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. . . Have we too easily accepted the notion that we “live in a secular world”? Too readily agreed to play by its rules? I remember a time several years ago when some learned pro-life advocates insisted our arguments be tailored to air in what the late Fr. Richard John Neuhaus called “the naked public square,” an intellectual marketplace stripped of theological underpinnings and supports. Hence the increasing role science has played for those of us making the case for life in a culture which, we are told, is increasingly rejecting religion as a behavioral guide. There is a problem with this—while science can reveal human life in all its magnificent glory, it cannot compel us to protect it. Personal convenience so infuses the zeitgeist, college students can actually entertain the idea of killing a difficult child as “more humane” than “letting him live with imperfect parenting . . . or giving him to a family who wanted him” (see David Mills’s “Mercy-Killing Five-Year-Olds,” page 79). And infertile would-be parents can order up biological children from scientists who will concoct a baby using a couple’s own eggs and sperm (Stephen Vincent’s “What About *My Needs?*,” page 13). Today perverse social science dogma permeates grade schools, where “children as young as five are being taught that they may have been born in the wrong body” (“The Youngest Guinea Pigs,” by Madeleine Kearns, reprinted with thanks to *National Review*, page 89). And the governor of New York—perhaps soon to be joined by other “enlightened” peers—ushers in a new age of infanticide (“A Promiscuous Extension of Abortion Rights,” William Murchison, page 5; “Abortion and Public Witness,” Margaret Hickey, page 10).

It is a cultural moment that gives even those who have long labored in the pro-life vineyard pause. And one that demands herculean pushback: an unabashed and full-throated promotion of the Judeo-Christian tradition that formed Western civilization and molded the institutions—family, community, church, government—that nourished it for over two millennia. It is heartening that pushback is coming from young people like Emily Oncale and Robert Delaney, graduate students at the College of Holy Cross in New Orleans, who we are delighted to welcome to the *Review* (“Maternal Femininity and Paternal Masculinity: Recovering Authentic Gender in the Abortion Age,” page 38). Joe Bissonnette, a regular contributor to our website, reflects here on “The Religion of Progress” (page 19) and how it is devouring its adherents. And what about Church leaders? Are they up for defending the faith—and the flock—against secular leaders of an alarmingly barbaric bent? William Doyno Jr. doesn’t pull his (albeit respectful) punches in calling out “religious leaders and writers [who] promote ‘solutions’ that would actually weaken Judeo-Christian principles” (“Misdiagnosing Our Age,” page 25). Fr. George Rutler, pastor of St. Michael’s Church in New York City, is one cleric with spine: “The faithful,” he writes, “are entitled to the expectation that their bishops will qualify as vertebrates in more than a purely anthropological sense” (“Governor Cuomo’s Bridge,” page 86). We thank John Vella, editor of *Crisis Magazine*, for permission to reprint Fr. Rutler’s powerful indictment: “Our Lord did not chase the moneychangers out of his Father’s house with a whimper of melancholy.” No, He did not.

ANNE CONLON
MANAGING EDITOR



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INTRODUCTION

As the world reeled from the news that a sudden fire had partially destroyed Paris's magnificent Cathedral of Notre Dame, New York's Governor Andrew Cuomo ordered the spire of the Freedom Tower lit up in the colors of the French flag, proclaiming: "Our hearts ached as we watched a devastating fire ravage one of the world's most sacred and celebrated religious monuments. . . . New York stands in solidarity with the people of France and Catholics worldwide who are mourning this tremendous loss."

Nearly three months earlier, on the 46th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*—a decision responsible for *over 60 million* deaths—Cuomo ordered the Freedom Tower, two major New York City bridges, and the Alfred E. Smith Building in Albany lit up in pink to celebrate passage that day of his Reproductive Health Act, a law that spits on the Catholic Church and its insistence on the sanctity of life. Cardinal Timothy Dolan, who said the RHA would make abortion "dangerous, enforced and frequent" instead of safe, legal and rare, was besieged by impassioned demands for Cuomo's public excommunication, which he resisted. (For a devastating indictment of "former altar boy" Andrew Cuomo's Catholicism, and the excommunication uproar, see our *Appendix A*, "Governor Cuomo's Bridge," by Father George Rutler.)

Senior editor William Murchison in his lead article, "A Promiscuous Extension of Abortion Rights," writes that the RHA is "a stunner for its breezy indifference to the profound question of who shall live and who shall die." The New York law "cleared from the pathway of abortion-seeking mothers virtually all obstacles as remained in the state whose pre-*Roe* abortion law hadn't been much of an obstacle to begin with." And it goes even further, removing the legal obligation to give medical care to a baby who survives an abortion. "On from elective infanticide," writes Murchison, "to where, exactly? To the 'mercy killing' of the enfeebled—people with no more objective value to society than infants malformed in the womb? . . . what do we make of it? After we stop shuddering?"

The New York law reverberated around the country—and the world. Margaret Hickey writes from Ireland (where, as you know, abortion was legalized in May of 2018) and asks: "How can one be Catholic or Christian in any meaningful way while condoning the taking of human life at any stage? Especially innocent and helpless human life." Hickey compares the calls for Gov. Cuomo's excommunication in the wake of the RHA—and Cardinal Dolan's response—to that of Irish government minister Josepha Madigan, who holds a prominent role as Minister of the Word in her Roman Catholic parish, even after supporting the referendum, and subsequently "unreservedly" supporting abortion legislation—"rejecting every mitigating amendment."

While the secular culture as a matter of course eliminates millions of "unwanted" children every year, if a couple *desires* a biological child, they often decide they are entitled to "getting one" by any means. As Stephen Vincent writes in "What About My Needs," recalling a whiny catch-phrase from the 1980's TV series *Thirtysomething*, the "attraction of the 'my needs' mindset has brought new meaning to the process of

making babies,” as evident in a *Time* magazine cover story (Jan. 14, 2019) titled “The Future of Babies.” “You might call it the Frankenstein cover story,” Vincent writes, “except the beings in question are innocent human babies caught in the tide of reproductive manipulation.” The *Time* article relies heavily on the emotional tug of couples suffering infertility or genetic risk, while “daring readers to find fault with cutting-edge science that pursues new methods to make life.”

A secular society still retains an “intrinsic religiosity,” writes Joe Bissonnette next in “The Religion of Progress.” Yet our “faith in progress is sustained by technological sacraments,” and “technological changes have changed our consciousness; they have changed the ways in which we relate to the world, to each other, and to ourselves,” creating “skepticism about overt metaphysics and indifference towards religion.” We have forgotten God—not “as atheists, willfully defiant” but “like a distracted spouse at a party, forgetful of covenant, engrossed by the charms that present themselves to us.” Still, there remains, Bissonnette writes, “a flickering hope,” because the religion of progress cannot compare to the meaning discovered in “an abiding relationship with the Author of Being.” A similar theme is taken up by William Doino Jr. in “Misdiagnosing Our Age”: In asking how we can turn our society back to the Judeo-Christian principles that gave it its strength, Doino challenges remedies proposed by some Christian thinkers. For example, some argue that conservatives and Christians ought to admit they have lost the “‘culture war’ on issues like abortion, sexual morality, and pornography” and stop obsessing over them; instead, we ought to invite people into the Christian fold by offering first the “irresistible attraction of beauty”—of the “greatest Christian thinkers, artists and saints.” Doino respectfully but emphatically rejects such recommendations; he urges Christians to be “fully dimensional witnesses to their faith,” agreeing with G.K. Chesterton that “The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting; it has been found difficult, and left untried.”

A real-world application of Christianity is conveying to others the truth of the sanctity of life, and extending compassionate aid to those at risk for abortion. Of course, we would all answer yes to the question posed by senior editor Mary Meehan in her article’s title—“Would You Like to Save a Life?” But if faced today with a person in crisis, would we know how to react? To help us answer in the affirmative, Meehan has gathered here wisdom from leaders who have worked on the front-lines of pregnancy-help counseling for years, people like Margaret Hartshorn of Heartbeat International and Roland Warren of Care Net. As Meehan writes, our “kind help can save a child’s life and save the parents much regret and guilt.”

“Underlying our abortion culture lie layers of radically wrong thinking,” write our next authors, Emily Oncale and Robert Delaney, and one of the most damaging examples of wrong-thinking is the rise of the gender fluidity/transgender movement. (For a chilling look at the harm being done to young children, see *Appendix B*, “The Youngest Guinea Pigs,” by Madeleine Kearns.) We welcome these two young graduate students to the *Review* with their masterful essay, “Maternal Femininity and Paternal Masculinity: Recovering Authentic Gender in the Abortion Age.” “Despite biological abnormalities,” of course, “a human person is always created male or female,” and this sexual difference does not “stop at biology, however, as the human person has a

soul, which means that corporeal differences reveal incorporeal differences.” What follows is a fascinating and rich discussion aided by the philosopher saints Thomas Aquinas, Edith Stein, and John Paul II. As Oncale and Delaney write, “a rediscovery of the maternal femininity and paternal masculinity that has cultivated the very best of civilizational meaning, cannot help but be pro-life, pro-reason, and pro-truth to its very heart and soul.”

Our final article looks at a cruel and dangerous prejudice in Africa. In “The Plight of Africans with Albinism,” Mark Mostert explains that in much of the Third World, people with disabilities are perceived as being a curse on the family. This is especially the case with Africans born with the genetic condition of albinism: “Africans with albinism are widely discriminated against, socially shunned and isolated, and can suffer violence and even death based on their appearance.” In addition, “deep-seated beliefs” that the body parts of those with albinism have special powers in “magic potions” has led to a huge demand for organs and an escalation of African Albino “killings, maimings, and abductions.” Mostert points out the urgent need for awareness and action.

