.

One could predict that an encyclical on the “Gospel of Life” would have a particular focus on abortion and euthanasia, but John Paul II consistently called out a number of different-but-interrelated issues. In defending the inherent dignity of human life, especially when it is weak and defenseless, John Paul II proclaimed the Gospel of Life by drawing attention to “the ancient scourges of poverty, hunger, endemic diseases, violence and war.” The list gets longer when the Pope joins the Second Vatican Council in “forcefully condemning” the following practices which are “opposed to life itself”:

any type of murder, genocide, abortion, euthanasia, or willful self-destruction, whatever violates the integrity of the human person, such as mutilation, torments inflicted on body or mind, attempts to coerce the will itself; whatever insults human dignity, such as subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, deportation, slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children; as well as disgraceful working conditions, where people are treated as mere instruments of gain rather than as free and responsible persons; all these things and others like them are infamies indeed. They poison human society, and they do more harm to those who practice them than to those who suffer from the injury (http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25031995_evangelium-vitae.html, 3).

It shouldn’t surprise anyone that Benedict XVI reflected the views of his predecessor. In his *Caritas in Veritate*, for instance, he explicitly says the distinction between “pro-life” issues (where the Church is thought to have more conservative views) and “social-justice” issues (where the Church is thought to have more liberal views) is a false one. Abortion, euthanasia, and embryo-destructive research are to be understood as social-justice issues—just as global capitalism, ecological concern, and care for the poor are to be understood as life issues. For example, while Benedict makes a groundbreaking call for increased ecological concern in this document, in true CEL fashion he refuses to isolate this concern from what he calls “human ecology” and “integral human development”:

[T]he decisive issue is the overall moral tenor of society. If there is a lack of respect for the right to life and to a natural death, if human conception, gestation and birth are made artificial, if human embryos are sacrificed to research, the conscience of

society ends up losing the concept of human ecology and, along with it, that of environmental ecology. It is contradictory to insist that future generations respect the natural environment when our educational systems and laws do not help them to respect themselves. The book of nature is one and indivisible: it takes in not only the environment but also life, sexuality, marriage, the family, social relations: in a word, integral human development. Our duties towards the environment are linked to our duties towards the human person, considered in himself and in relation to others. It would be wrong to uphold one set of duties while trampling on the other (http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate.html, 51).

The U.S. Bishops—reflecting the last several popes—have made the CEL their primary framework when attempting to reach the larger culture with a pro-life message. The very first heading on the website of their Pro-Life office is “The Consistent Ethic of Life” and notes the following:

This focus and the Church’s commitment to a consistent ethic of life complement one another. A consistent ethic of life, which explains the Church’s teaching at the level of moral principle—far from diminishing concern for abortion and euthanasia or equating all issues touching on the dignity of human life—recognizes instead the distinctive character of each issue while giving each its proper place within a coherent moral vision. As bishops of the United States we have issued pastoral letters on war and peace, economic justice, and other social questions affecting the dignity of human life—and we have implemented programs for advancing the Church’s witness in these areas through parishes, schools, and other Church institutions (e.g., *Communities of Salt and Light* [1994]; *Sharing Catholic Social Teaching* [1998]). Taken together, these diverse pastoral statements and practical programs constitute no mere assortment of unrelated initiatives but rather a consistent strategy in support of all human life in its various stages and circumstances (<http://www.usccb.org/about/pro-life-activities/pastoral-plan-prolife-activities.cfm>).

Some argue that the CEL is misguided because a pro-life ethic must only focus on direct killing (as occurs in abortion and euthanasia) and not on supporting those who need help. But this attitude, again, comes from liberal/conservative secular political debates in the United States rather than the actual teaching of the Catholic Church. The *Catechism*, for instance, claims that “the fifth commandment [thou shalt not kill] forbids doing anything with the intention of *indirectly* bringing about a person’s death. The moral law prohibits exposing someone to mortal danger without grave reason, as well as refusing assistance to a person in danger.” It then goes on to quote St. Ambrose: “The acceptance by human society of murderous famines, without efforts to remedy them, is a scandalous injustice and a grave offense. Those whose usurious and avaricious dealings lead to the hunger and death of their brethren in the human family indirectly commit homicide, which is imputable to them” (http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p3s2c2a5.htm).

As a faithful Roman Catholic, I believe the CEL has been revealed by God as moral truth. In a related story, as a prolife, I believe the CEL is required for our movement to authentically honor the dignity of the human person.

— *Charles Camosy is an associate professor of theological and social ethics in the theology department at Fordham University.*

Anne Hendershott:

If one wishes to convince others that the whole-life approach to protecting the unborn is preferable to the traditional pro-life movement, hurling insults at the pro-life community is not the place to start. Unfortunately, this has been the strategy adopted by some of the most articulate advocates of the whole-life position. Accusing the pro-life community of “using the unborn as human shields” in political debate, whole-life proponents like Mark Shea, a former columnist at *The National Catholic Register*, now a blogger at *Patheos*, suggest that the pro-life movement has “mutated into a heresy” (<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/markshea/2017/03/prolife-movement-large-measure-mutated-heresy.html>), and claim that too often when it comes to protecting minority children, pro-life people “hide behind their Precious Feet pins” (<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/markshea/2016/07/an-honest-and-heartfelt-exchange-with-a-friend-who-feels-that-ive-changed.html>).

Likewise, *Patheos* blogger Rebecca Bratten Weiss accuses the pro-life movement of being “infected with misogyny, not just on the cranky edges, but right down the middle.” For Bratten Weiss, recognizing the dignity of unborn human life “can only make sense in the context of recognizing the dignity of all human life. This means eliminating the causes that drive women to abortion; it means working to end racism and domestic abuse and rape and gun violence and poor working conditions; it means opposing all war, all capital punishment . . . Oh, and let’s take it a step further. Let’s respect all life, not just human life. That means radical opposition to all cruelty towards animals, poaching, factory farming, and the commodification of pets” (<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/suspendedinherjar/2016/05/now-is-the-time-to-be-whole-life/>).

While Robert Christian, editor of *Millennial*, the online journal of Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good, has attempted to make a persuasive case for the whole-life movement, he cannot resist taking a nasty swipe at traditional prolife when he writes that we need a “better” pro-life movement—“only a whole-life approach can make the pro-life movement authentically pro-life.” And, like Bratten Weiss, Christian provides a long list of issues which he defines as pro-life, including ending global poverty,

saving the environment, enacting immigration reform, promoting gun control, ending racial injustice, and reforming the criminal justice system. Christian relegates abortion to just another issue on that very long list (<https://millennialjournal.com/2016/02/03/what-is-the-whole-life-movement/>).

That is the real problem with the whole-life movement. When a commitment to saving the lives of unborn children is equated with opposition to “commodifying pets,” the mission and the message of protecting unborn children become muddled. That is likely the intention of whole-life advocates, because the movement itself is focused on political rather than life issues. While many of those affiliated with the whole-life movement have accused traditional proliferators of politicizing the unborn through their support for candidates running on the Republican Party’s pro-life platform, the truth is that many whole-life movement leaders—including Robert Christian—are committed to convincing Catholic voters that pro-choice Democratic nominees for public office actually will do more than Republicans to reduce abortion. Robert Christian’s own George Soros-supported Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good was created to help elect pro-choice Democrats. Leaked emails from longtime Democratic Party operative John Podesta confirm that Podesta personally helped launch CACG to infiltrate the Catholic Church and challenge Catholic teachings on life issues like abortion. Calling it a “Catholic Spring,” Podesta acknowledged that he “created” these groups to provoke a progressive revolution in the Catholic Church (https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/acts-of-faith/wp/2016/10/12/wikileaks-emails-show-clinton-spokeswoman-joking-about-catholics-and-evangelicals/?utm_term=.987bac9b2210).

For more than a decade, many within the traditional pro-life community sought to expose CACG’s political agenda, publishing articles on its funding sources and its duplicitous attempts to neutralize the abortion issue by, for example, suggesting that even though the Democratic Party platform essentially endorses abortion on demand, Democratic policies addressing poverty would reduce abortion rates more than Republican policies would. In 2008, CACG released a study by Michael Bailey of Georgetown University and Joseph Wright of Penn State, in which the professors claimed to have “discovered evidence that abortion rates could be driven down by redistributive policies aiding low-income Americans.” They also implied that legislation to restrict access to abortion had little to no effect on abortion rates. Their study, however, was shown to contain faulty data by social researchers, and CACG was forced to retract it (<https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052970204731804574384702313364172>).

It is not surprising that progressive activists create progressive organizations

devoted to electing progressive politicians. Conservatives do the same thing. But from the start, CACG promoted progressive politicians and public policies designed to expand abortion rights—while accusing traditional proliferers of “using” the unborn to elect Republicans.

Insisting the pro-life movement needed to be “purified” by moving away from what Christian has called a “simplistic focus on a single issue,” the whole-life movement is already a bit late to the struggle. In many ways, Christian, Shea, Bratten Weiss, and others seem to have missed the fact that the pro-life movement is already helping to change the culture surrounding abortion by winning many battles at the state level—over waiting periods, ultrasound and parental notification requirements, and restrictions on late term abortion. More than 300 policies to protect the unborn have been passed in the states in the past five years alone—with little help from those in the whole-life movement. The number of abortions in each of those years has fallen to pre-*Roe*-era levels—the lowest in more than four decades. Many of these gains are due to the selfless efforts of the traditional pro-life community and its pro-life religious leaders. We now have a pro-life president who has promised to appoint pro-life judges. Yet just as victory appears possible at the level of the Supreme Court, the whole-lifers want us to give up our “single issue focus” on the unborn. We need to ignore them.

—Anne Hendershott is Director of the Veritas Center for Ethics in Public Life at Franciscan University, Steubenville, Ohio.

Aimee Murphy:

I was walking around downtown last weekend, minding my own headspace (or trying to), when quite suddenly I was struck by the sheer diversity of those gracing the streets of my city. There are so many differences among us—our ages and our skin colors, our sizes and our shapes, our sexualities and our gender identities, our abilities and our educational attainment, our economic classes and our religions, our levels of innocence and dependence. Yet a common thread ran from each to each: our humanness. It was an existential moment, in which I saw our connectedness laid out in front of me like a spider’s web sprawling for miles. And I was reminded of these words of Martin Luther King, Jr.: “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” Indeed, when we support an act of violence against one human being, we undermine our support for all human rights. The multifarious circumstances of our lives matter not a lick to the question of our dignity and worth. Truly and honestly caring for human rights necessarily requires a deep, profound, and pervasive respect for our shared, inherent human dignity; it

requires a personalist worldview that puts the human at the center of all that we do.

We can accept that “pro-life” is a single-issue word meaning only “opposition to abortion,” or we can take it to its logical end (and its beginning!) by extending the respect for the inalienable right to life to each and every human being in each and every circumstance. It is dismaying that the mainstream pro-life movement has been tied so closely to a political party whose leaders (and often constituents) support hawkish war policies that kill civilians overseas, throw their weight behind the death penalty, and give credence to torture and “enhanced interrogation.” We often hear that pro-lifers don’t care about people after they’re born—why does that stereotype persist? Perhaps part of the reason is that consistent-life-ethic supporters (like me) have been pushed to the fringes of the pro-life movement. Cardinal Bernardin has been made out to be a villain by some pro-life leaders, yet the question among most of those who embrace the consistent-life ethic isn’t whether ending abortion is the most urgent cause we could champion (it most certainly is), but whether being pro-life ends there.

I’ve been accused of using the consistent-life ethic as a tactic. I’ve been accused of heading a front group for some right-wing conspiracy. I’ve been accused of not truly caring about ending violence against the unborn. But none of these charges is true. I don’t embrace the consistent-life ethic because it’s a good strategy for reaching disenfranchised and disillusioned millennials (though it is). I don’t embrace the consistent-life ethic to get people to become conservatives (I’m pretty left-leaning myself). I don’t embrace the consistent-life ethic to give cover for leftist politicians who campaign hard for the abortion industry (I have not once voted for or supported a politician who supported abortion).

I embrace the consistent-life ethic simply because it is true.

It is true no matter your age or size or race or sexuality or religion or gender identity or ability or class or level of innocence or dependence: Human beings have inherent, unchangeable worth and dignity. This worth and dignity demands respect, demands that we be treated always as ends in ourselves and never as mere means. Out of this worth and dignity flows the inherent and inalienable right to live free from violence.

So when I say that being pro-life should necessarily require opposition to all forms of aggressive violence, it is not because I am trying to equate abortion and war, or imply that torture and embryonic-stem-cell research are equivalent, or say that euthanasia and capital punishment are the same. It is because all of us, as members of the human family sharing this same intrinsic human worth, are connected. “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”

And each act of aggressive violence that we perpetuate in our culture and in our laws compounds the disregard for human dignity.

We need to stop choosing sides. We need to stop allowing our movements for life and for human rights to be dragged slavishly behind political parties that could care less about actually passing laws to abolish abortion, stop war, or otherwise end legalized violence against human beings. We need to be strong, principled, and above all: human-centered. This doesn't by any means imply that we slow down or do less in our efforts to end abortion (it is, after all, the most urgent issue by sheer numbers and complicity alone); but it means that we refuse to treat *any* human being as expendable in our search for justice. Because, in the end, we are all connected by the only thread that matters: our humanity.

—*Aimee Murphy is executive director of Rehumanize International.*

Kevin D. Williamson:

The worst part of abortion is the violence it inflicts on the unborn. The second-worst part of abortion is the violence it inflicts on the truth.

Those who favor abortion favor euphemism: “choice,” “women’s health care,” etc. They rely on euphemism for the same reason they feel the need to suppress and exclude protesters carrying signs with images they deem shocking, “graphic,” or, in the insipid language of the moment, “triggering”—and for the same reason they object so strenuously to measures such as the Texas sonogram law: The rhetoric of abortion cannot withstand the reality of abortion. Those protest placards bearing images of fetal remains are shocking, but only because they make plain and undeniable the truth of what abortion is and what it does. Abortion is the intentional killing, often through gruesome means, of a living human organism at an early stage of development.

Those of us who oppose the intentional killing of those living human organisms ought not feel any need for euphemism, even if the convention of describing ourselves as “pro-life” is at least a little euphemistic. To the extent that adopting the labels “whole life” or “consistent life” is merely adopting euphemism, it ought to be rejected. It is the case that the label “pro-life” comes with some unwelcome cultural baggage: thundering preachers in polyester suits assuring young women in terrible circumstances that they are bound for eternal damnation and all that. Some of that is a result of political caricature and media exaggeration, but it is not the result of pure invention, either. The fix for the negative associations of the term “pro-life” isn’t pretending that we are somebody else—the fix for that is for us to be better than we have been.

But “whole life” and “consistent life” are not innovations in language only. They also represent a distinct school of thought holding that the campaign against abortion should be linked to other causes broadly involving questions of “life,” such as opposition to capital punishment or support for anti-poverty programs. Some of that tendency is genuine, though some of it is cynical political calculation, too: Many leaders in the pro-life movement believe that they will have more success in the political realm and endure less intense hostility in the popular culture if they emphasize goals that appeal to political progressives rather than those that appeal to conservatives. Many in the clergy, particularly the traditionally liberal Catholic bishops of the United States, have adopted the “seamless garment” both as a rhetoric and a sincerely held set of principles.

This is a mistake. While capital punishment is generally undesirable—and as practiced in the United States is horrifying—it is a fundamentally different kind of issue. That is true as a religious question (no matter how energetically the U.S. bishops may misrepresent their own teachings on the subject) and as a secular political question: Putting a prisoner to death for having committed murder is a different kind of proposition from putting a child to death for being inconvenient. Even if we concede that the same high regard for life that causes us to seek to protect the child should also soften our hearts toward the criminal, that shared sentiment does not bridge the moral or political distance between those fundamentally different situations.

Abortion and capital punishment may be said to be procedurally similar in that both involve the intentional taking of a human life with the blessing of the state. That is a similarity so rough and general as to be politically and morally useless. But the “whole life” school of thought would conjoin even more vaguely related proposals. Of course it is the case that those of us who oppose abortion should also care about the situation of children and mothers in difficult personal and economic situations. (So should people who do not oppose abortion.) Atomistic, Randian individualism exists in American politics mainly within the imaginations of progressives who believe themselves to be opposing it. In truth, Left and Right in the United States both believe in community and charity, and both broadly accept the legitimacy of social-welfare programs. Even F. A. Hayek, the 20th century’s great critic of overly ambitious government, made room in his political economy for a reasonably generous welfare state. Our political fights over issues such as health care and anti-poverty programs are not disagreements about how and whether we value human life, but are mainly about economic incentives, program design, and trade-offs. These are questions for compromise and negotiation—and abortion is not.

We ought not be afraid to say who we are or what we think, because what proliferators propose—that putting unborn children to death is a scandal and a crime—is eminently reasonable. When we talk about the basic facts of abortion, the first reaction of our opponents is to try to change the subject. We ought not be changing the subject for them.

—Kevin D. Williamson is director of the National Review Institute's William F. Buckley Jr Fellowship Program in Political Journalism.

Matthew Schmitz:

Come quickly, Lord. Devils and fools have been saying that “pro-life” is too narrow a label and needs to be replaced with “whole-life” or “consistent-life.” Why not follow this logic to its end and label our movement “People who favor good things but not at the expense of other things that also happen to be good”? Or, if that’s a bit wordy, “Utopians for Utopia”?

Online debates have produced an ugly term that also happens to be a useful concept: *concern trolling*. Someone who “concern trolls” claims to be in fundamental agreement with a cause but spends all his time raising minor “concerns” or tactical objections against those who advance it, thereby derailing action with pointless disputation.

People who would have us call ourselves “consistent life” are either concern trolls or have been deluded by them. One need not oppose any of the good things they favor to see that their objections are beside the point. If the pro-life movement gave equal attention to every evil in the world, it would fail to end any of them.

Much as I hate the proposals of the would-be rebranders, I have to confess that I don’t care for the term “pro-life” either. It seems that every other week someone publishes the “pro-life” case for this or that: pacifism! veganism!—even abortion. Intriguing as it may be to debate the meaning of life, somewhere along the line we seem to have forgotten about protecting the unborn.

Twenty years ago, a certain Jim McFadden once put the point nicely: “Why do we eschew ‘pro-life’ and call ourselves ‘anti-abortion’? The short answer is, honesty: ‘pro-life’ is a euphemism that has been effectively countered (with endless media support) by ‘pro-choice’—we do not ‘link’ abortion with any other issues; that led to the ‘Seamless Garment’ which *in effect* holds that, in a perfect world, abortion would disappear. No, we see *Roe v. Wade* as our *Dred Scott*, and abortion as the analogue to slavery; the Abolitionists were not afraid to be ‘negative’—they fought not for Utopia but against slavery *alone*—they saw it as a singular evil that *could* be defeated in both the moral and *political* realms.”

A growing number of abortion opponents see things McFadden's way. Earlier this year, Kristan Hawkins, president of Students for Life of America, told the *Washington Post* that she considers herself anti-abortion rather than pro-life. "We're against abortion. I think it's much simpler. It gets across what we're about in a faster way . . . To say you're against it is okay. I am anti-smoking. I'm anti-sex trafficking. I'm anti-drunk driving. And yes, I'm anti-abortion."

Debates about whether we should be *consistent life*, *whole life*, or plain old *pro life* ought to remind us of the virtues of precision. From first to last, we are anti-abortion. All else distracts.

—*Matthew Schmitz is Literary Editor of First Things.*



"Maybe you should find another book group."

Why We Must Become Pro Abundant Life

Roland C. Warren

ABSTRACT: Over the last few years, there has been a debate in the pro-life movement concerning whether or not our messaging should be more focused on women or the unborn. In the midst of this debate, many have embraced a primarily woman-centered messaging that highlights abortion's effects on women. After several years of this messaging, progress is still needed to overcome the constant refrain in the media and Washington that abortion is a fundamental right of feminism. More importantly, if we are not careful, this message can substitute one oversimplification of the issue for another. Instead of primarily talking about abortion's impact on the unborn, it talks about abortion's impact on women. Of course, these messages are needed. But, it is important to constantly evaluate the effectiveness of these messages and their impact on changing America's culture of death. Therefore, rather than choosing to focus on either babies or women, a more effective message to consider is one that more accurately and winsomely recognizes that abortion affects women, men, families, and the unborn. Accordingly, solutions to abortion must address all of its causes, consequences, and victims if they are to be successful.

Abortion. Hardly any topic garners such strident responses in America's political climate. More than forty years after the Supreme Court's ruling in *Roe v. Wade*, about one million babies are aborted every year.¹ After four decades of entrenched political discourse, pro-life organizations are rightly debating what messaging best challenges abortion and the abortion culture that has emerged post-*Roe*. The biggest debate seems to center on whether pro-life organizations should focus on abortion's impact on the unborn, its impact on women, or its impact on both.

Life-focused Messaging

Pro-life advocates have always argued that abortion is the destruction of life. The opposition has argued that abortion simply removes a “clump of cells” from a woman's uterus—not destroying life, but preventing a pregnancy from becoming a human life. As ultrasound technology improved, pro-life advocates increased their resolve. Ever-clearer images of babies in the womb with tiny hands, feet, and faces seemed irrefutably representative

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of *life*. Arguments and apologetics were developed that highlighted the logical similarities between the child in the womb and the child in the crib, saliently pointing out that to justify the destruction of one was to justify the destruction of the other.

These arguments were predicated on the hope that people would become pro-life if they realized a human life was at stake. Unfortunately, however, history is filled with examples of the powerful preying on the weak, fully knowing that their victims were human beings. Few slave owners in the Antebellum South, or Nazi prison guards in World War II, believed that the slave on the auction block or the prisoner on his way to the gas chamber was not a person.

They were recognized as persons, but persons worth selling and sacrificing. The slave owners and Nazi soldiers were not dehumanizing their victims; they were sub-humanizing them.

Even with the advent of 4D ultrasound technology, fetal heart monitors, and stories of babies surviving birth at less than 25 weeks, nearly one million abortions will likely happen this year.² Simply highlighting the humanity of the unborn child, no matter how true and important that may be, has not swayed as many as we would like. Pregnancy center workers can attest to stories of women seeing fully formed babies on ultrasound screens yet choosing abortion anyway.

Moreover, pro-choice advocates are now using the language of personhood to describe the unborn, while denying them their rights as persons. In 2013, *Salon* magazine published an article entitled “So what if abortion ends life?”³ In it, Mary Elizabeth Williams argued that pro-choice activists were “illogically contradictory” for referring to the unborn as clumps of cells one moment and then celebrating a pregnancy or mourning a miscarriage the next. Even Williams agreed that “life is life.”

Rather than arguing that abortion does not sacrifice life, she wrote that activists should argue that the fetus is a “life worth sacrificing.” According to Williams, “A fetus can be a human life without having the same rights as the woman in whose body it resides. She’s the boss. Her life and what is right for her circumstances and her health should automatically trump the rights of the non-autonomous entity inside of her.” Her conclusion? Activists should embrace the truth that “all life is not equal.”

Rather than being representative of some radical pro-choice fringe, however, Williams’ views are now mainstreamed in the rhetoric used by the nation’s largest abortion advocates.

For example, NARAL’s video, *Comedians in Cars Getting Abortions*,⁴ featured a woman saying that she was tired of her body incubating a “per-

son.” Hillary Clinton defended abortion by saying that the “unborn person” does not have any constitutional rights.⁵ And a recent article in *Romper* was written by a pro-choice activist who said that becoming a mother made her more pro-choice than ever before.⁶

With the pro-choice community adopting the language of personhood to defend abortion, some have argued that pro-life advocates must double down on woman-focused messaging to win the fight against abortion. They point to the Center for Medical Progress’s undercover videos and the resulting public backlash against Planned Parenthood as evidence of how successful such messaging can be. Additionally, such messaging allows pro-life people to attack, head on, the claim that abortion empowers women.⁷

Woman-Focused Messaging

Planned Parenthood and NARAL have long argued that abortion must be a fundamental right of women and have linked it to feminism. Couching abortion in terms like “reproductive freedom” and “autonomy,” they argue that a primary reason women have grown in social power is because they have the power to control the lives in their womb.

The problem with this line of reasoning is that the research has not found abortion to be a contributing factor of the increased social mobility, economic power, or political power of women.⁸ Additionally, multiple studies have found that abortion is often used to further *reduce* feminine empowerment.

The Guttmacher Institute’s own data found that half of the women who have an abortion say they were having difficulties with the father of the child.⁹ A recent national survey by Care Net found that 6 out of 10 women who have had abortions cite the father of the baby as the person with whom they are most likely to discuss their abortion decision.¹⁰

More than half of the women who are trapped in sex trafficking, researchers found, have experienced abortion, many of them under the coercion of their pimps.¹¹ Due to sex-selected abortion and infanticide, there are over 100 million women missing worldwide.¹² Experts now refer to this phenomenon as “gendercide.”¹³ In addition, every year women are threatened or killed by their boyfriends for refusing to abort their children.

A study on the psychological effects of abortion published in the American Medical Association’s *Archives of General Psychiatry*—a study that is often used by the pro-choice community to argue that abortion causes no ill effects—found that a full 20 percent of women experience regret, depression, and other emotional and psychological reactions after an abortion.¹⁴

With approximately one million abortions a year, that would mean as many

as two hundred thousand women suffering psychological harm each year.

Perhaps this is why Frederica Mathewes-Green has said, “There is a tremendous sadness and loneliness in the cry ‘A woman’s right to choose.’ No one wants an abortion as she wants an ice-cream cone or a Porsche. She wants an abortion as an animal, caught in a trap, wants to gnaw off its own leg.”¹⁵

With such ample evidence that abortion harms women, embracing a woman-focused pro-life message may seem to be the logical choice. It addresses the increasing evidence that abortion harms women and directly confronts the pro-choice position.

However, after several years of this messaging, little progress has been made in overcoming the constant refrain in the entertainment and news media and in Washington that abortion is a fundamental right of feminism. When pro-life organizations say that abortion harms women, the media reports that pro-life people are deceiving women. When pro-life people say that some women suffer from psychological effects due to their abortions, the media ignores the data and claims the facts are being twisted.

Arguing that to be pro-life is to be pro-woman, though true, is an uphill battle. The news media and the entertainment industry have perpetrated the deception that abortion empowers women and that those who oppose abortion oppose women’s rights. When coupled with the countless millions of dollars of annual funding that NOW, NARAL, Planned Parenthood, National Abortion Federation, and other abortion lobbyists secure, the complicity of the media and Hollywood ensures that stories about crises such as gendercide barely make a dent in the public conversation.

The Pro Abundant Life Message

When examining the data available on abortions in the United States, it becomes clear that the circumstances leading to a woman’s unplanned pregnancy and subsequent abortion remain with her long after her baby dies.

The pro-choice community largely ignores this reality. Abortion defenders have long treated the issue solely as one of a woman’s immediate choice to terminate her pregnancy. In so doing, they do a great disservice to the woman, the father of the child, and their unborn child. Women facing difficult pregnancy decisions are not given the help they need to see beyond their immediate situation into the possible ramifications of their decisions.

Abortion eliminates the baby, but not the poverty, sexual abuse, and relationship difficulties the mother faces that often lead her to consider abortion. Once her abortion is complete, the abortion clinic’s services and assistance end.

Pro-life people have the opportunity to confront the realities of unplanned

pregnancy and abortion head on through their messaging. We do not agree with the pro-choice movement that abortion is solely a “women’s issue”; rather than focusing only on abortion’s destruction of unborn life, however, pro-life messaging should proclaim the holistic truth that abortion harms women, babies, fathers, families, and communities. In doing so, we will discover that the breakdown of marriage and the family over the past four decades has directly contributed to the acceptance of our nation’s abortion-on-demand culture.

Logically speaking, if pro-life objections to abortion are solely based on its effects on the unborn or on women, then pro-life services won’t effectively break the cycle of abortion in families and communities. Indeed, pro-life work cannot just be about saving a baby, as God-honoring as this is; it must also be about raising a child.