* * * *

This issue’s Film/Booknotes is a rich collection: Kathryn Jean Lopez on the game-changing movie, *Unplanned*; John Grondelski reviews Robert W. Artigo’s book about pro-life African American minister Walter B. Hoyer’s unjust incarceration, and Fiorella Nash’s take on how radical feminism actually betrays women; and Nicholas Frankovich contributes a thoughtful review essay on Helena Rosenblatt’s *The Lost History of Liberalism: From Ancient Rome to the Twenty-First Century*. Following that is a selection of five compelling columns from our website, by senior editor Ellen Wilson Fielding, Donald DeMarco, David Mills, Cecile Thompson, and Reverend W. Ross Blackburn. And finally, our two appendices, previously mentioned, Fr. George Rutler on Andrew Cuomo’s devilish overreach, and Madeleine Kearns on the danger of transgender “therapies” for children. As always, we welcome Nick Downes’ cartoons to lift our beleaguered hearts.

MARIA McFADDEN MAFFUCCI
EDITOR

A Promiscuous Extension of Abortion Rights

William Murchison

He who says A must say B, you know. Or don't you know? Or does it sound just too, too mechanical and deterministic as an explanation for human behavior, notwithstanding recourse to the aphorism by such a well-known muscle-flexer as V. I. Lenin?

In other words, Step 1 leads logically to Step 2, which leads to Step 3, and so on from there . . . unless some element of caution, deterrence, or outright repentance enters the equation. We see this hasn't been the case at all with the so-called constitutional right to an abortion, now enjoying 46 years of dominion over former human and theological objections.

The *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court hedged slightly this spacious new right, employing language about the prerogative of states to regulate abortions proposed for the third trimester, or three-month period, of pregnancy. But the justices had said A. In due course they were almost certainly going to say B, with the support of the large constituency *Roe v. Wade* had won among feminists and their well-wishers. In *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, a decade after *Roe*, the Court narrowed the states' running room. No law a legislature might pass in defense of unborn life could permissibly place an "undue burden" on the mother's choice as to whether to give birth, or to abort. We have fussed ever since over the meaning and applications of "undue" and "burden."

In January, New York's legislature cleared from the pathway of abortion-seeking mothers virtually all obstacles that remained in the state whose pre-*Roe* abortion law hadn't been much of an obstacle to begin with, if you want to know the truth. The 2018 elections having cost Republicans control of the state Senate, Democrats pounced. A bill allowing abortion "at any time when necessary to protect a woman's life or health" sped from introduction to final passage in 13 days. The Senate, on January 22, forwarded the legislation to Gov. Andrew Cuomo, who signed it with a flourish on the 46th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, even as pro-life New Yorkers marked the day with prayer and protest. There was ample time left for a victory lap. That evening, by gubernatorial order, New Yorkers saw the One World Trade Center spire swim in feminist pink, along with two major bridges—one named for Andrew Cuomo's

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late *Roe*-affirming father, Gov. Mario Cuomo—and the Alfred E. Smith Building in Albany. Al Smith, faithful Catholic as he was, might not have relished his co-optation in such a cause. Too bad. There were new destinations along the sidewalks of New York.

In *Roe v. Wade*, the U.S. Supreme Court had vociferously said A—for abortion. Was Cuomo, then, saying B, C, or even, possibly K? By no means. The governor is best understood as crying X—the gaudy letter that all but wipes from legal sight past attentions to the duty of defending human life’s essential worth. A couple of weeks after his victory lap, Cuomo found it necessary to deal with critics hostile to his achievement. He proceeded, in a *New York Times* op-ed, to castigate “the far-right’s escalation of its assault on a woman’s constitutional rights.” The new law he had signed would thwart “the Republicans’ efforts to pack the Supreme Court with extreme conservatives to overturn the constitutional protections recognized in *Roe v. Wade*.”

What New York is saying right now, by Cuomo’s reckoning, is, you can’t stop us. Say the High Court does strike down *Roe*, denationalizing in the process the whole issue of protection for unborn life. New York would carry on as before, exercising, like other states, the pre-*Roe* right to allow or prohibit abortion, under conditions of one sort or another. Maybe so, maybe not, depending on how the Supreme Court framed the terms of a *Roe* overthrow—assuming our perpetually divided Court could pull itself together and either narrow *Roe*’s scope or overthrow the decision entirely.

New York’s Reproductive Health Act, meanwhile, is a stunner for its breezy indifference to the profound question of who shall live and who shall die—and what governmental third party gets a say in the decision, and on what principles one would base such a decision anyhow. The condition specified in the law—“necessary to protect a woman’s life or health”—is about as woolly as could be contrived. “Life” we can understand. What is “health”? Can it mean mental health? Almost certainly. But what does *that* mean? My wife, fresh out of graduate school, shared quarters with a gracious, cheerful contemporary named Alice, who, when she would take a notion—and it wasn’t regularly, I should note, in absolution—announced she was taking a “Mental Health Day.” That meant Alice wasn’t going in to work. Having regained her “health,” she returned to work the next day, in good humor and fettle. I have never myself declared a mental health day, but I understand there are people who occasionally feel the need to do something rather large out of what they define as personal interest. Such as shall we say disposing of an unwanted baby? Why not? What principle these days prevents it? What prejudice in favor of life? None that New York appears to lay down as dispositive.

In New York, under the Reproductive Health Act, practically nothing (I say practically because the full effects remain to be tested) blocks a woman’s desire

for an abortion: no limit on pregnancies of 24 weeks and longer; no exclusion of non-doctors from performance of an abortion; no possibility of criminal charges lodged for harm to unborn children. All gone. Nothing left save perhaps moral or religious squeamishness about the deliberate extinction of an unborn life. As for the religious element in that diminished protection, Cuomo, in the *New York Times* op-ed, besides laying into the “religious right,” cited polls purporting to show three out of five Catholics “support *Roe*.” In any case, he said, driving home the point, “Thanks to the nation’s founders, no elected official is empowered to make personal religious beliefs the law of the land.” (Only “unelected officials,” he might have gone on to explain—such as justices of the Supreme Court, in behalf of the religion of no-religion when it comes to women’s rights.)

Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam, in about the same time frame, put eyes and lips and ears on the matter—without, apparently, intending to. He had been asked in a radio interview about a liberalized abortion bill under consideration by the state’s House of Delegates. The bill, so its sponsor had testified, would allow a woman showing signs of labor to opt for an abortion. This was clearly an enormous story. Abortion right up to the moment of birth? What did the governor, himself a medical doctor, think?

It was not clear from the governor’s answer that he had thought deeply, or at all, about the question. He replied: “If a mother is in labor, I can tell you exactly what would happen. The infant would be delivered. The infant would be kept comfortable. The infant would be resuscitated if that’s what the mother and the family desired, and then a discussion would ensue between the physicians and the mother.” Which sounded like a description of infanticide. There followed, in subsequent days, various attempts to unravel the question. The bill’s sponsor walked back her own claim: She had not meant infanticide was an option, Virginia having outlawed infanticide. President Trump accused Democrats of “pushing extreme late-term abortion, allowing children to be ripped from their mother’s womb right up until the moment of birth.” The Assembly tabled the bill. A Northam spokesman said the governor had been referring to “the tragic and extremely rare case in which a woman with a nonviable pregnancy or severe fatal abnormalities went into labor.”

Maybe that’s right; maybe all he meant to say was that tragic cases indeed are tragic, requiring careful attention. In which case a corollary question would arise: What kind of careful attention? The kind that could issue in a long-faced, exquisitely empathetic declaration to the mother of a child with unspecified “abnormalities”? Well, ah, yes, we all know how precious is this child, how long desired, how painfully disconnected from prospects for a long and fruitful, the kind we all wish her, unless you should choose to consider . . . ? And then a break for silence as the possibility of . . . of . . . of a merciful ending to pain and sorrow sidled into the room.

At what point, in other words, and under what circumstances and conditions does ministry to a rare and painful case turn—without the blaring of alarm bells or the dimming of lights, possibly with no one’s even noticing—into vindication of a desire for . . . release? That would be it—release from suffering and pain and manifold frustrations. The question at the heart of the matter is terrible to raise. It frightens. No greater responsibility can be imagined than the responsibility for the life of another. It is why a vast part of the human enterprise has been the setting of rules and guidelines, of permission and prohibitions. Virginia law forbids infanticide, as New York law once did, inasmuch as the killing of infants, like the killing of their elders, intervenes in affairs of destiny and purpose, poorly understood by fellow humans. Wherefore interventions of this character are off the table, by and large. And when political people suggest they might be put back on the table for human disposition, what do we make of it? After we stop shuddering?

He who says A must say B. It is one of the few points on which we are compelled, as human beings, to go along with Lenin. Do we start to sense how this works with questions of human life? The late, much-honored Judge John T. Noonan, of the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, had a clear sense of the matter when he wrote in the *Human Life Review*, in 1977: “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.” He quotes the Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts: “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.”

Further, in Noonan’s own words: “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?”

Historical footnote to Noonan’s article: Dr. Kermit Gosnell, in Philadelphia, got that chance. He relished it. Investigators at his inner-city clinic, in 2010, found the remains of 47 babies. A jury convicted him of murdering three of them. As investigative journalists Ann McElhinney and Phelim McAleer would write, in *Gosnell: The Untold Story of America’s Most Prolific Serial Killer*: “Gosnell’s modus operandi was to kill babies born alive by cutting their spinal cords.” The babies were born; they died. Their mothers had no use for them; no more than had their abortionist.

On from elective infanticide—to where, exactly? That is what we cannot know in these uncertain times. To the “mercy” killing of the enfeebled—people

with no more objective value to society than infants malformed in the womb? To their antiseptic killing after voluntary surrender to the mercies of Those Who Know Better? What about their non-voluntary surrender, as depicted in P.D. James's *The Children of Men*—useless, feeble old coots, put on boats, with nostalgic music playing, and decanted into the sea, to the cleansing and certainly the betterment of their former environment?