So, rather than rejecting a baby-focused message in favor of a woman-focused message, the pro-life movement should consider a more holistic message that has the power to transform lives. This requires embracing and promoting marriage, encouraging responsible fatherhood, and consistently sharing the transformative message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It means providing compassion, hope, and help to those facing pregnancy decisions so that they are empowered to choose life for their unborn children and abundant life for their families.

At Care Net, we use the term “pro abundant life” to describe this new approach.

It is an approach with a strong foundation because it is derived from an accurate assessment of what abortion really is. Abortion is not wrong only because it is an attack on the sanctity of human life; it is also wrong because it is an attack on the sanctity of marriage and family as God designed.

The Christmas story serves as the inspiration for this approach. When Mary faced an unplanned pregnancy, the angel Gabriel did not stop at delivering the message of abundant life to her; he also delivered it to Joseph so that he could provide her with a loving home and help to raise Jesus in a loving family. God’s choice for His Son was for Him to be raised by a mother *and father*. The goals of the Sexual Revolution stand in stark contrast to this divine ideal.

When the Supreme Court legalized abortion during the height of the Sexual Revolution, they attempted to change when motherhood and fatherhood begin. Now, from our culture’s viewpoint, motherhood begins at conception, but fatherhood begins at birth. This creates perverse incentives for unattached men to avoid the responsibilities of fatherhood by pressuring their partners to abort. On the flip side of the equation, it means that committed men have

no social or legal say as to what happens to their child before birth.

For the champions of sexual “freedom,” this detachment was vitally necessary. Freedom to engage in sex whenever and with whomever one wished brought with it tremendous opportunity for unplanned motherhood and fatherhood. Children threatened sexual freedom and the unencumbered sexual lifestyle sought by its advocates. Contraception, while robust, was not completely reliable and still allowed the possibility of pregnancy. Social pressures often meant that pregnancy, especially in the 1970s and before, resulted in marriage. Goodbye sexual freedom. This is why the sexual revolution’s leadership called for abortion. Their revolution could have no “victory” without it.

Forty years after *Roe*, our culture still reels from the delinking of marriage, motherhood, fatherhood, sex, and pregnancy. While *Roe*’s advocates argued that legalized abortion would reduce the number of out-of-wedlock births,¹⁶ they have only skyrocketed.¹⁷ And so have the number of single-mother homes, which tend to be the poorest homes in the nation.¹⁸

The pro-choice movement has framed abortion as a “women’s issue” for precisely this reason—it isolates the woman and, oddly, they view this autonomy as empowering. So, by using women-centered messaging, the pro-life movement could end up reinforcing this narrative, despite the reality that a woman at risk for abortion really needs support from the father of her child, her family, her church, and her community. Indeed, a holistic Pro Abundant Life message, rather than isolating the woman, “surrounds” her both rhetorically and programmatically with the loving support she needs to consider alternatives to abortion and to avoid becoming a repeat client of either an abortion clinic *or* a life-affirming alternative, such as a pregnancy center.

The Role of Healthy Marriages and Responsible Fatherhood

Central to the Pro Abundant Life approach is its emphasis on marriage as both a deterrent to abortion *and* a source of hope after life is chosen. Marriage deters abortion because children who grow up with married parents are less likely to engage in the risky sexual behaviors that lead to unplanned pregnancies.¹⁹ Marriage’s benefits continue into adulthood, because we know that 86 percent of abortions are among unmarried women.²⁰ Furthermore, the possibility of a high-quality and low-conflict marriage for the woman and man involved in an unplanned pregnancy can act as a deterrent to her abortion choice. Specifically, research shows that women consider the father of the baby to be the most influential party in her abortion decision.²¹ He is also the party she is most likely to tell about her pregnancy before she gets an abortion.²² Her very act of telling him and involving him in her decision

reveals her desire for him to step up to his responsibility to the unborn child she is carrying. After all, if she was not hoping for a life-affirming response from him, why tell him? He could tell others whom she does not want to know, or worse, place obstacles in her way.

Finally, we know that the best way to ensure that children not only survive but thrive is to have their own two married parents raise them. It cannot be the goal of the pro-life movement to be satisfied with creating a generation of children raised by single mothers. We should certainly celebrate the saving of a life and the formation of a family. And we should certainly provide the new single mother and her child with the support they need. But if we are to believe our own rhetoric (backed by decades of social science research) that children in unmarried or father-absent homes face significant challenges in life, then we are, ironically, giving ammunition to the faulty pro-choice argument that “the child would have been better off never having been born.” When the pro-life movement leaves marriage and fatherhood out of the conversation, we are helping to create situations that we’ve spent decades trying to reduce: unwed childbearing, father absence, and the breakdown of the family.

Instead, we should be acknowledging the truth that children in father-absent homes are two to four times more likely to live in poverty, use drugs, drop out of school, be abused or neglected, be obese, become incarcerated, and have emotional or behavioral problems.²³ Moreover, they are more likely to be sexually active—and, therefore, more at risk for abortion.²⁴

In other words, the work of the Pro Abundant Life movement doesn’t end when the baby’s life is saved from abortion; it only begins there. Accordingly, the work of providing parenting, relationship, and marriage education to parents who have just chosen life must be fully integrated into every aspect of the pro-life movement.

The Role of the Gospel

Finally, the Pro Abundant Life message is centered on the truth that lasting change is not found only in intellectually proving abortion’s harm to women and their children—it is found in the person of Jesus Christ. After more than forty years of providing compassion, hope, and help to clients at its affiliated pregnancy centers, Care Net has found that intellectual arguments or religious exposure are often an insufficient barrier to the social and situational pressures to abort. Of note, 4 out of 10 women who have had an abortion were attending church at least once a month at the time of their abortion.²⁵ These women likely knew that abortion was wrong and violated their Christian values, but their circumstances made them believe that it was

their only choice. This research caused Care Net to create the first curriculum designed to provide churches with the ministry on-ramp necessary to engage abortion-vulnerable women and men with the message of abundant life. *Making Life Disciples* gives churches the tools they need to raise the pro-life IQ of their congregations to offer healing to those who need it most.

Indeed, women in these situations crave the compassion, hope, and help found in people who live out Christ's call to love their neighbors as themselves. Perhaps this is why Christ told His disciples that they would be known by their love. When women receive this loving care at Care Net centers, 80 percent of them choose life for their unborn child. *Roe v. Wade* did not have to be overturned in the Supreme Court for it to be overturned in their hearts.

Conclusion

Over 60 million babies have died in the United States since *Roe v. Wade* was decided. Much energy has been spent and much ink spilled trying to craft a message that can stem the tide of abortion and overturn the ruling, yet about one million abortions will likely still take place this year. Abortion is an assault on the sanctity of life *and* the sanctity of marriage and the family as God designed. Therefore, our messaging must reflect an understanding of this. And, our work must offer the compassion, hope, and help that mothers, fathers, and unborn children desperately need, while casting a compelling call to them to form stable and loving families. To do this, Pro Abundant Life messaging and outreach are essential.

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On the Moral Wrongness of Suicide: **Self-Murder and Euthanasia**

Mathew Lu

In a 2016 Gallup survey on American moral attitudes, only 18 percent of respondents deemed suicide “morally acceptable” while 53 percent accepted “doctor-assisted suicide.”¹ If most people think that plain suicide is wrong, why do so many of these same people think that it’s not wrong when performed by a doctor? My best guess is that they simply don’t consider doctor-assisted suicide to be a type of suicide at all; they believe it is an entirely different sort of act.

I think they are mistaken, but to see why we need to be clear about exactly why plain suicide is morally wrong. My analysis will not be particularly novel. As it turns out, once we analyze suicide properly, we will see that its moral wrongness is well captured in an older name for it: *self-murder*.² I hope to show why this is so by carefully defining both “suicide” and “murder.”³ Once we have the proper moral framework in place, we can apply the same sort of analysis to euthanasia and see that it too is wrong for more or less the same reasons.

The Moral Wrongness of Plain Suicide

Murder is not simply the killing of a human being. Morally speaking, murder is the intentional killing of an innocent person. Conceptually, there are three distinct aspects to murder: (1) it must be an intentional act; (2) the victim must be a person; (3) the victim must be morally innocent. If any of these three conditions are not met, then the act in question is not murder. Needless to say, killings short of murder still involve moral (and legal) questions. A drunk driver who kills through negligence is rightly imprisoned. The killing of non-persons (e.g., animals) can also be wrong. Nonetheless, it is for good reason that murder tends to be the paradigmatic example of a morally evil act.

Most people accept, in principle at least, that there are examples of morally permissible intentional killing. The most uncontroversial is killing in self-defense. While some argue that even in self-defense one may not intend the death of the assailant, most agree that killing an unlawful assailant in defense of one’s life (or the lives of other innocent persons) is generally permissible.

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Similarly, I think most also accept that killing in a just war is permissible. More controversially, capital punishment may also be an example of justified intentional killing so long as certain conditions are met (such as a fair trial, etc.).

To determine if suicide really is self-murder, we should begin by asking whether suicide meets these three conditions. At first it may seem that we can simply set aside intentionality (1) and personhood (2), since an accidental self-killing is unintentional and the “victim” is surely a person. This seems right in the paradigmatic cases of suicide where someone with a relatively clear mind intends his own death. The question can be complicated, however, by the fact that many (if not most) people who attempt suicide suffer from one of a variety of mental disorders, such as extreme depression. If those disorders are severe enough, there may be serious questions about the intentional nature of the act, just as mental disorders can sometimes be at least partially exculpatory in the killing of others. Additionally, advocates of “doctor-assisted suicide” sometimes raise questions about the personhood of extremely incapacitated patients, such as those in a “persistent vegetative state.”⁴

While these issues might complicate the moral evaluation of particular deaths, they don’t fundamentally alter the overall moral analysis of suicide as such. The key issue is the innocence criterion, because whatever else it is, suicide is clearly an example of the intentional killing of a human person. In short, then, the real moral question is whether intentional self-killing can ever be justified in something like the way intentional other-killing is justified in cases like self-defense.

The obvious place to start is with the distinctive fact that in suicide the same person is both killer and killed. Can this fact alone justify the killing? In general, the killing of a human being can only be justified when the person killed is not morally innocent. In self-defense cases, for instance, the assailant loses his innocence precisely owing to his unjustified attack; therefore, if he is killed by someone warding off his attack, the assailant’s death is not the death of an innocent person. Similarly, if capital punishment is justified, it is precisely because the executed criminal is not innocent.

Can the fact that in suicide the killer is the person killed somehow render that person not innocent? Specifically, can someone give up moral innocence simply by choosing to do so? I think that the answer is obvious once we think about the fact that nobody can legitimately give someone else permission to kill him. Of course, there have been many actual cases like this, but the victims’ cooperation with their killers does nothing to change the killers’ moral culpability. Naturally, it’s possible for someone to *lose* his moral

innocence in consequence of committing an immoral act (as with the assailant above), but the state of innocence cannot be surrendered at will any more than guilt can be surrendered.

If this is correct, it is difficult to see how or why the fact that the suicide kills *himself* should, by itself, affect the objective fact of his moral innocence. Since one can lose moral innocence only in consequence of committing an evil act, the only way in which a suicide loses his innocence is precisely in consequence of his (attempted) self-murder, and that loss of innocence is obviously subsequent to the (attempted) suicide. Whatever one thinks of the near-universal decriminalization of suicide, the traditional legal condemnations of suicide made sense from the standpoint of justice. In any case, the mere subjective desire (or intention) to die cannot discharge the objective fact of someone's being in a state of moral innocence.

Many advocates of the moral permissibility of suicide (or euthanasia) tend to argue that the right to suicide is an expression of autonomy. Many of them presume that they own their own bodies, and seem to think a right to suicide directly follows from that fact. Whether or not we own our bodies, however, no legitimate expression of autonomy can violate an objective state of innocence.⁵ This is clear enough in the case of other-killing, as I noted above. My autonomy over my own life does not allow me to give somebody else permission to kill me. My state of moral innocence is an objective fact about the world. I do not somehow own my innocence in such a way that I could give it away or destroy it. Accordingly, properly understood, moral autonomy consists in a right to do what is morally permissible.

Defined in this way, the central moral principle is clear. The state of moral innocence is an *objective* fact about the world. The immorality of suicide consists precisely in that suicide is an attack on an innocent person. Neither the identity of killer and killed nor his *subjective* desire to die can change the objective fact of his being in a state of moral innocence. Accordingly, the wrongness of suicide is just the wrongness of murder. In suicide innocent blood is shed, and the moral wrongness of the act isn't changed even if the murder was self-inflicted.⁶

None of this means, of course, that victims of (attempted) suicide should be denied compassion or psychological treatment. As I noted above, most people who attempt suicide are suffering from mental disorders that might legitimately call into question their mental competence and capacity for moral responsibility. Nonetheless, it is important to be very clear about the objective moral wrong involved in suicide, even if, prudentially, questions of punishment are sometimes properly set aside.

Now that we have established the proper framework for evaluating the

moral permissibility of plain suicide, we are in a position to turn to the question of doctor-assisted suicide (euthanasia). Our analysis will determine that doctor-assisted suicide is no more justified than plain suicide (and perhaps even less so). As before, our analysis will turn on the question of moral innocence.

The Moral Wrongness of Doctor-Assisted Suicide

As I noted above, despite the overwhelming consensus against plain suicide, many of the same people who reject suicide regard euthanasia as morally permissible. The only way this makes sense is if they think that doctor-assisted suicide isn't really suicide at all. In all likelihood, in the euthanasia cases the respondents have in mind somebody is in great pain, suffering from a debilitating illness. I suspect their key intuition is that such a patient is going to die soon anyway, and so it makes sense to them to euthanize the patient to avoid "needless" pain and suffering. In short, it is the presence of the already-existing underlying illness that distinguishes these euthanasia cases from plain suicide and seemingly accounts for the much different attitudes people expressed in the survey.

In fact, I think this intuition actually reflects something of real moral importance, but it does not justify euthanasia. What is true is that we are *not* morally obligated to extend our lives as long as possible. The moral prohibition on suicide should not be imagined to generate a duty on patients (or physicians) to pursue any medical procedure whatsoever that might have any chance of extending life. We must recall that the essential moral wrongness of suicide consists in its being *intentional* killing; prohibiting such intentional killing is not a requirement to survive longer, no matter the cost. Specifically, this means that neither patients nor physicians are morally required to pursue "extraordinary" medical interventions against a patient's wishes.⁷

It is important to see that when a patient elects to forgo an extraordinary treatment, it is the underlying disease or injury that causes the patient to die. By contrast, in the case of doctor-assisted suicide, it is a specific, *intentional* action of the physician that is the cause of the patient's death (e.g., administering a lethal dose of a drug). In short, in euthanasia the physician—rather than the disease or injury—kills the patient. Of course, it may be true that the disease or injury was likely to kill the patient anyway, but that doesn't change the proper description of the physician's act as intentional killing. If I happen across somebody already in the process of dying from a stroke, I would still be a murderer if I decided to shoot him in the head. The fact that my victim was going to die soon anyway if I had done nothing doesn't somehow exonerate me or justify my intentional act of killing him.

Once we make clear that doctor-assisted suicide simply is an example of

intentional killing, we've met two of the three conditions for murder. As in our analysis of plain suicide, the key question concerns justification. Could euthanasia be an example of justified killing like self-defense? First, we need to determine whether the doctor-assisted suicide case is morally different from the plain suicide case. Since we've already established (and most people seem to agree) that plain suicide is not justified, then doctor-assisted suicide could only be justified if it is significantly morally different from plain suicide. In our analysis of plain suicide, we saw that the justification issue turned on the fact that the state of moral innocence is an objective truth about the world and that neither a (subjective) desire to die nor the identity of killer and killed can change that.

The obvious difference in the euthanasia case is the pre-existing disease or injury and the pain and suffering it brings. So the moral question turns on whether the existence of a severe illness (and associated suffering) can somehow justify the physician's intentional killing. Specifically, can the illness (and suffering) change the objective fact of the patient's moral innocence? Obviously, it's not difficult to see why somebody would want to avoid suffering, but the understandable desire to avoid an evil obviously does not license any possible means for doing so. Just as the (subjective) desire to die cannot change the objective fact of moral innocence, the (understandable) desire to avoid suffering cannot do so either.

As we noted previously, the state of moral innocence can really only be lost in consequence of the commission of an evil act, and that obviously does not apply here. While the terminal patient *suffers* a (natural) evil, he is the victim of that evil, not its perpetrator. Accordingly, the objective fact of the patient's state of moral innocence is in no way changed by the evil that has befallen him. While we can (and should) sympathize with the patient's desire to avoid suffering, that understandable desire cannot justify choosing a moral evil.

This is obvious when it involves killing another person. If I am suffering from terminal heart disease, nothing can justify my killing an innocent person to take his heart. But the moral evil is the same in the doctor-assisted suicide case. Yes, it's true that the victim wants to die, and the doctor acts at his behest, but this does nothing to change the objective moral situation. Indeed, it's easy enough to imagine a situation in which I might want to give my heart to a loved one (e.g., a child) knowing both that I will die in the process and he will die without a new heart. Still, no morally responsible surgeon would agree to such a transplant. By the same token, no morally responsible physician should agree to kill a patient, no matter how much the patient might be suffering or want to die.

Of course, this does not mean the physician is powerless to do anything for a suffering patient. Attempts to relieve pain, even attempts that may *foreseeably, but unintentionally* result in the patient's death may be justified (e.g., extremely high doses of pain-relievers). What can never be justified is the *intentional* killing of the patient. If plain suicide is best understood as self-murder, then doctor-assisted suicide is simply doctor-murder, and it is irrelevant, from a moral standpoint, whether or not the patient wants to die.

Once we are clear about why plain suicide is wrong, it is impossible to escape the conclusion that doctor-assisted suicide is just as much an example of murder as plain suicide. In the case of plain suicide, neither the desire to die nor the identity of killer and killed change the objective fact that the person committing suicide is in a state of moral innocence. Similarly, in the case of euthanasia, the presence of a debilitating, terminal disease (with its accompanying suffering) and the patient's desire to die do not undermine the patient's moral innocence. If the moral prohibition on murder means anything, it means that the state of moral innocence is morally sacrosanct. The state of innocence must be guarded at all costs; otherwise, morality itself becomes meaningless.⁸

Conclusion

I know that many will find my conclusions hard to accept. Our natural sympathy for those who suffer, and the benevolent desire to relieve that suffering, are both intuitively powerful and seem almost the essence of mercy. However, we must remember that compassion, like all feelings, must be regulated and constrained by reason and the demands of justice. This is why it is so important to define our terms, because that allows us to reason clearly in the face of strong passions.

Once we have clearly defined both plain suicide and doctor-assisted suicide as examples of intentional killing, we can see that the moral analysis of each turns entirely on the question of justification and moral innocence. What makes murder wrong is not just that it is intentional killing, but that the victim is morally innocent. We are now in a position to see that the same applies to both kinds of suicide.

The realities of extreme suffering are horrendous to contemplate, and perhaps none of us are really prepared to grapple with such suffering in ourselves or our loved ones. But living a life of moral integrity is often difficult, forcing us to confront unpleasant alternatives. It might seem that mercy requires us to put people out of their suffering no matter the cost, and the refusal to do so might seem a kind of moral squeamishness. While it is certainly a moral obligation to comfort the afflicted as best we can, it is

never mercy to intend evil, and it is not squeamishness to uphold the sanctity of moral innocence. In fact, that is the very essence of morality, no matter how much we sympathize with those who suffer. In the end, the moral prohibition on suicide is simply an expression of the age-old truth that it is wrong to intentionally kill an innocent human being. If we cannot all agree about that essential truth, then there is little hope left for us to draw reasoned conclusions about morality and to act on them.

NOTES

1. <http://www.gallup.com/poll/192404/birth-control-divorce-top-list-morally-acceptable-issues.aspx>
2. Despite its apparent Latin roots, ‘suicide’ (the term) is more modern than antique Roman. The OED only attests ‘suicide’ in English from 1732. ‘Self-murder’ is older (attested 1570) but is still a modern English term.
3. My central claim—that once we see through all the distractions, suicide is nothing more or less than the intentional killing of an innocent human being—I owe to Thomas D. Sullivan’s “Assisted Suicide and Assisted Torture,” *Logos*, 2(3), 77–95.
4. While I think the underlying essential assumption here (e.g., that personhood requires the active exercise of rational powers) is false, we can see that the euthanizing of such a patient cannot really be a case of suicide at all, because it cannot be an intentional act *of that patient*. If family or physicians decide to euthanize such a patient (even in light of the patient’s previously expressed wishes), it is *they* who bear responsibility for the killing. Accordingly, such cases are not properly understood as examples of self-killing at all, but other-killing. This semantic point notwithstanding, if the victim is not a person, then the killing is not murder. However, as I and others have argued extensively elsewhere, what determines moral personhood is not the active exercise of rational powers, but membership in a natural kind (human being) that is rational by nature. Accordingly, human beings in persistent vegetative states, etc., remain persons, even if they never “wake up,” and so in my view intentionally killing them is morally the same as killing any other person.
5. In fact, I do not think we own our bodies, not because anybody else does either, but because, in virtue of their nature, I do not think that human bodies are ownable, even in principle. Rather, properly understood, the human person is a (hylomorphic) composite of soul and body and so it would be more true to say that a human being *is* his body, than that he owns it.
6. One might ask whether it would be wrong for a justly convicted murderer to take his own life (e.g., in his jail cell). After all, such a person would not be in a state of moral innocence. In fact, I think that such a suicide would still be wrong, not because the convicted murderer is in a state of moral innocence, but because he would not have the legitimate authority to execute himself. A just example of capital punishment requires not only that the criminal be duly and justly convicted of a capital crime, but also that the punishment is carried out by legitimate authority. A justly convicted murderer killing himself would be morally akin to vigilantism.
7. The line between “ordinary” and “extraordinary” medical intervention is sometimes difficult to precisely nail down. Of course, so is the line between day and night, though clearly there is a difference. At the very least, we can identify paradigmatic examples of ordinary treatment (e.g., food and water) and extraordinary treatment (e.g., a heart/lung machine) and simply acknowledge that prudence will be required for the difficult cases closer to the line.
8. While this may sound somewhat hyperbolic, I think this is absolutely one of the defining features—if not the key defining feature—of morality. Specifically, any plausible system of morality must hold that certain (kinds of) acts are fundamentally impermissible (in all circumstances). The fact that absolute prohibitions are incompatible with utilitarianism (and consequentialism) is probably the single strongest reason to reject them as moral theories.

Human Persons in Western Literature

Ellen Wilson Fielding

The history of the West from the classical era almost to the present reveals a vigorous and developing understanding of the uniqueness and value of the individual human person. For the most part we are accustomed to finding evidence of this evolving valuation in legal and religious codes, histories, speeches, and certain classic works of philosophy and statesmanship. However, the West's developing understanding of the person and the person's value also appears in its great literary works, although earlier on, and particularly in the pre-Christian era, the understanding of what has come to be called the sanctity of human life was partial and imperfect. Certainly infants, the poor, and the handicapped were largely unprotected in the pre-Christian era, and inadequately protected in all eras of our fallen history.

But despite the bent in human nature inclining us toward less noble and more self-seeking actions, the general impression communicated by both historical accounts and the literature of the West accords with Hamlet's famous paean: "What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason, how infinite in faculty! In form and moving how express and admirable! In action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a god! The beauty of the world. The paragon of animals." (*Hamlet*, Act 2, Scene 2). The great Greek epics and tragedies faithfully depicted this development of the West's perception of human nature as elevated above the rest of creation and as individually worthy of respect. They also helped hand on this perception to readers of each new generation. To be educated in Western literature is to be initiated into awe-filled reverence for human beings, the capstone of God's creation; to neglect or reject Western literature is to place oneself in danger of forgetting what respect for human beings looks like in action.

Let's consider first the great epics of the West, in which matters of great moment are at stake. In fact, life and death are at stake—and not the life and death of one or two people. Often, the hero of the epic dies, and many of his comrades may accompany him to the grave. However, beyond them, what lies in the balance is not even the fate of armies but of tribes, peoples—civilizations. Even the *Iliad*, recounting the war between the Trojans and the Greeks over the outcome of an absurd beauty contest among the gods, gains heightened significance not only from the fate-filled rivalries of those same

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gods but from its 10-year duration and pile of Greek and Trojan corpses. And the *Iliad's* audience would also have understood as a backdrop to the story the ambitions of the competing ancient peoples of the Eastern Mediterranean, and the necessary conditions under which the great Greek culture could survive and flourish.

The *Aeneid*, composed by Virgil in part as a sort of mythic justification for Augustus' Roman Empire, is more self-consciously the story of the origins of a great people. All of the layered references and allusions in the *Aeneid* serve to reinforce the reader's understanding that the destiny—the very existence—of Rome hangs on the willingness and ability of one man, Aeneas, to obediently chart his preordained course as he journeys from fallen Troy to what will become Rome.

Centuries later, with the Iberian Peninsula occupied by the Muslim armies of North Africa, the great hero of the *Song of Roland* dies attempting to beat back the Muslim onslaught into Southern France. Further north, an anonymous Anglo-Saxon author recounts the hero Beowulf's battles against beastly enemies that threaten the safety and order of those he defends. When Beowulf finally falls in old age, he leaves his people rid of one more enemy, but exposed to the encroachments of future ones.

Finally, in the great Christian epic *Paradise Lost*, Milton presents the highest stakes of all by choosing as his topic the fall of the angels and, through them, the fall of mankind into original sin in the Garden of Eden. Here *eternal* destiny is at stake—something by its nature immeasurably greater than the rise and fall of Greece or Rome.

Our own era's more superficial superhero action films also present higher stakes than the success of this or that hero against this or that villain. What's at issue is not "just" the survival of a handful of human beings, but the endurance and human flourishing of cities (Batman), nations (Captain America), the world (all screen epics figuring megalomaniacs who hold the planet hostage, and all invasion-by-space-aliens scenarios), or distant parts of the universe (Star Wars). After all, stripped of their sometimes-strident rhetoric, any of these individual contests merely reproduces the basic choreography of a schoolyard scrap. What draws the audience's allegiance to the hero is the premise that *this* contest means something monumental: the future of multitudes, perhaps of human existence itself.

And the assumption in all the great epics of the West is that our continued existence matters for more than sentimental or chauvinistic reasons. Our survival matters because human beings matter—they matter, in fact, hugely more than lower forms of life, however diminished we are by their extinction. The world of Western literature is, let's face it, a cold and comfortless place

for those who hold that we are merely one life form among many, and distinguished principally by being a threat to the rest.

In the sphere of great literature, for many millennia the authors of successful epics topped the pyramid of reputation. Though the epic's plot usually narrowed to a localized combat in a certain place and time, the audience sensed that it somehow summed up all of history and that the final confrontation hinted at the meaning of all things. *This* was life. *This* pantomimed in human gestures and articulated in human words something of the underlying meaning of it all.

The defense of peoples, nations, civilizations, and worlds does not, however, by itself exhaust the human understanding of life and its value and purpose. Though one way of capturing the weight of human affairs is through the epic sweep of time and space, with cosmically important contests, another way was chosen by the great tragedians of Western Civilization, who focused on the destiny of a single human soul grappling with circumstances that trigger the unfortunate occurrence of the "tragic flaw."

In comparison with the epic, eagle's-eye view of human affairs and the macrocosmic implications of human action, the classical tragedy telescopes in to reveal the individual human being's fate worked out in his or her thoughts, plans, and actions. To the pre-Christian world—notably ancient Greece, where this form of drama was born—the protagonist's (unhappy) fate flowed either from a moral flaw, such as pride or anger, or from circumstances beyond the protagonist's knowledge or control, such as Oedipus' ignorance of his parents.

In most Christian tragedy, the protagonist is assumed to be to some degree morally responsible for his downfall, however much other persons or circumstances conspire in his ruin. The tragedy thus not only assumes the existence of human free will, but locates in free will much of the dignity, grandeur, and pathos of human life. Mere bad occurrences are sad but not "tragic," because they do not result from the protagonist's poor choices. Our ability to choose the good raises us above the level of other creatures because it allows us the freedom to knowingly align ourselves with our Creator. It allows us to choose our destiny.