Where are the rules? That is what we need to know. It is also what we have no certainty concerning in our time of moral flux, when, for instance, the modern-day governor of one of the original 13 colonies lashes out at the moral principles the founding generation thought without discussion or argument it was building into the new nation's life. Do the musty assumptions we formerly knew concerning mercy and justice have any place in modern life, or do they—like undesired, inconvenient New Yorkers in the third trimester of life—just fade gently, and antiseptically, from sight? It is hard to know what battles lie ahead, on account of the difficulty in apprehending what people self-shorn of responsibilities may decide they want next. They may want only what they have now. They may want much more. We may count on being told when those who want more want it now and on what terms.

The conditions for infanticide—termination-at-will, if one prefers—rest in the particulate matter of the human soul: in desire, in wish, in thought. To alter the wish in question; to reverse it, to reassert the wonderfulness and splendor of life as given by God, and held close to human hearts for so long—that would be present-day society's job; a job from which present-day society flinches in our climate of moral latitude and blanket permissions. We're not supposed to go around telling people what to do with their own lives, or where to seek fulfillment. Who wants to be accused of trespassing on someone else's duly promulgated constitutional rights: the hitch here being the tiny number of promulgated rights that don't butt up against the rights of others.

Take for instance the imputed (if not, these days, constitutionally promulgated) right to be born, contrasted, as per the Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts, with the right "not to give birth to offspring." The power of democratically enacted law to protect the unborn and the weak and the feeble against the strong and the powerful has been neatly turned inside out.

There is a moral disconnect here which the feminist-pink glow of city spires tends to block from view. For how much longer, at that? The more promiscuous the extension of abortion rights, as in New York, as in other states laying plans against the overthrow of *Roe*, the uglier, the nastier the look of the whole business. To the incitement of public horror and disgust? You cannot tell. Odd things happen in life, not least in those quarters—such as those we occupy now—where to wish is to get. A sentiment at least as old as Lenin's has point and pith: Be careful what you wish for. You may get it.

Abortion and Public Witness

Margaret Hickey

Should politicians who support abortion legislation without caveat be denied Communion? Should they be excommunicated? These questions have become more pressing as more and more self-identifying Catholic legislators ever more boldly support abortion even in its most extreme form. It is a debate that has been rumbling on for quite some time in the U.S., where defiant Catholics like Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi have been unapologetically pro-choice for years without renouncing their Catholicism.

It does seem strange and confusing. How can one be Catholic or Christian in any meaningful way while condoning the taking of human life at any stage? Especially innocent and helpless human life. In fact for that reason the Church has traditionally reserved special censure and sanction for abortion, which up until 2016 was the only kind of killing considered to be a reserved sin, meaning a priest needed the permission of his bishop before administering absolution. In 2016, the Year of Mercy, Pope Francis removed this requirement. It didn't mean the pontiff was softening on abortion. On the contrary, he continued to use terms like "horrendous evil" to describe it. In his speech to the Irish government in Dublin Castle during the World Meeting of Families last year, he somewhat provocatively defended the right to life of the unborn, given that the country had recently repealed the article in the Constitution that acknowledged and protected that right. Later in the year, in one of his addresses in St. Peter's Square, Francis went further, saying that abortion was "like resorting to a contract killer to solve a problem."

Yet, self-declared Catholics like New York Governor Andrew Cuomo preside over the liberalization of abortion to the point of birth and gleefully celebrate it as a signal victory for women's healthcare and freedom. Cardinal Dolan, when asked if he intended to excommunicate Cuomo, addressed the question in terms of the likely consequences of any such action rather than whether or not it was appropriate in itself. He said he did not consider excommunication to be the appropriate response given the circumstances. The excommunicated politician, he claimed, citing an example, could win electoral advantage for defying ecclesial pressure. It is likely Cardinal Dolan was conscious too that many of the Catholics Cuomo represents hold similar views to those of their governor.

Margaret Hickey is a freelance writer whose op-eds on current social and religious issues have appeared in the *Irish Examiner* and *The Furrow*, a religious monthly. She also writes features on places of literary, historic, and scenic interest in rural Ireland.

Cardinal Dolan has been strongly criticized for shirking what many Catholics believe to be his duty. Yet he let Cuomo and everyone else know what he thought of the legislation in a strongly worded opinion piece in the *New York Post*, describing the new law as “ghoulish.” Cardinal Dolan, and other bishops who find themselves dealing with the same issue, may well be exercising appropriate prudence when one considers the context of these political transgressions. Self-identifying Catholic politicians may have little regular engagement with their parish. Excommunication could be the legal equivalent of a dead letter which would only serve to gain them the kind of popular notoriety that pays dividends in the ballot box. There are situations where the exercise of restraint may demand its own more discreet kind of courage and determination.

One may well ask if circumstantial factors should carry such weight. Governor Cuomo’s support for abortion “rights” is indeed unequivocal—explicit, extreme and enthusiastic. For Cardinal Dolan however, the situation demands direct, personal, pastoral intervention as a first response. If Governor Cuomo were a regular churchgoer, a direct approach from his pastor might convince him that he could not worthily receive Communion. Were he not to be persuaded, he would unquestionably bring automatic excommunication (*latae sententiae*) upon himself. It would then be strange indeed if he approached his pastor or anyone else ministering under the priest’s authority for Communion without first publicly revoking his position. However, in general terms, it is very difficult for anyone, priest or extraordinary minister of the Eucharist, to know the interior disposition of those who approach them for Communion. The presumption has to be that the person is presenting himself in a state that is reconciled with God and his Church. The Spirit can move in swift and extraordinary ways within the human soul and any given Eucharist could be that individual’s last. Refusing Communion to anyone who approaches the altar is a very difficult call.

It is more difficult to take punitive public action against abortion-supporting politicians when they cite the separation of their roles as public representatives and private individuals. Irish government minister Josepha Madigan, who led the Repeal campaign for the Fine Gael Party in last year’s referendum, has said that abortion is “not something she would necessarily seek for herself,” that her support of the legislation which followed the referendum was about allowing others to make their own choices. This position is at a different point along the spectrum of moral thinking from Governor Cuomo’s, but it still places Madigan firmly in conflict with her avowed Catholicism. Appealing for choice and freedom of conscience for others is not a get-out clause when the choice concerned lacks all moral legitimacy. There are many choices, one presumes, which Josepha Madigan would not be happy to grant the Irish electorate. Would she, for instance, permit abortion until birth for any reason, as a matter of choice, as

Cuomo is happy to do? Would she support infanticide for any reason? Yet, no less than Cuomo, Josepha Madigan's support for abortion is grounded in reasons that are not tenable for a Catholic.

The same considerations and caveats that apply to ecclesial sanctions in Cuomo's case also apply to Josepha Madigan. However, there is this difference: Josepha Madigan is more than just a regular churchgoer; she is a Minister of the Word in her parish. The latter makes her the face of the parish, and by extension that of the Church, when she performs her liturgical role. However, there is no evidence that Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, who has jurisdiction over her parish, intends to take any action. Given that she still reads at Mass, some nine months after the referendum, and almost two months since she unreservedly supported abortion legislation—rejecting every mitigating amendment—the evidence points the other way.

In his apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* (The Joy of Love), Pope Francis wrote of the importance of welcoming all who come seeking Christ, whatever their background. However, he was insistent that the Church's teaching should never be compromised by giving, or appearing to give the impression that the Church "maintains a double standard" (AL 300). It can certainly be said that the appointment of people who have publicly opposed the Catholic teaching to frontline roles in the Church—particularly liturgical roles—gives, at the very least, a mixed message. Asking such people to step aside if they don't see they are a sign of contradiction themselves is surely in line with the Pope's words.

Still, it is nevertheless possible for Catholic legislators to vote in good conscience for legislation that is contrary to their personal convictions. Ethical and moral positions often shape themselves to political pragmatism. Supporting legislation to regulate abortion is not necessarily the same as condoning it. Choosing the lesser of two evils or moving incrementally towards the good is the stuff of politics, which the German statesman Otto von Bismarck defined as "the art of the possible." If one believed Minister Harris when he claimed that legislating for abortion would actually reduce the number of Irish women having abortions, then voting to repeal the 8th Amendment to the Irish Constitution would not be problematic for either a Catholic voter or politician. On the other hand, if a Catholic voted to repeal the 8th Amendment, seeing it as a legitimate lifestyle choice, or "intending abortion to be the outcome," as Bishop Kevin Doran of Elphin put it, then that places a Catholic in need of Confession and absolution, as the bishop rightly pointed out.

While the issues at stake in this debate can be complex, the Church needs to speak and act with authority. It also needs to be ready to stand its ground and defend its own position when challenged and not retreat at the first sound of return fire.

“What about *My* Needs?”

Stephen Vincent

Readers of a certain age, or those with a 1980s YouTube addiction, may recognize the words quoted above from the TV show *Thirtysomething*. For a series about successful Baby Boomer professionals, there was a lot of whining and dissatisfaction threading through the episodes over four years—so much so that “What about *my* needs” became a sardonic cliché for the insipid self-help sayings of the Me Generation. Late-night comedians would spoof the familiar line, and it would even pop up in everyday conversations as a half-joke when one party felt on the short end of a relationship.

The fact is, the saying expresses some truth. As limited persons dependent on others in so many ways, we all have needs that must be met physically, emotionally, psychologically, and spiritually. There are important things that we cannot do or get for ourselves which move us outside the comfort of self-sufficiency. “What about *my* needs” caught on so well because it hit a nerve of our relational lives. How do we ask for what we need, and how do we get someone else to provide it?

Of course, in *Thirtysomething* the needs referred to were often sexual, and often between husband and wife. To foreplay or go all the way? To make a baby or not? These questions were well illustrated by the show’s opening scene of a young couple making out on the floor as their infant crawls by. It was cute and curious in the late Eighties to see babies so much a part of a prime-time series. After all, Boomers grew up with the promise that sex could be fully separated from procreation through the Pill, so there was something exhilarating and even liberating in acknowledging the natural biological connection between the two. Amid the overarching “me” theme of *Thirtysomething*, in the act of making babies a stubborn trace of honesty and acknowledgment of mystery remained that still retained some hold on the characters and the audience, even as the show touted the values of our birth-control culture.

Not surprisingly, however, the attraction of the “my needs” mindset has proved too potent within our culture and brought new meaning to the process of making babies. With modern methods, the child in the womb has become a commodity and more literally a “product of conception” and human will. You didn’t need to be a prophet to see this coming. “What about *my* needs” was inscribed on the human heart from the first sin in Eden. We just have more ways

Stephen Vincent writes from Connecticut.

today to get what we want, by moral methods or not.

The push and possibilities for having children on demand have grown with the advance of reproductive technology, and science and society have crossed one line after another. A recent chronicling of the progress was laid out in the Jan. 14, 2019, issue of *Time* magazine with the cover title “The Future of Babies.” You might call it the Frankenstein cover story, except the beings in question are innocent human babies caught up in the tide of reproductive manipulation. Mitochondrial replacement therapy (MRT), three biological parents, gene editing, uterus transplants, egg and sperm donation, in vitro fertilization, frozen embryos, preimplantation abortion, fetal “reduction,” genetic screening, and the shifting meaning of motherhood, fatherhood, and fertility: All of these issues were raised in a personal yet strangely sterile manner in the magazine, which featured on its cover a stylized picture of “the first baby born in the U.S. to a mother with a transplanted uterus.” I must say I flipped to that article first, fearing some trans-species womb exchange, and was relieved to read that the uterus was transplanted from one woman to another, though there are other moral problems with a healthy young woman donating her uterus.

The special section could have been titled “The Future of Humanity,” for that is what babies represent. The future is what we touch when we hold a baby; when we feed, clothe, and care for a child. We are working for the health and well-being of this one little person, hoping that he or she will see a bright future, but we are also seeking to pass on life to the next generation and the next, acting on our most basic instincts and fulfilling a universal human obligation—to preserve and protect life for the survival of our species.

Time taps into these primal instincts and motives, daring readers to find fault with cutting-edge science that pursues new methods to make new life.

Where to start?

Readers of this journal are familiar with the arguments against most forms of assisted reproductive technology (ART). According to the concept of human dignity and the principles of natural law, humans should be respected in their individuality, never used as a means toward an end, and each should be treated as a personal subject rather than as an object. These bedrock beliefs of our Judeo-Christian heritage are expressed in our nation’s Declaration of Independence: “that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness.” An international consensus adopted similar language in the United Nation’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which begins, “Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,” and states in Article III, “Everyone has the right to life,

liberty and security of person.” As much as the UN has sold out to the culture of death since its founding, these words still nominally stand.

Despite these lofty tenets, today we face a widening array of assaults on human life and dignity that appear on the surface to be all about enhancing and advancing life. Yet there are problems as we move along the road that *Time* maps out.

First, as a journalist who has written extensively on life issues, I must confess that what initially offended me in the special section was the hackneyed, shopworn style of the articles. Again and again, or maybe *Time* and again, we’ve seen this form of social advocacy dressed as scientific reporting since at least the early 1960s, with the push for the contraceptive pill and abortion. It has been replicated over time with the rise of one cause after another: contraception, abortion, radical feminism, gay rights, marriage “equality,” gender fluidity—the list grows longer and longer. The underlying message is that the personal is political, and the common good or moral law should bend to the perceived needs of the individual. This journalistic formula for advancing ideology has become something of a cliché, albeit often a persuasive one even after so many uses. Brave, impassioned, righteous yet apparently humble, and generally attractive and sympathetic individuals who seek human fulfillment run up against the heartless, impersonal, dehumanizing laws, rules, and traditions of a hidebound medical, legal, political, or religious institution. In the *Time* version, heartbreak abounds in the faces of the poor victims who simply want what comes naturally—a baby—even when it doesn’t come by natural means.

I will focus here on the first article, “The next frontier in fertility treatments,” in which we are introduced to Evan and Kristelle, a married couple whose son tragically died at three months of age due to a rare mitochondrial disease. The mother was a nurse and the father a physician assistant, yet they knew nothing about the mitochondrial mutation that tests found hidden in Kristelle’s genes. Because each pregnancy would be playing “reproductive roulette,” the article states, doctors told the couple that a healthy child would be unlikely and they should consider “adopting or using donor eggs,” as though the two methods are equivalent morally or procedurally.

Instead Evan and Kristelle asserted a “need” for their own healthy child and were willing to explore experimental means to get one. They entered a privately funded research project for mitochondrial replacement therapy (MRT), and here’s where the double heartbreak comes in. After losing one child, they now face a federal ban on MRT because, the article states almost in passing, “Not only does federal policy prevent scientists from using government money for research on human embryos that would result in their harm or destruction, but Congress also prohibits the Food and Drug Administration, which evaluates

new therapies like MRT, from even accepting applications to consider approving the procedure.” Well into the article, after we’ve grown to feel a sympathetic tug of the heart for these earnest young people who express undaunted resolve against the forces of faceless mitochondria and government bureaucracy, do we finally learn that their chosen method of conception involves “harm or destruction” of embryos.

But what are such details when placed against “needs”? As the article baldly states, “For families affected by mitochondrial diseases, that’s the only moral imperative—their right to use every option available to have their own healthy children.”

So what is MRT? It turns out that “their own healthy children” would not be fully theirs in terms of DNA. What the article describes as a form of gene editing is really gene adding. The process takes two eggs, one from the affected woman who wants to become pregnant and one from a mutation-free donor. In what is described as a “swap,” the “DNA from a donor egg that has healthy mitochondria” is [removed and replaced] with DNA from the egg nucleus of the woman affected by mitochondrial disease.” The mixed egg, which is composed of the woman’s DNA and the donor’s “non-mutated mitochondria, can be fertilized by the father’s sperm.” The freshly conceived embryo is implanted in the uterus of the new mother to grow normally to birth. This sounds precisely like in vitro fertilization using a donor’s egg, except that the resulting embryo has the mother’s DNA, the father’s DNA, and the donor’s mitochondrial DNA.

Those who value God’s design for sex and procreation find plenty wrong in almost every step of in vitro fertilization, so how much more fault do we find with MRT, which opens the possibility of a three-DNA child? What could possibly go wrong with playing God with the human genome?

Though for Evan and Kristelle, the article is careful to make clear, choosing to undergo MRT is not only a personal matter but also one of promoting science and hope for others. Against charges that they are seeking a designer baby, Evan says, “This is not about creating what we want, but purely about removing a fatal disease that is devastating to so many people.” In other words, the ends justify the means if the means lead to what Evan wants for himself and others. For now, the couple are waiting for an egg donor and a change in the law.

As always in articles like this, a note of caution is introduced as some scientists warn that such research must be peer-reviewed and weighed according to costs and benefits. Children have been born by MRT in Mexico and Ukraine, but large-scale studies are held back by limits in most countries. As the article points out, there are reasonable objections to the method beyond the desire to protect embryos from harm. Altering DNA can have unforeseen effects upon the new child and his or her later offspring. And there is no way to be certain that

some mitochondrial diseased cells don't go along for the ride while transferring the affected woman's DNA to the new egg. In short, the intended cure may be far worse than the disease.

According to the scientists quoted in the article, however, these risks present no reason to stop research. All that is needed is a "stepwise" process, professional caution, better controls, and sharing of data. Don't worry, say the experts, we can handle this. Still, reading the article closely, one has to wonder what problem is being solved. Who is being treated and what illness healed by MRT?

It seems that MRT does not treat a medical condition as much as it fulfills a human desire. It is more like cosmetic surgery than formal medicine. After all, MRT does not correct Kristelle's unfortunate mitochondrial disease that contributed to the death of her infant. Rather than treating her condition, MRT totally bypasses it by introducing mitochondria from a donor egg. Yet the procedure is designed to deliver what is desired—a baby with DNA from the woman who will be the mother. And it does so at some known and much unknown risk. Nowhere in the article does anyone raise the possibility of the donor egg being incompatible with the DNA of the mother, or the donor egg carrying a hidden genetic defect of its own that would be expressed in the newly fertilized embryo. But then, of course, the unspoken assumption is that abortion could deal with any "mistakes" made along the way.

This, I fear, is the future of medicine—the development of technology to meet heartfelt needs rather than cure actual disease. Or worse, the encouragement of a stream of new needs to justify another advance into questionable research.

An article like this one from *Time* indicates a certain desperation or hysteria on the part of scientific progressives—those who see research as a self-critical, self-monitoring, self-correcting discipline needing scant guidance from moral reasoning or religious traditions. They see little risk in this headlong technological tilt into the biological unknown. What can be done must be done as long as test subjects are willing and results are peer reviewed. Our scientific wizards have lifted the lid on the building blocks of life and are loath to close it and define some limits to their arts. They have grabbed hold of what they perceive as ultimate power and imagine they can control the effects. How could anyone who has united sperm and egg in a dish not think of himself as somehow a creator? How can anyone who has discarded human embryos like so many fruit flies not think of the greatest good as an assertion of human will?