In King Lear's vain preference for Goneril and Regan over his loving daughter Cordelia or in Othello's jealous doubts about the pure Desdemona, we see the human being urged on toward disaster by his crippled human nature. Even so, the protagonist's human freedom is recognized, and therefore the moral repercussions of those choices.

As the dramatic tension of the epic lies in the hero's struggle against enormous odds to battle external evils that threaten Society with a capital S, so the tension of the tragedy lies in the protagonist's temptation and fall into

some form of self-destruction (however aided by the villainy of other characters). In a Christian tragedy, it must be possible for the protagonist to escape such destruction, even if this is “only” a moral escape (for example, the character might decide between a moral or immoral death). Without such a possibility, the audience experiences no suspense, no dramatic tension, but only the bird’s-eye view of two objects colliding.

Although great epics and tragedies have appealed to all classes and conditions of people and to both male and female, epics universally and tragedies for the most part are generally seen to inhabit the traditional “man’s world” of war, strife, and political ambition (*pace* Wonder Woman). Yes, *Romeo and Juliet* features star-crossed lovers, but the tragic result unwinds in the context of a blood-feud between two families, and is helped along by Romeo’s killing of Tybalt.

However, several hundred years ago in the West another literary genre arose that, particularly in its domestic version, has often been identified—sometimes dismissively and sometimes with acknowledgment of its social and psychological richness—with the “indoor,” domestic, more traditionally female realm of human existence. This is the sphere of the domestic novel, which primarily recounts the shaping of human character in the interrelationships of a protagonist or protagonists with those around them.

In practice the primary ambiance and preoccupation of the classic domestic novel is marriage and family life. The protagonists of the novel, like those of the epic and tragedy, possess free will, though they too are often impeded in making and living out wise and moral choices by their moral failings, the faults of others, and their imperfect knowledge and capabilities.

The virtues and strengths that loom large in the hero of the epic are such qualities as courage, daring, loyalty, and sagacity. The corresponding signature vices of the epic are cowardice, treachery, overweening ambition, intriguing, and egotistical self-seeking.

The distaff, domestic side of human behavior in the world of the novel relies upon many of the same strengths and virtues, though often displayed less dramatically. Obedience to family, loyalty to the beloved, courage and fortitude in adversity, are cardinal virtues in the courting-and-marriage world of the domestic novel. Clear-sightedness, prudence, and self-control are others. And egotism is as great a threat to the integrity of romantic love, marriage, and family as it is for the hero in an epic or tragedy.

However, because the classic epic and tragic heroes are so very exalted in stature and abilities over the mass of men, epics often emphasize and exaggerate the individuality and isolated performances of their heroes at the expense perhaps of their comradery. Epic heroes often work alone, their

hallmark being single combat. Even in describing a battle, the epic poet is likely to zero in solely or predominantly on the hero's exploits.

Perhaps the closest thing to a domestic epic is the *Odyssey*, in which the hero's protracted effort to get himself and his men back from Troy to the "domestic tranquility" of peacetime Ithaca beautifully conveys, for all its exploits, the nostalgic pull toward home and normalcy. And the scenes showing Penelope back in Ithaca fending off the suitors who seek to take Odysseus's place demonstrate not only her faithfulness but a talent for managing a great household as great as that of the woman portrayed in Proverbs 31.

But surely the accomplishments of neither of these women share the life-and-death, society-saving quality of the epic hero? In this vein, many critics of literature have disparaged the narrow limits and restricted ambitions of the domestic novel. How can the romantic vicissitudes of a novel by Jane Austen or Charlotte Bronte or even George Eliot or William Thackeray speak to us of the exalted stature and moral choices of the human person?

But the great domestic novels, particularly those written in the heyday of the 19th century, share much of the social vision of the great comic plays of Shakespeare, which often veer away from tragedy by a hair's breadth, by the weight of a single human choice that, after the disunity and human alienation that threaten the social fabric, restores social cohesion, ensures the preservation of the community, and guarantees its continued health and persistence.

The domestic novel up until the 20th century celebrated social communities formed from the basic units of families. Their casts of characters existed not merely to amuse but to populate a society, a world within which the principals acted, reacted, developed or regressed, flourished or were morally maimed. All this occurred in and within a grouping of families—something like a tribe or collection of tribes upon which society, culture, nation, and ultimately civilization were based. And therefore every malformed, misbehaving, dysfunctional, or decadent family is a drag on the health and prospects of the little society coexisting together.

One of the great insights that developed in the West was that each individual is endowed with an immortal soul and therefore has an everlasting destiny—and therefore is to be revered. Building on this understanding, the Christian West increasingly perceived that neither the individual nor individual family units exist *for* the society or the nation or the civilization, although families are the medium in which individuals are nurtured to flourish and build strong communities. Human societies are not anthills or beehives in which the point

is mere propagation or population growth for its own sake. Instead, a good God creates life as a loving and personal overflow of his own goodness, and the highest creaturely imitation of that goodness is the loving and personal overflow of the individual's talents, ideas, energies, and inspirations onto those around them.

Among human beings, one of the most God-like examples of such human relationships occurs when male and female unite in marriage to pour out their love and devotion in a way that bears fruit as new human life. As that great interpreter of the culture of life Pope St. John Paul II emphasized, human beings are most human in community—and the community is most human when structured on the family, with its qualities of complementarity, exchange of persons, need and gift love, and fecundity.

Although this is a beautiful and coherent understanding of the creativity and fecundity of human family life, it derives from a particular religious tradition. However, even non-Christian and pre-Christian societies—perhaps *especially* ancient pre-Christian societies—were awed by the mysterious power from which human life emerged in the conjoining of male and female. Ancient peoples sometimes found perverse or destructive ways of expressing such awe, such as temple prostitution or human sacrifice. However, underlying even the most depraved of such behaviors lay a profound or “thick” understanding of the meaning of the sexual act that makes possible new life. This contrasts with the “thin” and even emaciated understanding of the origins and power of human life held by those who today consider fertility an undesirable complication and pregnancy a clump of cells.

Because the connection between the mating of male and female and the generation of human offspring was apparent to all until quite recent times, and because the tenuous nature of life—threatened by disease, famine, war, natural disaster, and accident—was equally apparent, and because pre-Malthusian societies considered population growth a source of strength and prosperity, people and the societies they formed commonly understood the paramount importance of healthy families.

And that is a primary reason why the domestic novel at its best bore a weight of significance analogous to that of the epic or tragedy. In the centuries before widespread divorce and near-universal contraception, it was much harder to deny that the individual's human happiness depended upon the right choice of a mate. In addition, the happiness and survival of the community depended upon a preponderance of relatively healthy and happy marriages.

The traditional domestic novel more closely resembles the tragedy (with its focus on the fate of the individual through his or her moral choices) than

the epic (which derives most of its force from a crisis or immediate threat to a community from the outside). And in the novels that end happily ever after, we are meant to feel, through the near-miss of the main characters' union or through the contrasting catastrophic unions of subsidiary characters, how much depends upon right thinking and right acting. Consider Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, which presents readers with a gamut of marital decisions, from the very wise to the very foolish. Among the latter are Lydia Bennet's elopement with the scoundrel Wickham and the sad mismatch of Elizabeth Bennet's parents, which has chafed and demoralized her father, corrupted the upbringing of at least two of her sisters, and hampered (though fortunately not fatally) Elizabeth and Jane's chances of winning good husbands.

Or consider the ruin of career and prospects brought about in George Eliot's *Middlemarch* by the young doctor's choice of a flighty and expensive young woman as a mate. Yearning to achieve distinction in the field of medical research, the doctor must abandon those ambitions in order to keep his extravagant wife happy. Note that the decisive significance of his marital choice to his future happiness or unhappiness depends on the permanence of marriage. Their union becomes an object lesson in the perils of marrying impetuously, unwisely, or heedlessly.

Another example of the *gravitas* of great domestic novels before the breakdown of marriage and family is Sigrid Undset's monumental medieval novel *Kristin Lavransdatter*. This three-part work is especially noteworthy because Undset (whose writing career spanned most of the first half of the 20th century) also wrote some less-successful contemporary novels. Among the advantages she found in turning to the Middle Ages as a setting was the opportunity to, like her 18th and 19th century literary predecessors, present characters making irrevocable decisions with enormous consequences for the lives and happiness of themselves and others.

Whether they end happily or sadly, the great domestic novels, like the great epic works and tragedies, present the human person as worthy of respect and even reverence in a way singular among all of creation, because our Maker respected us enough to permit us to choose our destiny.

Many novels written after divorce became more common and family life more fluid continue to concern themselves with marriage and the choice of spouse. Superficially, they may appear to belong to the traditional school of domestic novel-writing, and to follow the great authors' presentation of the dangerously momentous character of human freedom. However, among the moderns this apparent resemblance, however intended, is largely illusory. The high incidence of divorce and widespread contraception have drained

away much of the irrevocable and fateful character of the choice of spouse. Cohabitation, same-sex marriage, and theories of the plasticity of gender have weakened our understanding of unalterable norms and inescapable identities. Very little aside from death is acknowledged to be inevitable, and the folks in Silicon Valley and other places pursuing “trans-humans” are busy blurring the lines of that final frontier through attempts to merge man and machine.

All of these changes have serious implications for our conception of what it is to be human, both individually and socially, and what our duties to one another are. An explosive expansion in human power and ingenuity unfortunately seems in our time matched to a shrinking—a trivializing—of our understanding of human choice, destiny, or purpose. And the lessons of millennia of human history on these topics are much easier to ignore when the great creative works that dramatize those lessons increasingly gather dust on library shelves.



“You know how I felt losing my job to a robot.”

The Day Socrates Met a Pro-choicer (II)

Chris Rostenberg

Part II: Socrates and Diane continue discussing abortion....

SOCRATES: You've told me abortion should be legal. Do you think all abortions should be legal, or only some?

DIANE: Well, if I oppose some, you'll call me inconsistent, and if I support all of them you'll call me an extremist . . .

SOCRATES: Welcome to adulthood.

DIANE: . . . so I'm not going to answer the question.

SOCRATES: You can't escape the question. If you support abortion, but don't stop anywhere, you are supporting all abortion until birth.

DIANE: Fine. I oppose late abortion. Happy now?

SOCRATES: Then you are not a pro-choicer. That is not what a pro-choicer would say. Pro-choice means nine months. Pro-choice cannot mean every position that is not pro-life; the two positions are at opposite poles. Do you think Americans should be allowed to vote on this issue?

DIANE: Sure.

SOCRATES: Again, that is not what a typical pro-choicer would say. They want the Supreme Court to set policy.

DIANE: Well, I'm sure not a prolifer! Those people are freaks!

SOCRATES: Judging from what you say, you are a "pro-hybrid": part anti-abortion, part pro-abortion. What would you say to nine-month pro-choicers who want to kill older children?

DIANE: That late abortions are just too late.

SOCRATES: Do you really think that is going to be persuasive? Is the killing going to stop on your whim? The wrecking ball of abortion is not going to stop because you blow on it!

DIANE: I would argue that some fetuses have a right to live after all.

SOCRATES: And at what point in the pregnancy are you going to reverse yourself?

DIANE: I'd have to think about that. Maybe in the fifth month.

SOCRATES: Can the line of reversal be arbitrary? Doesn't the line of reversal have to be based on some kind of principle to stop others from taking lives

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you believe should not be taken?

DIANE: Viability! That's the ticket! That's a good time to set the line of reversal.

SOCRATES: But viability is more of a process than a point. In ten years, viability dropped ten weeks because of advances in technology. You have to consider where in the world the pregnant mother and her child live, and how much money she has, to see if they can exploit current technology. Besides, why should we deny protection to the children who are frailer and more dependent? Don't we normally offer the weak and defenseless more love and protection?

DIANE: Viability doesn't work. I guess I have to support abortion after viability too!

SOCRATES: On the contrary, if you can't draw the line of reversal in principle, you have no right to kill anyone to begin with. Otherwise, you're going to end up killing children after birth. When you take the pro-hybrid position, you oppose the equality of life ethic at the beginning of pregnancy. Since you're giving so much to the killers, your defense of the older babies has to be even stronger than that given by proliferers. But what can be stronger than the equality of life ethic?

DIANE: It's a woman's body. The fetus does not count as much as she does.

SOCRATES: It's still a woman's body in the ninth month. The unborn is an unborn in the ninth month. You can't use those arguments. Use them and you are a nine-month pro-choicer.

DIANE: But the government is run by men. What right do they have to interfere? It's a decision between a woman and her doctor. And if abortion is ever outlawed, illegal abortion will come back and thousands of women will die.

SOCRATES: Each of those is an argument supporting nine-month abortion. To oppose nine-month abortion, you have to abandon all of them. And in fact, the pro-hybrid position is impossible to defend. You have to protect the big babies, abandon nine-month pro-abortion arguments, and come up with new pro-abortion arguments that only allow early abortion. Can you do that?

DIANE: You can save your breath, Socrates. I'm not going to oppose abortion from conception!

SOCRATES: All I'm asking is for you to stop endorsing early abortion. Be silent on it. If you oppose late abortion, are silent on early abortion, and support no abortion, then you are a pro-compromiser. Pro-compromisers and proliferers are allies; the former are more pragmatic, and the latter are more orthodox. Both are anti-abortion. [See Chris Rostenberg's essay in the Winter 2015 issue of the *Human Life Review*.]

DIANE: And what about rape and incest? You abuse women when you deny them abortions under those circumstances.

SOCRATES: But pro-compromisers don't oppose abortion in rape and incest—

they are silent on them. And that is not where the debate should be fought. The myopic focus on pro-life purity in every case has wrecked our dialectic for decades. Pro-choicers have to show that all pre-birth infanticide is right—I only need to show that some is wrong to make the case for changing the current abortion status quo.

DIANE: All of this is absurd. Who supports nine-month abortion anyway?

SOCRATES: What would you say if I told you Hillary Clinton supported nine-month abortion?

DIANE: That's ridiculous!

SOCRATES: I'm glad you agree.

DIANE: I mean I don't believe you.