In taking on the cloak of creator and destroyer, these men and women in reality diminish themselves, as they fall prey to fatalism—a fatalism that grabs those who lose a sense of the grand gift and mystery of life. They are like a hapless rider on a runaway bronco who imagines himself the master of the beast as he holds on for dear life. Our scientific community could use some humility when handling the stuff of life. Though from the tone of the *Time* article, it is apparent

that any hint of limits that humility might bring is opposed to human progress.

If you doubt, just ask the suffering couple. As in all such advocacy articles, the final word goes to the person frustrated by the ban on a new technology. The distressed yet upbeat Kristelle says of MRT, “Even if it doesn’t work out for us now, we hope one day it will for everyone affected by mitochondrial diseases.”

After all, what about *their* needs?

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The Religion of Progress

Joe Bissonnette

In *Man's Search for Meaning*, Viktor Frankl proposes that it is not Eros (Freud) or power (Adler) that is the primary engine of the psyche. More than anything else, according to Frankl, we are driven by a desire to make sense of things, and beyond observing proximate causes, we want to make sense of it all—we want to know what it all means.

The great historian Christopher Dawson viewed religion as the primary engine of history. Individuals and whole peoples have been moved to self-sacrifice and heroic love, overcoming seemingly insurmountable obstacles to draw close to God. From the Judeo-Christian view of man as created in the image of God, Western civilization came to recognize the dignity of the individual. And from this exaltation of man came a de-mystification of nature, which led to the abandonment of mystery cults and the development science.

But for the vast majority of people under 30 today, Frankl's insistence on meaning seems naively metaphysical, and Dawson's emphasis on religion, irrelevant. What I will argue here is that technological changes have changed our consciousness; they have changed the ways in which we relate to the world, to each other, and to ourselves. The most current technological developments have effected some of the most dramatic changes, creating skepticism about overt metaphysics and indifference towards religion. And yet, there abides an implicit metaphysics, and an intrinsic religiosity.

Since the Industrial Revolution, each generation has been severed from the preceding one by massive technological and cultural changes. The industrial model moved artisans and peasant farmers from socially stable villages into Dickensian factory cities. My great-grandfather drove a horse and carriage. My grandfather flew a biplane. The nuclear age eclipsed the sun like a pagan god, threatening apocalypse. The unprecedented growth of the post-war era fueled a Dionysian cultural decadence. The birth-control pill and legalized abortion made us sterile gods, forever young. Same-sex marriage and transgenderism are now considered heroic existential declarations of the plastic self. For each generation, the break with the past has been so extreme, parents have been reduced to stunned bewilderment, while children are battered in a vortex of perpetual change.

In a Ted Talk a decade ago, Sir Kenneth Robinson famously said, "Our bodies

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are merely transport systems to bring our heads from one meeting to another.” But that was before Apple introduced the smartphone. Today, we live far less in our heads, which at least back then were our own. Today each of us inhabits a consciousness managed by predictive algorithms that identify patterns in our searches and anticipate our future choices. With every search we make, our profiles become deeper, and, through constant improvements in computing, this data can be more subtly interpreted and deployed. We are thus progressively relieved of the burden of thinking, which in turn weakens our ability to think at all.

We have lost God, not as atheists, willfully defiant of God, or agnostics, finding elegant sounding objections to save ourselves from the moral demands of faith, or even as elite aesthetes, too rarified for the commonness of faith. No, we have lost God like a distracted spouse at a party, forgetful of covenant, engrossed by the charms that present themselves to us. It is a soft infidelity and then a sleepy surrender to seduction. It is spiritual apathy. Apathism.

In a way, our condition can be compared to Narcissus, the mythological character who saw his reflection in a pool and was enthralled by it. The myth is generally understood to illustrate the paralyzing effects of excessive self-love, but there is a deeper layer of meaning. What Narcissus saw in his reflection was not himself but rather a mysterious, enchanting other who seemed uncommonly sympathetic. He was beguiled by the illusion of the longed-for perfectly compatible other; feeling a false sense of communion, he did not realize he was alone. Like Narcissus, neither do we. We peer into our smartphones and see the most sympathetic of friends, the perfectly compatible other, but in fact we are entranced by a dark mirror, programmed to anticipate our interests and manipulate our longings.

The technological mediums driving this transformation are entering our lives with dizzying speed. The Pew Research Center notes that the cell phone is “the most quickly adopted consumer technology in the history of the world.” Now, we are never separated from our screens. And as Marshall McLuhan famously noted: “The medium is the message.” This technology thoroughly defines what it is to be and the meaning of Being. Technology informs religious sensibility, and though it may seem that the spirit of progress has supplanted religiosity this would be a category error. The religious sense is deeper than the world-view created by technology or the captivating parade of technological progress. Technological progress has not replaced religion, Progress is itself a religion, manifesting all the classic traits which define religion, including ritual sacrifice. And of this last point, ritual sacrifice, abortion is the most extreme and horrific example.

The foundational truth of Progress, the creed of Progress, is *newer is better*. It might seem like a trite advertising slogan, but it is packed with meaning. This

is revealed in two important ways.

First, *newer is better* thoroughly discredits the past. In a world transfixed by a constant stream of “new and improved,” previous instantiations belong in the landfill. There is no loyalty or sentimentalism. Today we look upon our ancestral homes with cold eyes. The past is benighted, the heroes of yesterday are irrelevant, even absurd. History is pitiable, and so too the lessons derived from history. Tradition and wisdom are meaningless.

Second, *newer is better* destroys ontology, which is the branch of philosophy that deals with the nature of Being. Ontology begins with the confident assumption that there is truth to be known—that there is such a thing as a human being, a person. Further, ontology asserts that there are such constants as virtue, goodness, and beauty. But according to Progress, the only abiding truth is constant change. There is no fixity to Being, there is only Becoming. What “is” now is merely a momentary instantiation without any abiding integrity. In debates in my classes, an increasingly common defense of abortion is that there should be no species preference for “humans.” There is no difference between killing animals and babies, since we are, each of us, merely momentary instantiations of fluid Becoming. The Polish philosopher Zygmunt Bauman describes the radical instability caused by our alienation from Being as the fundamental problem of our age. He says we exist adrift in “Liquid Modernity.”

Our faith in Progress is sustained by technological sacraments. Every new version of the iPhone, every new development in gene editing, creates a world more mysterious and incomprehensible, and makes the world of the senses, and the physical self, less reliable. New technology has always presented itself as evidence of the superiority of the present over the past and as a harbinger of a luminous future. And every declamation of some historic injustice, every declaration of some newly minted existential right, has served the same narrative, as the humanities gracelessly follow technology and the sciences in proclaiming utopian progress.

But the creedal statement *newer is better* is not just about our technology or the world around us. It is about us. We ourselves are subsumed under the singular reality of Progress. Each of us is but a momentary instantiation with no abiding essence, no core truth, no essential goodness (or evil). We are but a snapshot in the progression of Becoming. So we strive to stay in Becoming mode with all of our being. We want to be forever young, because youth is the embodiment of Becoming. This makes those who are young, especially our own children, potentially our existential enemies. To have children, to promote the Becoming of a successor generation, is to relegate ourselves to the contemptible past. According to the religion of Progress, to have children is existential suicide.

And this is where the religion of Progress unavoidably leads to child murder.

We resent the young, who are more current instantiations of fluid Becoming. They supplant us. In a worldview in which the *newer is better*, our children are not our beloved, they are next year's model, soon to render us obsolete. The religion of Progress requires abortion as a logical necessity. More than that, in the religion of Progress abortion is a sacrament. It is a ritual rejection of the arc of life, of the sublime mystery of aging and of the selfless parental love which is the most beautiful natural expression of humanity.

At a deeper level, abortion is not just a repudiation of nature and Being, it is a repudiation of the Christian God. All of history since the Incarnation has been a response to the Holy Trinity.

In *Theology of the Body*, St. John Paul II revealed the fruitful love of marriage as a reflection of the triune nature of God. In Trinitarian theology, the Holy Spirit is the personification of the love which proceeds from the Father and the Son. The procreative act, in which the child is the personification of the love between the father and mother, is a reflection of the Holy Trinity. The begetting of a child is unlike any other act in its reflection of the nature of God, hence the deliberate killing of the child is not just murder, it is sacrilege of the worst kind.

A common narrative among proliferators portrays the abortive mother as the second victim of abortion. Pro-life feminist Frederica Mathewes Green has said: "No woman wants an abortion as she wants an ice cream or a Porsche. She wants it like an animal caught in a trap wants to gnaw off its own leg." This is powerful rhetoric, but it is fundamentally mistaken. We are not animals, even when we are in crisis. We have reason, free will, and responsibility, individually and as a culture. And we are architectonic thinkers, striving to make sense of the whole. At the deepest level, we are religious, even when we are anti-religious.

Catholic theology describes the family as the domestic church. The Church is both the model and the reflection of the family. Both are hierarchic, but parents today perpetrate an egalitarian betrayal. Parents pretend they are not parents, and they pretend their children are not children. They dress and address their children as peers and friends. Mothers in the past harbored no illusions about the power of sex and the importance of modesty, but many mothers now dress their prepubescent daughters in aggressively sexual clothing. Fathers, who represent protective authority, call their sons "buddy" and try to interact as peers. These may seem like small things but they aren't. Because this habit of mind now encourages some parents to permit the mutilation of their children's bodies in transgender hormonal treatments and operations, and has left others unable to defend against such travesties. This is a descent into madness, and it is terrifying.

Unlike our children, as adults we're somewhat immunized by a broader base of lived experience and the unyielding responsibilities of jobs and bills. Our big ideas are unhinged, even surreal, but at a day-to-day operational level

we remain more or less grounded by common-sense realism. But the young, though ostensibly freed from the “isness” of Being, are in fact in freefall. They are lost in space and there is no up. They have no meaning and purpose. They don’t even exist. They have been subjected to a sort of gaslighting, a systematic destabilizing of their experience of reality. As a defense strategy, the young have turtled; they are withdrawn and non-responsive. Increasing numbers of them are medicated, and committing suicide.

As horrific as all of this is, it is almost impossible for us to imagine living outside of the model of technological progress. Hyper-ingenuity is a genie that will not go back into its bottle. Techno-pioneers like Bill Gates, Steven Jobs, Mark Zuckerberg, and Elon Musk are rock stars, the forward outliers of enlightenment, as are transhumanists like Ray Kurzweil and Aubrey de Grey. (Testing the limits of our credulity, Elon Musk has mused that what we are experiencing now is probably not base reality but a simulation.)

The question is whether technological progress must necessarily bring with it an architecture of meaning, a religion of Progress. If a separation is at all possible, it certainly can’t be achieved without a clear-eyed, ongoing recognition of the dehumanizing, murderous dangers intrinsic to the logic of Progress. And it can’t be done without an abiding relationship with the Author of Being.

But there remains a flickering hope. The religion of technological progress is loveless, sterile, and hopeless. Christian history is filled with the lives of saints who voraciously consumed the charms of the world and came away empty, who drank deeply of the spirit of the world and tasted ashes. The religion of technological progress cannot satisfy. But far more powerfully, Christianity is not a truth to be discovered, it is a relationship to live within. While the Lord will sometimes wait in silence when darkness falls, in the deepest darkness He draws near, He beckons, He takes us by the hand, He carries us like tiny children.

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Misdiagnosing Our Age

William Doino Jr.

Of all the challenges now facing society, few are more important than accurately diagnosing our age and providing effective remedies for its ailments. If one is a conservative, especially a person of faith who embraces the Judeo-Christian biblical tradition, one does not expect liberals or libertarians to address these questions well. It is a source of real concern, however, when prominent religious leaders and writers, trusted by people committed to biblical values, not only misdiagnose our age, but promote “solutions” that would actually weaken Judeo-Christian principles. Such is happening at an ever-increasing pace.

Among the arguments now gaining traction within certain Christian circles are these:

1. Whether conservative Christians like it or not, and while they should never abandon their convictions, it is long past due for them to realize that the “culture war” on issues like abortion, sexual morality, and pornography is over—and that they lost it, especially among the young;
2. But that is not an altogether bad thing, since conservative Christians tend to obsess over these social issues and suffer from a puritan mindset—even though a truly biblical vision is much broader and richer than that; consequently
3. Conservative Christians should downplay, if not avoid pressing their controversial moral beliefs in the public square, lest they drive away even more people from the Judeo-Christian perspective.
4. The best way for conservative Christians to influence our culture with biblical principles is to celebrate Christianity’s crowning achievements, which still enjoy broad support: its magnificent works of art, architecture, music, literature, and film; the astonishing courage of its martyrs; and the beautiful lives of its saints.
5. What the world needs now, more than ever, is an infusion of that kind of beauty—not only as an antidote to the ugliness and evil around us, but as a way to win over skeptics who are tired and numb to the culture war but still attracted to beauty, which is often a gateway to larger notions of truth and goodness, and even to personal religious conversion.
6. In short, if our culture is to be transformed with Judeo-Christian ideals,

William Doino Jr., a contributor to *Inside the Vatican* and *First Things*, among many other publications, writes often about religion, history, and politics. He has published an 80,000-word annotated bibliography on Pope Pius XII, which appears in the anthology, *The Pius War: Responses to the Critics of Pius XII* (Lexington Books), available in hardcover, paperback, and in Kindle format.

it will not be due to any contentious new crusades on behalf of marriage and morality, but by the irresistible attraction of beauty, as it has been expressed by the greatest Christian thinkers, artists, and saints; for as Dostoyevsky prophetically wrote, “Beauty will save the world.”

Among prominent Christian writers who have advanced some, if not all, of these concepts, are the late Swiss theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar,¹ essayist and editor Gregory Wolfe,² blogger and author Rod Dreher³; and the well-known Bishop Robert Barron, whose recent book, *To Light a Fire on the Earth: Proclaiming the Gospel in a Secular Age*,⁴ might be considered a field guide to this (as he sees it) fresh and dynamic approach to evangelization.

Before respectfully disagreeing with that perspective, let me stress that I consider all of these authors outstanding Christians.⁵ Much of what they say about the power of beauty and the inspiring witness of the saints is undeniably true. Their arguments are eloquent and made in good faith, and they all make clear that they reject an “art for art’s sake” approach⁶ to cultural renewal, holding that truth and goodness are indispensable sisters to beauty, even if they believe a major shift in focus and strategy among Christians is needed.

That said, and however well-intentioned, their ideas and proposals, outlined above, derive from highly questionable assumptions which cannot go unchallenged.

Is the Culture War Really Over?

To begin with, the idea that the culture war is “over” contradicts both history and current events and, in its relentless defeatism, arguably runs against essential tenets of Christianity—like hope, the efficacy of prayer, and confidence in God’s final victory.⁷

Further, as Professor Steven D. Smith demonstrates in his powerful new book, *Pagans and Christians in the City*,⁸ the culture war is hardly recent: It did not begin with the rise of the “Moral Majority” nor has it ended with Supreme Court rulings in favor of abortion and same-sex marriage. It is a struggle that has been going on for centuries, and will not be “over” until the world itself ends. It began the moment Christianity entered the world (and from a Judeo-Christian view, even earlier, when Judaism preceded it).

One of the reasons given by Christians for their retreat from the culture war is that we live in a “post-Christian” era which no longer understands the language of Christian morality. Yet one of the strengths of Smith’s book is that it shows how the pagan world understood Christianity even *less* than ours does—but the early Christians didn’t use that as an excuse to refrain from preaching the Gospel. Christians of today shouldn’t either.

In his introduction to *Pagans and Christians in the City*, Professor Robert P. George notes that “beliefs about sexuality and morality in the ancient world”

marked a dramatic divide between Christianity and paganism:

Christian ideas about sexual norms (rejecting fornication, adultery . . . homosexual acts, pornographic displays and so forth) were revolutionary; and the pagan establishment was no more welcoming of revolutionaries—even nonviolent ones—than any other establishment is. . . .

The Romans perceived Christianity as a threat—and Christian ideas about sex (and, in consequence, about Roman sexual practices) figured significantly in that perception. They feared that Christianity would, in Smith’s evocative phrase, “turn out the lights on that ‘merry dance.’” And that, of course, is what Christianity eventually did.⁹

That victory didn’t come about overnight, however; it took several centuries before Christianity emerged as a leading cultural force. Now, many Christians fear that the pendulum has swung back, and that Christianity faces a radical assault upon its foundations. But if there is one thing Smith’s book firmly establishes, it is that no one can know the course of the culture war: Its twists and turns throughout history have been wholly unpredictable, and this remains true today.

Whatever one thinks about the character and conduct of Donald Trump, his election as America’s president in 2016—which was largely driven by conservative Christians¹⁰—was a shock to political pundits, and a stinging rebuke to those who thought religious conservatism was a spent political force. Now, even many liberals (if not all religious conservatives, ironically) who once bragged about their presumed victory in the culture war, are fretting once again, if not panicking, afraid that *Roe v. Wade*, as well as other elements of the secular-progressive agenda, are in danger.

The point here is that no one but Almighty God knows for certain what the future holds; in the meantime, Christians should not be making premature declarations about their supposed defeat in the culture war, much less waving the white flag of surrender. The battles for recovering a culture of life and moral order and protecting religious liberty are still very much alive¹¹; and given the Left’s propensity to always overplay its hand—with extreme positions on gender ideology¹² and now even infanticide¹³—liberals are actually making it easier for religious conservatives to make their case.

Are Religious Conservatives Really “Obsessed” about Culture War Issues at the Expense of More Important Ones?

The charge that conservative Christians are “obsessed” with sex and social issues, at the expense of more fundamental biblical truths, is both misleading and unfair.

Every informed believer knows that Christianity begins not with today’s burning social issues but with the highest theological teachings of the faith (e.g., belief in the Holy Trinity, Resurrection, Second Coming, and Final Judgment) as

expressed in the Nicene Creed and other major professions of faith. That does not mean Christian teachings on human sexuality and related matters are not of major importance. The New Testament makes abundantly clear that those who knowingly, and with full consent of their will, sin gravely in the sexual realm—and continue their way of life without sincerely repenting and reforming—“will not inherit the Kingdom of God.”¹⁴

Obviously, any sins that have the capacity to prevent souls from reaching Heaven cannot be deemed inconsequential or on the peripheries of Christianity. As Dan Hitchens wrote in “The Trouble with Catholic Politicians” for the *Catholic Herald*:

People like to argue about which is worse: “left-wing” Catholic politicians who contradict the Church on marriage and abortion, or “right-wing” Catholic politicians who neglect the Church’s teaching on immigration, and on the state’s duty to correct some of the injustices of the market. The debate is interminable . . . It is, though, fair to say that the most intractable conflicts relate to that cluster of issues around sex, gender and reproduction. For supporters of abortion, gay marriage and the new theories of gender, there is a clear set of dogmas which cannot be transgressed; the same is true for Catholics. While sexual ethics are not central to Church teaching, they are an essential part of it—just as the windpipe is not a major organ, but if it is blocked even for a few minutes the whole body will perish.¹⁵

To those perceptive comments, one might add: Rarely, if ever, are committed Christians who strongly and rightly fight the evils of racism, social injustice, and environmental damage accused of exhibiting an unhealthy focus on these “single issues.” It is, however, often regarded as inflammatory for Christians to defend the unborn, protect the disabled and ill from euthanasia, criticize pornography, defend traditional marriage, and oppose same-sex relations—even though, as the Catholic Church (and many other Christian denominations) teaches, that is exactly what the Gospel requires of them, *in addition to* speaking out on the other major issues.