SOCRATES: What if I told you Barack Obama, Bill Clinton, and Joe Biden all support nine-month abortion? So does Bernie Sanders. So does Al Gore. So do the majority of Supreme Court justices.

DIANE: You're out of your mind.

SOCRATES: What if I told you abortion already is legal through all nine months and pro-choicers want to keep it that way?

DIANE: I would tell you it's legal so late only in rare circumstances.

Socrates: In all circumstances.

DIANE: Not in this state.

SOCRATES: In all fifty states.

DIANE: If that was the law, I would have heard of it. That law would have to have just recently been passed, and it hasn't.

SOCRATES: It became law in 1973.

DIANE: I'd say you were crazy.

SOCRATES: If I did demonstrate that abortion was legal for viable children, for any reason, in all fifty states, and has been since 1973, would you oppose that law?

DIANE: I'd rather not say.

SOCRATES: If that was the law and you did not know it, would that prove that the media was not doing its job of informing the population about abortion?

DIANE: No, I won't admit that. I have a college degree and I've never even heard someone make your claim!

SOCRATES: Then you should return your degree and demand a refund, because you were not properly educated! Would you admit that the education system was teaching a lie if that was the law and you did not know it for all this time?

DIANE: No, I won't admit that.

SOCRATES: Would you admit that the medical community was corrupt if it accepted such a policy?

DIANE: No. Besides, how many women get abortions so late anyway?

SOCRATES: How many wrongful abortions would you tolerate rather than oppose the law that allows them?

DIANE: Only a small percentage of abortions are done in the third trimester.

SOCRATES: Do we justify wrongful late killings by performing more early abortions? The point of the extreme nature of our abortion law is that it strongly suggests that the law is unconstitutional. So many pro-abortion arguments only work if nine-month abortion is acceptable, and since late prenatal homicide is wrong, that proves these arguments are bogus. See what I mean?

DIANE: Again, so few abortions are done after the fourth month!

SOCRATES: If you support nine-month abortion in theory, you need to justify it. Besides, pro-choicers always bring up abortions from the point of conception or pregnancies caused by rape or incest or women whose lives are endangered by pregnancy, and those abortions also are a very small proportion of the total.

DIANE: Answer me—how many abortions are done on viable fetuses?

SOCRATES: Planned Parenthood doesn't seem to track such late killings, but we can estimate. The Alan Guttmacher Institute, which used to be part of Planned Parenthood, reports that 3,300 abortions are done a day, and 8-10 percent of them are done in the second and third trimesters. So, over three hundred abortions a day happen in the fourth month, and a child starts to become viable about six weeks later. It is a safe bet that hundreds of post-viability abortions occur a week. Thousands a week around the world.

DIANE: I have to think about that.

SOCRATES: In my opinion, a politician or judge who supports a policy of post-viability abortion should be disqualified or impeached. A person who is unaware of this law is divorced from reality. A politician who won't opine on late abortion is depriving voters of the right to vote on this—which suits pro-choicers, who insist on letting the Supreme Court own this issue.

DIANE: Well, I've read *Roe v. Wade*, and it set up a trimester compromise that allows the states to make late abortion illegal. In the first trimester, all abortion is a constitutional right. In the second trimester, the states can restrict but not prohibit abortion. In the third trimester, abortion can be prohibited by the states if they so wish. The Supreme Court was very careful to honor the states' compelling interest to protect fetuses as they become viable.

SOCRATES: That's what it seems to say at first glance, but *Roe v. Wade* lies. It contradicts itself and misrepresents itself. There is a loophole in the trimester scheme.

DIANE: Yeah, I know about the loophole—if the woman's life is endangered,

she can have a third-trimester abortion even if the states make such late abortions illegal.

SOCRATES: If her life is endangered—or her “health.” Then the states can’t make late abortion illegal.

DIANE: Well, that’s the way it should be, you nut.

SOCRATES: The Supreme Court said a woman’s “health” is a good enough reason to get a late abortion. Now, why did it also bother saying that a woman can get a late abortion if her “life” is endangered?

DIANE: Because she should have that right. Duh.

SOCRATES: But why mention “life”? Isn’t that extraneous? After all, if her “life” is endangered, surely her “health” is endangered too, right? Isn’t it enough to say a woman can get a late abortion if her “health” is endangered?

DIANE: Look, I have a bus to catch . . .

SOCRATES: Maybe the Supreme Court justices were trying to sound as if late abortion would be legal only in rare circumstances, if the woman’s “life” was at risk. Maybe if the justices said that late abortion would be legal only if the woman’s “health” was endangered, without mentioning “life,” people would be less likely to agree with the decision. And maybe they would wonder just exactly what the Supreme Court meant by “health.”

DIANE: Okay, I’ll bite—what did the Supreme Court mean by “health”? When could the states’ prohibitions against post-viability abortion be circumvented? Under what circumstances can abortion be legal through all nine months?

SOCRATES: “Health” was defined as “all factors . . . physical, emotional, psychological and familial,” and the decision went on to include the woman’s age and even her marital status. “All factors” means all factors. So whether a woman is married or unmarried, she can have a nine-month abortion. And every woman on the planet has some kind of “health” problem. Only one doctor other than the abortionist is needed to testify that there is a “health” problem.

DIANE: Come on, you show me a single woman who got a nine-month abortion because she was not married. I need to see that to believe you.

SOCRATES: That’s not my job. It is your job to defend the policy you support.

DIANE: Then why say the states can make post-viability abortion illegal at all?

SOCRATES: Exactly. It’s like the High Court is saying, “The states can make post-viability abortion illegal unless anything happens.” That’s what “abortion on demand” means.

DIANE: Well, I don’t believe you.

SOCRATES: Then don’t. Read the court documents for yourself. The only way proliferators, pro-compromisers, and pro-hybrids can get the abortion law they

want is to overturn or circumvent *Roe v. Wade*.

DIANE: I've read *Roe v. Wade* more than once, and I've never seen that definition of "health."

SOCRATES: It's not in *Roe v. Wade*. It's over in *Doe v. Bolton*, the companion case that also addresses abortion and was handed down the same day as *Roe*. Both decisions "are, of course, to be read together," according to *Roe*. You cannot understand one without the other.

DIANE: But *Roe* does not say that there is a special definition of "health" over in *Doe*!

SOCRATES: That's right. And when "health" is defined in *Doe*, it makes no mention of the special effect it will have on the crucial trimester scheme in *Roe*.

DIANE: But that means . . .

SOCRATES: It means the author of *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton*, the late Justice Harry Blackmun, was trying to deceive the reader!

DIANE: But I've read that many states make late abortion illegal.

SOCRATES: They all have "health" loopholes. Pro-choicers want to pass Freedom of Choice Acts on the state and federal levels, which would codify *Roe* and *Doe*, and go further, but they also have "health" loopholes. That definition of "health" is the secret weapon of nine-month pro-choice extremists.

DIANE: Why would anyone even want such a law?

SOCRATES: Maybe because Justice Blackmun knew that, as ridiculous as it is to have a right to abortion until birth, it makes even less sense as a legal matter to have a true compromise. Blackmun wrote that there is a "compelling state interest" to protect "potential life" as it "approaches viability," but he didn't mean it. Once Blackmun said the unborn are not persons and state laws could not protect them, such laws could not offset women's right to control their bodies.

DIANE: I have trouble believing that pro-choicers are lying about this.

SOCRATES: When then-Senator Barack Obama debated Senator John McCain for the presidency, Obama said, "I am completely supportive of a ban on late-term abortion . . . as long as there's an exception for the woman's life and 'health.'" McCain could not combat the propaganda that Americans have been fed for so long.

DIANE: Have any of the Supreme Court justices explained their position on the "health" loophole?

SOCRATES: Supreme Court Justice Warren Burger supported the majority opinion in *Roe* but later wrote that he had misunderstood the ruling, believing that it had not mandated abortion on demand. He wrote that in the *Thornburgh*

v. *American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists* decision of 1986. Presumably, if Justice Harry Blackmun had been open and honest when he wrote *Roe* and *Doe*, all the justices who signed it would have understood he was supporting nine-month abortion. Burger's words are another indication that Blackmun lied in *Roe v. Wade*.

DIANE: I don't believe you!

SOCRATES: Chief Justice Burger cited *Roe* in *Thornburgh*, pointing out that Justice Blackmun in the former case had written, "Plainly, the Court today rejects any claim that the Constitution requires abortion on demand." Then Burger wrote about how Pennsylvania had passed a law requiring a second doctor to be present when a woman got a late abortion, in order to offer medical attention to the viable child. Since the majority of the Court in *Thornburgh* opposed that law, Burger wryly commented, "Undoubtedly the Pennsylvania Legislature added the second physician requirement on the mistaken assumption that this Court meant what it said in *Roe* concerning the 'compelling interest' of the states in potential life after viability." It is clear that Burger was troubled that the Court misrepresented itself in the *Roe/Doe* decisions. Supreme Court justices lied. They continue to lie.

DIANE: You are accusing the justices of a very serious crime!

SOCRATES: It gets worse. What if I told you that the High Court went further than legalizing nine-month abortion?

DIANE: What is further than that?

SOCRATES: I want to talk to you about aborted babies who survive abortion.

DIANE: I don't see how that is even possible.

SOCRATES: There is a type of abortion called a "hysterotomy," which is like a mini C-section, where the unborn baby is taken out of the woman intact. And then there is "prostaglandin" abortion, where chemicals are injected into the woman's body and the child is violently ejected out of the birth canal. When either of these abortion techniques is used, children can survive if they are developed enough.

DIANE: So what happens then?

SOCRATES: In the 1980s, Pennsylvania passed a law saying that if there was a chance the unborn child was viable and therefore could survive an abortion—as in a hysterotomy—it could not be aborted through dismemberment, which would certainly kill it. Guess how the pro-choice movement felt about this law.

DIANE: Did they go along with it?

SOCRATES: No, they opposed it. Planned Parenthood, NARAL Pro-Choice America, and the American Civil Liberties Union all said that it should be legal to dismember a viable unborn baby for any reason. They argued that

laws mandating that viable babies be aborted in the safest way should be overturned.

DIANE: What did the Supreme Court say?

SOCRATES: The Court sided with the abortion industry, using *Roe* and *Doe* as precedents. That was the *Thornburgh* decision of 1986.

DIANE: Well, is the media to blame for the public's failure to understand our law?

SOCRATES: According to Professor John Potts, in an essay in the book, *When Life and Choice Collide; Essays on Rhetoric and Abortion*, edited by David Mall, a typical example of the media's role in the public's misunderstanding of the nine-month law can be seen in *Newsweek* magazine, over a decade after *Roe v. Wade* was decided. A spokesman for a pro-life group was interviewed by a *Newsweek* reporter and the activist "painstakingly describe[d] the extreme nature of the opinions in *Roe* and *Doe*, making particular reference to the availability of abortion in the third trimester for reason of maternal health and the meaning of the word 'health' as used in the abortion context."

DIANE: What did *Newsweek* report?

SOCRATES: According to Potts, "In reporting on the last trimester, *Newsweek* magazine on June 27, 1983 wrote that in *Roe v. Wade* the Supreme Court . . . held that states . . . in the final months, *except where a mother's life was at stake* . . . could prohibit abortions entirely to protect the unborn child." Potts goes on: "*Newsweek's* statement stands in striking contrast to the conclusions of the *Roe-Doe* axis. The statement is not just misleading. The error is not a judgmental difference. Neither is it merely arguably wrong. It is absolutely and categorically false . . . This constitutes an egregious error on an important matter. (Emphasis added.)"

DIANE: And you think this was intentional?

SOCRATES: During the period Professor Potts studied the magazine, *Newsweek* got the trimester scheme wrong five out of six times. The one time it got it right was when George Will criticized the magazine for getting it wrong.

DIANE: And you think this is a problem throughout the mainstream media?

SOCRATES: The *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Milwaukee Journal*, and the *Louisville Courier-Journal* have all reported that *Roe v. Wade* legalized abortion in the first trimester. This is technically true, but the implication is that the Supreme Court made abortion illegal after the first trimester. The newspapers could just as easily have said that abortion was legal during the first three days, and that would have been true too.

DIANE: I'm surprised I've never heard this.

SOCRATES: As of October 2016, Wikipedia, the popular online encyclopedia,

portrayed *Roe* and *Doe* at face value, when they cannot be taken at face value, and did not seem to expose the nine-month “health” loophole. See this article for how the media, on this topic, conveys balderdash. Considering that the “health” loophole cover-up has facilitated the killing of nearly sixty million American children, this may be one of the most destructive lies in history.

DIANE: I think you should just try to pass a constitutional amendment.

SOCRATES: We already have one. The Tenth Amendment reads: “The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.” The Constitution does not mention abortion, so it is supposed to be left up to the states. The Supreme Court simply ignores this. The framers knew what abortion is and did not think it should be a right. The justices are pretending the framers made prenatal homicide a constitutional right without knowing it or meaning to.

DIANE: You know, if the American public learned about this, the Democratic Party would be in deep trouble! Their platform says they will only appoint judges who support *Roe v. Wade*.

SOCRATES: And polls consistently show that even those who strongly support abortion and call themselves “pro-choice” oppose nine-month abortion. That means they are really pro-hybrid. What if the Green Party came to oppose late prenatal homicide and the public started voting for them?

DIANE: Then the Green Party could usurp the Democratic Party on the left!

SOCRATES: Political parties have died over lesser issues. It would just be a question of how quickly the Democrats could extricate themselves from the clutches of the abortion lobby once they began losing elections.

DIANE: So why don’t the Republicans expose the loophole? It’s complicated, but it’s been over 40 years.

SOCRATES: As long as *Roe* and *Doe* stand, Republicans get a boost each presidential election as voters in the know support candidates who want justices who interpret the Constitution rather than write law from the bench. That advantage disappears the moment *Roe* and *Doe* are overturned. Second, Republican strategists know that if abortion becomes illegal, far more money would be needed for social programs for poor families. That need is understood to be best served by liberals.

DIANE: But if the public can be duped on this, what other secrets can the establishment keep from the people? Maybe there is proof that President Kennedy really was assassinated by the CIA!

SOCRATES: Let me tell you something, Diane. If it were ever proven that the CIA assassinated President Kennedy, that would still pale in comparison to a

child-killing holocaust on the scale we have seen since 1973.