Christians are called to be fully dimensional witnesses to their faith—not selective and hypocritical ones—who will passionately defend Christian teachings *on all fronts*. In supporting the entire Gospel, they should never feel intimidated by accusations of harboring an “obsession” with *any* vital issue.¹⁶

A “Gallipoli Moment,” or an Erroneous Historical Parallel?

In *To Light a Fire on the Earth*, Bishop Barron argues that the Catholic Church has reached a “Gallipoli kind of moment” in the culture wars, referring to Britain’s futile effort during World War I to take back Gallipoli, after thousands of British soldiers had been lost. The Church keeps pouring “all of our energy into the sexual issues,” Bishop Barron laments, without realizing that “We’re getting mowed down . . . We’re not making any progress.” Therefore, he argues, it is time to change the conversation, as Pope Francis has done, to topics

like the environment, the poor, and immigration (alongside the aforementioned “beauty” narrative).¹⁷

Here, Bishop Barron misconstrues the Pope. For Francis has not so much changed the conversation as *expanded* it, and, contrary to his critics, even as he has broadened the dialogue, he has simultaneously denounced artificial birth control, abortion, euthanasia, same-sex relations and “marriage,” and gender ideology.¹⁸ He is not the Left’s Pope any more than he is the Right’s. He defies simplistic labels, and the oft-heard claim that he has abandoned the culture war is demonstrably untrue.¹⁹

Moreover, the premise that the American Catholic hierarchy has spent too much time and too many resources combatting the sexual revolution is unconvincing. As Father Christopher Roberts wrote in a critique of Barron’s book:

Can anyone seriously claim that the Church [in America] has been *pouring* resources into combatting the sexual revolution in the past thirty years? I was born in 1979 and went to eight years of Catholic school in a very conservative state and continued going to religious education for three years in high school. I can count on one hand the number of times that I heard anything resembling an attempt to present the Church’s teaching on human sexuality in a robust way.²⁰

In a 2012 interview with the *Wall Street Journal*,²¹ Cardinal Timothy Dolan, the Archbishop of New York, underscored Father Roberts’ point, admitting that the Catholic hierarchy missed a critical teaching moment in 1968 when it failed to publicly defend St. Paul VI’s prophetic encyclical against contraception, *Humanae Vitae*.²² More recently, the *Journal*’s well-known columnist Peggy Noonan observed that the sexual revolution, and especially its contraceptive mindset, is inextricably linked to the epidemic of sexual harassment and abuse against women now finally being exposed. She wrote:

An aging priest suggested to a friend that all this was inevitable. “Contraception degenerates men,” he said, as does abortion. Once you separate sex from its seriousness, once you separate it from its life-changing, life-giving potential, men will come to see it as just another want, a desire like any other. Once they think that, then they’ll see sexual violations as less serious, less charged, less full of weight.²³

Even the otherwise commendable Bishop Barron has occasionally dropped the ball on this issue. In his highly acclaimed 10-part video series *Catholicism* there was virtually nothing of substance on Catholic sexual morality. In explaining this striking omission, Bishop Barron said, “In making this series, a lot of people said, ‘You have to have an episode on morality, or the Theology of the Body, or you have to talk about sexual ethics.’ I said no, I don’t want to do it. I didn’t want another bickering Catholic position paper, I wanted this to be lyrical.”²⁴

Yet no less a Catholic than St. John Paul II wrote an entire book, *Love and*

Responsibility,²⁵ on sexual ethics before becoming pope, and soon afterwards delivered his famous series of catechesis on the Theology of the Body.²⁶ One of the reasons he did so was to prove that the Church's teachings on sexual ethics *are* beautiful and *are* lyrical, and far more than a "bickering Catholic position paper."

If the topic is important enough to be covered extensively by one of the Church's greatest modern saints, is it not important enough for Bishop Barron?

It should also be noted that, while preaching against pornography on numerous other occasions,²⁷ Bishop Barron inexplicably chose not to mention a single word about this scourge in *To Light a Fire on the Earth*. Why the sudden silence about a growing and terrible epidemic?

The comparable failure of the American Catholic hierarchy, with rare exceptions, to loudly teach and defend the Church's teachings on sex has been costly and surely contributed to confusion and dissent within the Church. Many surveys now reveal that Evangelicals are far more committed to classic Christian teachings against abortion and sexual immorality than Catholics—even though Catholics originally *led* opposition to abortion and *Roe v. Wade*, and once held their own in defending biblical teachings on sex.²⁸

To Bishop Barron's mistaken belief that the contemporary Catholic Church has fought a vigorous, but useless, battle against the sexual revolution, one might reply with a statement from one of his favorite thinkers, G.K. Chesterton: "The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting; it has been found difficult, and left untried."²⁹

Did the Saints Oppose the Culture War?

Among the most attractive things about Christianity—without doubt—are the saints it has produced. Even religious communities that do not officially recognize saints admire the holiness, humility, and influence of an Augustine, Francis of Assisi, Catherine of Siena, Thomas More, Ignatius of Loyola, Teresa of Avila, Edith Stein, or Mother Teresa. Yet to depict the saints as an alternative to, or refuge from, the "unpleasant" culture war would be a profound mistake, as that would deprive the saints of one of their supreme virtues: their willingness to speak truth to power and to engage in the culture wars of their time without regard to personal cost or persecution.

Two examples that immediately come to mind are St. Francis of Assisi and Mother Teresa. No two saints have been more beloved, and yet no two have been more sentimentalized and misrepresented. Far from being just a gentle, poor, and whimsical preacher, who only spoke about the beauty of God's creation, St. Francis was also an outspoken defender of sexual purity who explicitly warned against "carnal desires" and where they could lead. Johannes Jorgenson, one of the saint's best biographers, described Francis as "an unbending moralist. He

was not silent about the wrongs that he saw, but gave everything its right name In his writings, there is many a Woe to the sinner, whose wages are eternal fire! He was not afraid to threaten with God's judgment. His words were compared to a sword that pierces through hearts."³⁰

Similarly, Mother Teresa is justly renowned for her life-long care of the destitute and dying, but her ministry did not stop there. Whenever the occasion called for it, she publicly condemned contraception, euthanasia, and abortion—no matter how secular or socially liberal her audience—and this earned Mother both the love of the faithful and the wrath of militant secularists who tried, unsuccessfully, to defame her and prevent her well-deserved canonization.³¹

What was true of these great saints is true of many others, including Catherine of Siena, who excoriated immoral clergy in her *Dialogue*; St. Peter Damian (singled out by Pope Francis for praise), who did the same in his *Book of Gomorrah*; St. Alphonsus Liguori, whose sermons examined sins of every kind and are as scorching as anything heard in the history of Christian preaching; St. Charles Borromeo, the great reformer who fought moral and spiritual corruption (beloved by St. John XXIII); Edith Stein, who, even as a contemplative Carmelite nun, wrote urgent letters to the Vatican and others to warn against the rising danger of Nazism and anti-Semitism; and Saint Faustina (a favorite of St. John Paul II's), whose devotion to God's Divine Mercy is much better known than her terrifying vision of hell and her warnings about the fate of those who consciously and shamelessly commit sins of the flesh.³²

The deeper one studies the saints, the more one realizes how powerful their lives were, not only because they were truly filled with beauty, mercy, and charity, but also because of their astonishing courage and righteous indignation against sin and evil of every kind. They were the fiery culture warriors of their day—forerunners to today's Christian combatants—not accommodationists or cultural appeasers, and anyone who tries to depict them as such has missed the mark by a wide margin.

Is Beauty Really the Great Solution that Will Redeem Our Culture?

Fyodor Dostoyevsky, the great Russian novelist, did indeed write that "beauty will save the world." Many people who quote this line, however, fail to note that he did so as an Orthodox Christian, who believed that beauty must always be rooted in God and His stable moral order, in the recognition of right from wrong, and good from evil.³³ When beauty is detached from these essential elements, it is but a phantom and fleeting idea which has no connection to the Judeo-Christian moral code and invariably leads those who abandon that code—especially secular artists and celebrities (ironically called "the beautiful people")—to live highly dysfunctional lives and produce offensive "art," all under the deceptive banner of "beauty."

These are serious dangers which many Christians, including high-ranking members of the Catholic Church, mesmerized by superficial notions of beauty, ignore.

That is the only explanation for the now notorious New York City Met Gala of early 2018, “Heavenly Bodies: Fashion and the Catholic Imagination.” That event, incredibly, received the full cooperation of Catholic leaders, even as it encouraged many celebrities—who have no discernible reverence for Catholic values—to wear sacred Catholic vestments and symbols in the most lewd, shocking, and provocative ways. The Gala was so tasteless that even secular critics wondered why certain members of the Catholic hierarchy would allow their Church to be exploited and degraded in such a manner.³⁴

The lesson is that beauty is not a self-controlling or self-guiding phenomenon which naturally leads to the truth about God, human nature, and the meaning of life. It *can* help bring people into the light, but it can just as easily seduce them and plunge them into darkness.

Consequently, the idea that modern evangelization should always “lead with beauty” and place the hard sayings of Christianity—including truths about crucial moral and social issues—in the background, is a serious strategic and spiritual error.³⁵ For if the upcoming generation is ever to understand and appreciate authentic beauty, it must have some preliminary knowledge about “first things”—namely, respect for basic truths revealed in the Bible and developed by the Judeo-Christian heritage.³⁶ Back-door or side-way conversions are bound to fail.