DIANE: I never knew the Supreme Court had such power.

SOCRATES: Effectively speaking, the Constitution has been suspended; American democracy is dead. The equivalent to this level of corruption in the executive branch would be if the president refused to leave office after his term was up, declared martial law, stayed in power for over forty years, and somehow killed millions of his own people.

DIANE: So why do you think the justices support *Roe* and *Doe*?

SOCRATES: Maybe they are being bribed by Planned Parenthood.

DIANE: You are besmirching the honor of the justices who support nine-month abortion!

SOCRATES: Ah, Diane, at least you have a good sense of humor. What is a Supreme Court justice's salary? How much money would it take for Planned Parenthood to pursue a nine-month policy across the country if *Roe* and *Doe* were overturned?

DIANE: I think you are paranoid.

SOCRATES: I think Americans expect to be lied to by politicians, but not by judges. Americans are not prepared for such a conspiracy.

DIANE: What you are saying sounds like a fiction, like a fantasy. The nine-month pro-choice movement sounds like a secret society, a cabal of child killers who run everything from the shadows. It reminds me of when Darth Tyranus tells Obi-Wan Kenobi that the Galactic Senate is under the control of a Sith Lord.

SOCRATES: If you think nine-month abortion is a mind-blower, you should watch minutes 10 through 15 of *Eclipse of Reason* on YouTube. Brace yourself. The abortion debate is not about the content of the arguments—as far as rational argument goes, anti-abortionists won that decades ago. It is about the fact that the public is not being allowed to consider the case for unborn human rights.

DIANE: You must really think the establishment is corrupt.

SOCRATES: It gets worse when you consider that the public itself is corrupt.

DIANE: What do you mean?

SOCRATES: The nine-month loophole shows at least one major case in which the politically correct people are not researching their opponents' positions. Why wouldn't there be others? Are you sure all global climate change is caused by mankind? Are you positive kids raised in gay homes fare just as well as kids raised by straight parents? Have you considered that the minimum wage might hurt the class it is designed to help?

DIANE: What are your positions on these issues?

SOCRATES: I don't have any. I'm not an activist on those issues. But if I were,

I would find out what people have to say on both sides. Liberals clearly are not doing that, and they run everything. They trust the establishment too much. “Politically correct” means having ideological power without having to defend your views. It could be argued that people who won’t make themselves accountable for late pre-birth infanticide have no right to vote.

DIANE: I don’t believe this conspiracy could be supported by the media and education system alone. I’m going to change my position. I was never pro-choice; I was a pro-hybrid, but that position is indefensible. You’re not going to like this, but . . .

SOCRATES: But the conspiracy has help. Prenatal homicide has made people neurotic. After a woman has had an abortion, she is psychologically cornered, where it is very difficult for her to concede that she has killed her child, let alone killed it wrongly. There are people who had sex when they were not ready for children. These people don’t want to admit that they were, on some level, planning to kill children. Prenatal homicide drives individuals and societies insane. It is tragic when a post-abortive woman denies she killed her child; by doing so she retreats from reality, and as long as that is the case she cannot come to terms with what she has done and recover her mental health. When the public won’t discuss the matter in honest terms for over two generations, that society is pathological.

DIANE: I resent that. I wasn’t insane. You weren’t there. You don’t know what I went through. Nobody was there for me. You would have done the same thing. How dare you accuse women of murder. I didn’t murder my child, but even if abortion is murder, it should remain legal. I’m not pro-hybrid anymore—I’m a nine-month pro-choicer. That’s what the law should be.

SOCRATES: Oh no! Well, Diane, I’m sorry I wasn’t able to persuade you.

DIANE: Don’t worry, Socrates. Maybe you can persuade some other sucker. Goodbye.

SOCRATES: Goodbye, Diane. And remember, beware of euthanasia too. Prenatal homicide is a form of euthanasia. Watch out for the Hemlock Society. That hemlock will get you every time.

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BOOKNOTES

RACKETEER FOR LIFE: FIGHTING THE CULTURE OF DEATH FROM THE SIDEWALK TO THE SUPREME COURT

Joseph M. Scheidler with Peter M. Scheidler
(TAN Books, 2016, \$24.95, 470 pp.)

Reviewed by Brian Caulfield

Joe Scheidler is such an iconic pro-life figure—often called the godfather of the movement—that one can imagine him coming into the world full-grown, with his signature beard, black fedora, and bullhorn in place. But to do so would undermine the central tenet of the cause he has championed over many years—that every human life begins as a unique fertilized egg with everything the new being needs to grow to maturity. Besides, imagining Scheidler as always the man we now know would also remove the interesting story of his early years that he tells in this deeply personal, historically valuable memoir.

The book's photo pages alone tell a warm, humanizing story of the man whom NOW, NARAL and Planned Parenthood demonized as a heartless, violent extortionist obsessed with keeping women from exercising their constitutional rights. The first photo is of toddler Joe, in 1928, with two older sisters, at home in Hartford City, outside of Chicago. The next shows Joe in a protective pose with a younger sister. Other endearing images follow: Joe on a rocking horse; looking quite bored at a tea party with his sisters; in a Navy seaman's uniform in 1945; as a Notre Dame University student (with two pretty girls on either side); in a monk's habit during his time at a Benedictine monastery; then a picture of his future wife, Ann, as a college student. The look on her face tells us that everything changed for Joe after he met this woman, so beautiful in appearance and spirit.

These are the parts of Scheidler's life that have rarely made it into the news. Joe Scheidler is a loving brother and husband, who signed up to defend his country, considered serving his Church as a monk, and married his college sweetheart. It is a heartwarming American story not uncommon to the men of the Greatest Generation who knew they were born for tough times, when bravery was a required quality for men.

His opposition to abortion grew out of the same sense of justice that found him traveling to Alabama in 1965 to march for civil rights with Martin Luther King. He possessed a strong sense of brotherly care for others, fatherly love for children, and patriotic devotion to his country. All of these virtues were

touched during a 1972 Chicago pro-life rally, an event his wife took him to, where Scheidler saw a pamphlet with images of aborted babies in a garbage bag. One of the baby's faces looked like his son Eric. "The shock of recognition made abortion suddenly personal," he writes. "These were real children whose only crime was being unwanted."

The rally was in response to the Illinois legislature's move to loosen the state's abortion laws. One of the speakers was U.S. Rep. Henry Hyde, a stalwart pro-life who whose amendment prohibiting federal funds from going to abortion organizations has saved millions of lives. A changed man after the rally, Scheidler was surprised that other people, good Catholics among them, were not as horrified by abortion. They knew it was wrong and would never vote for it, but they didn't feel a call to do something to stop it. Soon he left his public relations job to become a full-time pro-life, as head of the Illinois Right to Life Committee (IRLC). A man with a wife, children, and a mortgage took a large pay cut to engage full-time in the civil rights issue of our time. Yet not even fellow pro-life activists were ready for Scheidler's direct tactics, and he had constant disagreements with the boards of IRLC and the Friends for Life group that he formed later. After repeated pleas to take a more measured approach, he founded Pro-Life Action League in 1980, with his wife and a friend as fellow board members. A new era in pro-life activism was born.

He explains, "I had become wary of larger groups trying to control my actions." A newspaper quoted him as saying, "You can try for fifty years to do it the nice, polite way, or you can do it next week the nasty way." Yes, Scheidler has that quote favorably highlighted in his book. With his in-your-face manner, he never let anyone forget that abortion is the direct killing of an innocent human person and a scourge on the conscience of a nation. But he makes it clear that "nasty" did not include violence, or the killing of abortionists, which he never favored.

His book *Closed: 99 Ways to Stop Abortion* is a user's manual for those who want to have an immediate impact. It was also a rich source of material for his opponents to cite out of context. Yet he had a knack for turning each setback into a rally cry for further action. His pro-life hotline, updated with messages almost daily during his more active years, was also monitored by opponents, who pulled out information that they thought for sure would hang him. Yet pro-lifers called in by the thousands to hear the latest news from the frontlines of the movement, and gain encouragement from Scheidler's factual, confident tone. There was never any doubt after listening to the brief messages that pro-lifers were on the right side of history, the law, and the angels. The messages also are invaluable documentation of the movement; Scheidler referred to 6,000 of them in preparing this book.

He was involved in a number of legal cases, most notably *NOW v. Scheidler*, a civil suit brought under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act that accused him of running a criminal cartel against abortion clinics. The case went three times to the Supreme Court and Scheidler mortgaged his home to cover the possibility of treble damages. An expert in presenting the facts of the case, Scheidler also provides some illuminating behind-the-scenes stories that tell just how duplicitous his legal opponents could be, in the tradition of *Roe v. Wade*. Scheidler won his case at the highest court and was eventually cleared of all financial claims by NOW.

Yet as much as Scheidler played center stage in the pro-life movement, there was always a humility about him. The movement was not about him and his work; it was about the babies and their right to life. Our paths crossed a few times in our pro-life travels in the 1990s, and I always noted a quiet resignation in his manner that he was called to step out front, go public, lead others in action, because few others had the stomach, the nerve, or the verve to do it. If ever a man was made for a movement, Joe Scheidler was born for pro-life.

—*Brian Caulfield works for the Knights of Columbus Supreme Council in New Haven, Connecticut, where he is vice postulator for the canonization cause of Venerable Father Michael McGivney.*

GOD'S WILD FLOWERS: SAINTS WITH DISABILITIES

Pia Matthews

(Gracewing, 2016, \$19.95, 316 pp.)

Reviewed by Maria McFadden Maffucci

In *The Story of a Soul*, St. Thérèse of Lisieux wrote that God

set before me a book of nature; I understood that all the flowers He has created are beautiful, how the splendour of the rose and the whiteness of the lily do not take away the perfume of the little violet or the delightful simplicity of the daisy. I understood that if all flowers wanted to be roses, nature would lose her springtime beauty, and the fields would no longer be decked out with little wild flowers. And so it is in the world of souls, Jesus' garden.

This passage was an inspiration for Dr. Pia Matthews' recent book, *God's Wild Flowers: Saints with Disabilities* (Gracewing, 2016), about the rich "harvest" of saints who lived with physical, intellectual, or emotional afflictions. There are many "saints" books, she writes, but a book about *these* saints is needed. In a world "that knows only the secular story, a story that

sees only function, usefulness, speed and efficiency as the markers of human beings, the Church reminds the world of a different story,” one in which “grace blows where God chooses.” For readers who “inhabit a world that has lost a sense of the mystery of being, and forgotten that every human being has a part to play in history, it can be eye-opening to discover that the most unlikely of people, the disabled, are also, in the words of Pope Saint John Paul II, ‘workers in God’s vineyard.’”

Dr. Matthews is greatly inspired by St. John Paul II, who is well known as the pope who canonized and beatified more people than all his predecessors put together. He “astutely realized the significance of not only role models, but also of personal stories.” In the preface, she shares her own personal story about her daughter Paula, who is profoundly disabled—physically and intellectually—due to Rett syndrome. A lecturer in Theology, Philosophy and Bioethics at St. John’s Seminary Womersley and St. Mary University, Twickenham, London, Dr. Matthews writes with intellectual, moral, and spiritual depth, and, when writing about Paula, emotion—but not sentimentality. There is a graceful sensibility and balance in her descriptions of the many difficulties her daughter faces.

For us, for Paula’s family, is it hard? Yes. For Paula, it is hard? I suspect yes. But so are expectations, disappointments, complex relationships, exams, job prospects, paying bills, work-life balances. Paula does not worry about any of these because what is truly important—relationships with God and with other people—are actually rather simple.

Paula is in the world to remind people, says her mother, of “the great things that God has done, you remind people to stop and look, listen, touch and taste.” And she gives people the opportunity to *help* her, which is a gift to the giver. As a matter of fact, writes Matthews,

While many people think it is hard to help people with profound disabilities, in fact it is much, much more difficult the other way round, to help people who think they are totally self-sufficient, autonomous, proud of themselves and their achievements, people who do not need anyone or anything, the inwardly unperceptive, the spiritually stunted, people with such a deep and profound lack.

Matthews points out that there are no known saints with profound intellectual disabilities, but there are saints and blessed who had learning disabilities or were considered simple-minded. These she profiles in Chapter 5: “Slow Learners, Fools for God, the Simple and Pure in Heart.” St. John Vianney, for example, was a slow learner, who couldn’t pass the studies necessary for ordination—but his own parish priest convinced the “vicar general that what John lacked in education he surpassed in piety.” He became known for his “patience and wisdom” in the confessional and pilgrims came

from far and wide to listen to him. St. Joseph of Cupertino's mother "regarded her son as a burden since he was profoundly absent-minded, clumsy, unable to hold a proper conversation or take care of himself . . . He would wander with his mouth open all the time, so he was given the nickname 'the Gaper.'" Later, when he was a servant in a Franciscan monastery, his fellow monks called him "Brother Ass." Nonetheless, for his piety, he too was ordained as a priest, and became known as a healer and confessor—and also someone who could levitate during prayers!

The 141 saints presented here include those well known to Catholics and non-Catholics alike, such as St. John Paul II, who became a worldwide witness to disability in his public struggle with Parkinson's; St. Thomas Aquinas, who was never the same after he suffered what was most likely a stroke in the last year of his life, and Mother Teresa, who was born with a club foot, and also had heart and lung problems. There are many popular saints: Teresa of Avila, Maximilian Kolbe, Charles Borromeo, for example, as well as many lesser-known ones—so even lovers of saints can make new acquaintances. Matthews groups them by the kind of affliction they suffered; however, she writes, in "highlighting the person's disability the intention is not to define the person by a disability. Rather, it indicates the possibility of demonstrating that this aspect of a person's life is a tangible aspect of a life of heroic virtue." She also makes clear throughout the book that disabilities do not give sufferers a "pass"—as if they are not responsible for their actions.

After all, what is a barrier to holiness is not a missing limb, nor a chronic condition, nor an apparently slow intellect, nor a mental issue. What is crippling is sin, especially the sin of pride in my own abilities, the sin of malice, the sins of carelessness. And people with disabilities are no less immune than any other human beings from these spiritual sins. They may, however, because of their weakness, have a greater understanding of how dependent we all are on God.

Each chapter has an engaging introduction which reflects on the different dilemmas raised by disabilities. In the introduction to Chapter 8 ("Disciples of Jesus: the Deformed, the Stunted, the Crippled, Amputees, the Paralyzed, the Blind, the Deaf and Stammerers"), Matthews grapples with the "perplexity and mystery of suffering" and the role of collective or personal guilt. She recalls the scene in St. John's Gospel when the disciples ask Jesus about the man blind from birth: "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he should have been born blind?" It was a common Jewish proverb, writes Matthews, that when "the fathers have eaten unripe grapes; the children's teeth are set on edge." Yet Jesus answers His disciples' question with "Neither he nor his parents sinned, it is so that the words of God might be made visible through him."

BOOKNOTES

Of course all people sin, but perhaps what Jesus was teaching is that one should never depersonalize a human being made in the image and likeness of God. We live in a culture so caught up with achievement, beauty, success, and health that even good Christians can look at disabilities, physical or mental, as more of a curse than a cross. And this comes dangerously close to considering the afflicted as “less than.” Certainly, we live in a culture of death which promotes abortion and euthanasia for those whose lives *others* deem less worthy. One shudders to think how many of the saints profiled here—whose holiness graced the world—would have been exterminated for the very gifts they had to offer.

God’s Wild Flowers reminds us to rest in the truth that “God creates and rejoices in diversity. He calls us all, whatever our condition or situation, to grow in perfection, to cooperate with Him, and become what He wills us to be.”

—*Maria McFadden Maffucci is the editor of the Human Life Review.*

FROM THE HUMAN LIFE REVIEW BLOG:

Trusting Ourselves to Trust God

Anne Sullivan

The joy of being pregnant was dashed for me at five weeks when I found out that the twins I was carrying were high risk. The doctor told me there was a 50 percent chance both would die and an 80 percent chance that at least one would. Every other week more complications were diagnosed. The babies were only in one sack instead of each having her own, which meant an umbilical cord could cause strangulation. Twin-to-Twin Transfusion Syndrome threatened each of them in different ways—one would get too much nourishment from the placenta, taxing her organs, while the other would not get enough. Their weights needed constant monitoring. I was told again and again of my “right” to abort. Despite all the bad news, for nine months I was cocooned in a peace so sweet it seems almost unbelievable to me now. I had decided to hand over this worry—this piece of my heart—to God. Only He knew what the outcome would be. So I put my feet up and spent those months on bed rest, watching the Food Network and re-reading Jane Austen. At thirty-nine weeks I delivered two healthy, beautiful girls who—I am grateful to say—are still beautiful and every bit the annoying, whiny teenagers they should be.

Four years after the girls were born, I was blessed again to be pregnant, this time with only one baby. For the first few months, everybody was healthy and happy and taking it for granted that it should be that way. The euphoria came to a crashing halt at a routine sonogram when it was discovered the baby had a hole in his heart. Genetic testing was ordered, an amnio was scheduled, appointments with a pediatric cardiologist were made. Again, I was counseled on my “choices.” My mind spun back to when my girls were born. I remembered those parents in the NICU. The looks on their faces betrayed their thoughts and emotions. Many went home knowing their child would be facing a lifetime of challenges; some went home to dismantle a nursery. Suddenly, I was plunged into a darkness so desperate that not a chink of light could penetrate it. What had changed? What switch had been turned off in my heart and mind, interrupting the peace I had so deeply felt?

I had enjoyed four years of perfection. My girls were healthy, developmentally on target and happy. My heart swelled with love at the sight or thought of them. I knew the gift I had been given, and how differently it could have turned out. And now the knowledge of this precious gift fed my insecurity, broke my peace, and disconnected me from the loving God I had

known. Could I introduce imperfection and heartache into my untroubled family through this new child? Ironically, that second pregnancy illuminated the puffed-up reliance on facts that had slowly penetrated my mind versus the child-like trust I had practiced during my girls' pregnancy. I had gone from knowing that I could not solve any problem on my own to feeling like I needed to take control. More tests could be demanded. Bed rest again could be the answer. I was convinced that by looking to the outside world—doctors, nurses, geneticists—I had the means not only to fix the baby, but to protect the happiness of my present family. The ease with which I had made God the center of my life seemed to be slipping away because I was not getting that perfect baby.

The past several years have seen many scientific advancements, particularly in the field of women's health. The laws of our land allow us to separate the health factors of an unborn child from the whole person, from the respect and protection the child deserves and the potential he has despite physical or mental disabilities. This myopic view does not allow for the belief that the baby is a child of God, worthy, complete, and loved. It squeezes out the reality that no medical data can be as perfect as the love of God. It's not about ignoring our intellect or the facts, but about allowing room for the things we don't understand to be taken care of by Him. If God pays attention to the little things that worry me (a late bill, commuter traffic, an unkind word), why would He suddenly check out when the big things happen? It took me awhile to come around to this realization. As I carried this third child, I began to understand that the value of my two girls did not lie in their health but in their mere existence. And their sibling was to be valued in the same way. My son was born healthy. The hole in his heart had disappeared without a trace. I know that it doesn't turn out that way for everyone. God had given me an opportunity to lean on Him and allow His love to fill both the literal and figurative holes in our hearts. But it was also an important lesson on the bigger picture. We don't control everything. We can't predict the future. But we do have a choice. We can choose to trust Him to give us the peace we need.

—Anne Sullivan previously wrote for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops as a nationally syndicated film critic.

APPENDIX A

[*Mene Ukueberuwa is the Hilton Kramer Fellow in Criticism at The New Criterion. This article appeared June 7, 2017, on National Review Online (www.nationalreview.com) and is reprinted with NR's permission.*]

Loving Them Both: Being Pro-Woman and Pro-Life

Mene Ukueberuwa

When the organizers of last January's Women's March opted to exclude the pro-life New Wave Feminists from the event's official list of sponsors, they brought renewed attention to one of the strangest fault lines in American politics. The fact that unborn children have been demoted to just one "interest group" among many and now require an army of well-staffed organizations merely to defend their right to live is uncanny enough; the fact that their opponents in this cause include groups claiming to speak for the interests of mothers is darkly absurd.

Before the final call was made to oust the pro-lifers from the Women's March roster, Guardian columnist Jessica Valenti urged the event organizers to throw them out, saying, "Inclusivity is not about bolstering those who harm us." Valenti's language was evasive, but her message is clear. Like all pro-choice feminists, she suggests that defending a right to life for the unborn causes "harm" to women—a claim that casts reluctant mothers and their children as two opposing camps, and demands that we pick a side.

Even as Planned Parenthood and the other beneficiaries of this split work to keep the chasm as wide as possible, pro-life groups across the country have made it a priority to bridge the supposed gap between the needs of pregnant women and the rights of their children. Perhaps no group does this more explicitly than Feminists for Life (FFL), an advocacy group based in Arlington, Va. Founded in 1972, months before the *Roe v. Wade* decision spurred decades' worth of legal challenges to abortion, FFL is specifically committed to providing the "practical resources and support" that the group believes can put abortion far from the minds of conflicted pregnant women in the first place.

Last Thursday, FFL's longtime president, Serrin M. Foster, addressed a crowd at Saint John Nepomucene Catholic Church in New York City to share her organization's no-compromise approach with the upcoming generation of pro-life advocates. The event was organized by the Human Life Review (HLR)—a journal that publishes scholarly essays in defense of life at every stage—and by EXPECT, a new HLR initiative aimed at fostering dialogue among young adults.

Foster pointed out just how much of an anomaly it is that the causes of women's advancement and rights for the unborn, which were long understood to be mutually reinforcing, conflict with each other in today's political climate.

"Without known exception, the early feminists condemned abortion in no uncertain terms," she explained, citing the belief of the American Equal Rights Association, founded in 1866, that legitimate progress for women could never be bought at the expense of innocent life. Rather than believing that complete autonomy ought

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to be the end goal of feminism, AERA's founder, Susan B. Anthony, sought—in her own words—to “bring about a better state of things for mothers generally, so their unborn little ones could not be willed away from them.”

Nearly a century later, now that most feminists have dispensed with pro-life principles in what Foster calls a “betrayal,” FFL maintains Anthony's vision for the movement: taking a nonnegotiable stance on life, while striving to serve women's needs in a way that minimizes the attraction of abortion as an option. That second half of the deal—providing resources and support for expectant mothers—is more than an aspirational vision for FFL.

At the event last week, Foster recounted some of the legislative accomplishments that FFL had secured in behalf of needy women and their children. “During the Obama administration, we asked for [the State Children's Health Insurance Program] to cover pregnant women,” she recalled, explaining that the group advocated the expanded benefit that President Obama eventually signed into law in 2009. It was also the only pro-life organization to publicly challenge the “family cap” originally proposed in the 1996 welfare-reform act, and it has successfully lobbied for the funding of pro-life counseling on college campuses.

Although FFL is likely the group most explicitly aimed at serving women's needs and the pro-life cause at the same time, pro-life groups across the nation have a similar mission of service. Attending the EXPECT event, for example, were many members of the Sisters of Life, an order of Catholic nuns who host pregnant women in their Manhattan convent and make on-demand visits to women in need.

On a larger scale, Catholic Charities provided adoption services for more than 18,000 people in 2015 alone. Services such as these, provided for women throughout the entire process of gestation and often for months after childbirth, demonstrate a deeper and more abiding empathy for mothers than the brazen denial of motherhood that abortion advocates offer as an alternative.

Throughout her remarks, Foster avoided directly condemning women who had chosen abortion; her words expressed sympathy for expectant mothers in difficult situations, rather than scorn for those who had made the wrong decision. Her anger toward another group, however, was palpable—that is, for the divide-and-conquer feminists who claim to serve the interests of women while pitting mother against child.

As monstrous as it is, the claim that one cannot respect the dignity of women without denying that of unborn children has lingered for long enough to have been taken up by many Americans as an obvious conclusion. Feminists for Life—and every pro-life group that combines an unyielding defense of unborn children with a commitment to serving the needs of their mothers—has worked to disprove that claim with their deeds, gradually mending the most unnatural rift in the entire body of American politics.

APPENDIX B

[*Noemie Emery, a Washington Examiner columnist, is a contributing editor to The Weekly Standard and author of Great Expectations: The Troubled Lives of Political Families. The following column was published in the Washington Examiner on July 4, 2017, and is reprinted with permission.*]

Vogue, the Fashion Victim

Noemie Emery

Last year was a very bad year for *Vogue*. The magazine seemed to grow thinner and thinner, to the point of looking like a campaign flyer for the DNC.

Increasingly, *Vogue* mingled its usual stories on fashion and facelifts with blogosphere agitprop bashing conservatives and long, badly-done soft-focus pieces on feminist figures, for which the word “gushing” is only too kind. In February came the puff piece on Hillary Clinton; in August, the flattering one about Huma Abedin; in October, the ground-breaking endorsement itself.

Then came the blow, with those hardest hit being Huma and Hillary, who face unemployment. Not to mention Anna Wintour, the magazine’s editor, a prominent fundraiser and bundler for the one-time first lady, who was said to have been Clinton’s selection to represent American interests at the Court of St. James.

Now comes the bid to recoup in the reverent story about Cecile Richards, the Claire Underwood look-alike who is head of Planned Parenthood, and whom *Vogue* seems to see as the last woman standing in a bleak and a frightening world. Planned Parenthood had “‘big dreams,’ as Richards puts it, at the prospect of the first woman president,” the magazine told us. But fate held otherwise.

What *Vogue* doesn’t say is that Richards (and *Vogue*) are far out of touch with most of the country, that their promotion of Hillary probably did her no favors. In fact, the person who destroyed the dreams of *Vogue*, Planned Parenthood, and Hillary Clinton was most likely Richards herself.

“Cecile Richards will campaign for Hillary Clinton in Battleground States,” read a headline last August. That was the problem right there. Battleground states—like Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Michigan—have large numbers of Catholic voters, who tend to differ with Richards and *Vogue*.

“Hillary Clinton lost the overall Catholic vote by seven points,” Thomas Groome wrote in the *New York Times* on March 27, “after President Obama had won it, [and she] lost the white Catholic vote by 23 points . . . In heavily Catholic states like Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Michigan, she lost by a hair . . . A handful more of Catholic votes per parish . . . would have won her the election. . . . If Democrats want to regain the Catholic vote, they must treat abortion as a moral issue, work for its reduction, and articulate a more nuanced message than ‘We support Roe vs. Wade.’”

Abortion is a hard issue to get right with the voters. Although the parties are clearly divided on it, a vast cache of voters are split in themselves, with polls showing that many who don’t want abortion outlawed completely also think it

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“immoral,” while more than half of those who want it kept legal during the first trimester also want it outlawed by month five.

On the national scene, this is a nightmare for most politicians, who attempt to tread lightly, balancing the demands of their base with the center’s suspicions, with George W. Bush and Barack Obama acknowledging the issue’s complexity, and Bill Clinton coining his very effective and once-famous mantra, “Safe, legal, and rare.”

But with Richards’ embrace and endorsement of Hillary Clinton, the party went in for “safe, legal, and limitless,” stoking the zeal of the partisan activists while, in the words of Democratic pollster Doug Schoen, “pushing the party away from the American public, which fundamentally is center-right, and channeling the concerns and priorities of the Democratic coastal base.” No base is more coastal than that of the fashion-world activists, who turned very hard left in the recent election and may have mobilized Hillary out of her White House ambitions, a casualty of partisan zeal on behalf of her most fervent backers, and a true fashion victim at last.

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“**T**he worst part of abortion is the violence it inflicts on the unborn. The second-worst part of abortion is the violence it inflicts on the truth. Those who favor abortion favor euphemism: ‘choice,’ ‘women’s health care,’ etc. They rely on euphemism for the same reason they feel the need to suppress and exclude protesters carrying signs with images they deem shocking, ‘graphic,’ or, in the insipid language of the moment, ‘triggering’—and for the same reason they object so strenuously to measures such as the Texas sonogram law: The rhetoric of abortion cannot withstand the reality of abortion.”

—Kevin D. Williamson, “Whole Life v. Pro Life?”