A related error is to assume, as Bishop Barron does, that culture-war issues are automatic turn-offs to seekers of truth—especially young people—and are not what the Gospels want sincere Christians to focus on. In an article on this theme, Bishop Barron wrote:

Preoccupation with “the pelvic issues” has served to undermine the work of evangelization. When you read the great evangelizing texts of the New Testament—the Gospels, the Epistles of Paul, the Book of Revelation, etc.—you don’t get the impression that what their authors wanted you primarily to understand is sexual morality.³⁷

Putting aside Jesus’ stark words against lust—plucking one’s eye out or cutting one’s hand off, lest one’s whole body be thrown into hell for sins of the flesh³⁸—and ignoring St. Paul’s equally severe statements about sexual immorality in the Book of Romans³⁹—Bishop Barron’s opinion can be challenged on every level.

Think about a young, unmarried woman, reading the Bible for the first time, who is trapped in a destructive sexual relationship and has suddenly become pregnant, not knowing what to do next; or a married man in a disintegrating marriage because of his toxic addiction to pornography; or anyone in a same-sex

relationship trying to break free of it—the liberating truths of the Gospel on life and sexual morality may be *exactly* what they need to read and hear, up front, to rescue them.

Just offering them Christian poetry, or taking them to see a religious art exhibit, or playing sacred music for them—as beautiful and moving as all those things are—isn’t going to meet their deepest needs, or heal their wounds.

It is, moreover, an incontestable fact that many conversions have come about precisely because of Christianity’s uncompromising teachings on the culture-war issues that Bishop Barron and so many others needlessly fear. Ashley McGuire published a piece in the *Wall Street Journal* entitled, “The Controversial Text That Saved Me,” with a subtitle that explains her point, “I’m a Catholic thanks to *Humanae Vitae*. It’s about a lot more than birth control.”⁴⁰ In her remarkable new memoir, *Sunday Will Never Be the Same*,⁴¹ Dawn Eden Goldstein, a secular rock journalist turned Catholic theologian, describes how she was deeply influenced by the Church’s courageous pro-life witness in her journey to Christianity.⁴² My recently deceased friend Philip Trower, an acclaimed British Catholic writer, struggled with homosexuality early in life; but before he died, he asked me to write about his inspiring conversion story and how becoming Catholic and abiding by its sexual teachings had transformed and elevated his life, which I happily did.⁴³ At the Catholic Church’s recent Synod on Youth in Rome, Avera Maria Santo, a 22-year-old American Catholic with same-sex attraction, appealed to Catholic leaders not to water down Church teaching on homosexuality “in any way,” for its clarity and charity is what gives her the strength and grace to live a chaste and moral life.⁴⁴ This is not even to mention heroic Christians like Margaret of Cortona, Josephine Bakhita, Laura Vicuna, and Maria Goretti, who became saints or Blesseds because of their fearless witness of Christian teaching on human sexuality.⁴⁵

What all this points to is the great mission of contemporary Christians: to preach the entire truth about life, morality, and culture—in a winsome and compassionate manner, to be sure—but also to recognize the heresies of our time.

Almost one hundred years ago, G.K. Chesterton predicted one of the biggest problems that would ever face the Church:

The next great heresy is going to be simply an attack on morality; and especially on sexual morality. And it is coming, not from a few Socialists surviving from the Fabian Society, but from the living exultant energy of the rich resolved to enjoy themselves at last, with neither Popery nor Puritanism nor Socialism to hold them back The roots of the new heresy, God knows, are as deep as nature itself, whose flower is the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eye and the pride of life. I say that the man who cannot see this cannot see the signs of the times.⁴⁶

Heaven forbid that committed Christians misdiagnose our age, remain blind to these signs, and fail to resist this heresy with all our might.

NOTES

1. In the first volume of *The Glory of the Lord*, von Balthasar claims that the importance of beauty has been overlooked, if not disparaged: “We no longer dare to believe in beauty, and we make of it a mere appearance in order the more easily to dispose of it. Our situation today shows that beauty demands for itself at least as much courage and decision as do truth and goodness, and she will not allow herself to be separated and banned from her sisters without taking them along with herself in an act of mysterious vengeance. We can be sure that whoever sneers at her name as if she were the ornament of a bourgeois past—whether he admits it or not—can no longer pray and soon will no longer be able to love.” (*The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics, Volume 1: Seeing the Form*; T and T Clark Ltd, 1982, p. 18.)
2. See Wolfe’s book, *Beauty Will Save the World: Recovering the Human in an Ideological Age* (ISI Books, 2011).
3. See Dreher’s much-discussed book, *The Benedict Option: A Strategy for Christians in a Post-Christian Nation* (Sentinel, 2017); as well as the review of it, “Christians Have Lost the Culture Wars. Should They Withdraw from the Mainstream?” by Katelyn Beaty, *The Washington Post* online, March 2, 2017; and especially Dreher’s interview with Dr. Albert Mohler, in which Dreher says: “And that’s why I believe, and I agree with Pope Benedict on this, that now in this day and age, the best apologetics for the Christian faith are not arguments, but the beauty that comes through the art the Church makes, and goodness as comes through the lives of the saints.” (From the online transcript of Mohler’s program, “Thinking in Public,” for the segment, “The Benedict Option: A Conversation with Rod Dreher,” February 13, 2017). It is certainly true that Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (before becoming Pope Benedict XVI) stated, “The only really effective apologia for Christianity comes down to two arguments, namely the saints the Church has produced, and the art which has grown in her womb.” But the Cardinal was comparing the holiness of saints and sacred art to *bad* arguments made on behalf Christianity—what he calls the “clever excuses” which apologetics has invented to justify dark moments in Church history—not convincing ones. Cardinal Ratzinger went on to define beauty, not in an abstract or aesthetic way, but as an expression of objective truth: “Christians must not be too easily satisfied. They must make their Church into a place where beauty—and hence truth—is at home [emphasis added]. Without this, the world will become the first circle of hell.” (From *The Ratzinger Report* (Ignatius Press, 1985, pp. 129-130.) Even as he has hailed Christian art and the lives of the saints, Pope Benedict has never hesitated to make strong intellectual arguments for Christianity, as demonstrated by his acclaimed trilogy on Jesus of Nazareth, and his many teachings, conversations and books (often with non-Christians) in pursuit of truth.
4. See *To Light a Fire on the Earth: Proclaiming the Gospel in a Secular Age* by Bishop Robert Barron, with John L. Allen Jr. (Image Books, 2017).
5. As examples, I wrote two supportive profiles of Rod Dreher, and (then Father, now Bishop) Barron, for *First Things*: see “Rod Dreher’s American Classic,” by William Doino Jr., *First Things* online, April 29, 2013; and “Father Barron’s Affirmative Faith,” by William Doino Jr., *First Things* online, August 10, 2015.
6. “Art for Art’s Sake” is the idea that “art needs no justification, and need serve no political, didactic, or other end” (*Encyclopedia Britannica* online).
7. Christ assures his disciples that if their faith is strong enough, they can move mountains (Matthew 17: 20). Even as Christians invariably interpret this in a figurative way, they recognize that Christ was making a profound point about the power and efficacy of prayer—as has Pope Francis (see “Prayer Has the Power to Change Lives, Hearts, Pope Says,” by Junno Arocho Esteves, *Crux* online, January 9, 2019). In addition, Christ also promises his disciples that “he who stands firm till the end will be saved” (Matthew 24:13). Consequently, it is shortsighted for Christians to speak about “losing” the culture war, since, from a Christian perspective, those who persevere and remain faithful to the end will attain salvation during Christ’s final triumph. On this topic, see also the interview with Cardinal Jorge Medina Estevez in *Inside the Vatican*, March 1999, pp. 30-33, in which he is asked, “If the devil has such intelligence and power, how can human beings hope to stand against his wiles?” and to which he responds: “The Church is certain of Christ’s final victory and does not let herself be swayed by fear or pessimism.” Also note Pope Benedict XVI’s statement: “Let us go forward as the Lord said: ‘Courage, I have overcome the world.’ We are on the Lord’s team; therefore, we are on the winning side.” (“Pope Issues Rallying Call to His Brother Cardinals,” by Edward Pentin, *The National Catholic Register* online, May 22, 2012); also the remarks of Archbishop Charles Chaput in “Chaput: ‘God Doesn’t Lose,’” *Catholic News Agency* online, March 28, 2018. No one who remains faithful to the Lord ever loses the things that matter most.
8. See *Pagans and Christians in the City: Culture Wars from the Tiber to the Potomac* by Steven D. Smith; Foreword by Robert P. George (Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2018).
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

10. Evangelical support for President Trump is the subject of passionate debate. For a book-length critique of pro-Trump Evangelicals, see *Believe Me: The Evangelical Road to Donald Trump* by John Fea (Eerdmans, 2018); and the article, “Evangelicals are Paying [a] High Moral Price for Anti-Abortion Gains,” by Doug Pagitt, *USA Today* online, October 21, 2018. For qualified defenses of Evangelical support for President Trump, see “Should Christians Vote for Trump? Trump’s Behavior is Odious, but Clinton has a Deplorable Basketful of Deal Breakers,” by Eric Metaxas, *The Wall Street Journal* online, October 12, 2016; and *Donald Trump Is Not My Savior: An Evangelical Leader Speaks His Mind about the Man he Supports as President* by Dr. Michael Brown (Destiny Image, 2018). One encouraging sign in this intense and often emotional debate is that at least some Christians who disagree strongly over President Trump realize that they are still brothers and sisters in Christ—and should never allow political differences, however deep, to obscure that fact: See, for example, the moving piece, “How a Tweet Turned Eric Metaxas into My Brother,” by Elizabeth Palmer, *Christian Century* online, June 11, 2018.
11. Two examples of that—which took many by surprise—are the resounding religious liberty victories of Christian baker Jack Phillips, and the decision of the United Methodist Church to strengthen its opposition to same-sex marriage and homosexual clergy. See “Colorado Drops Case Against Christian Baker Jack Phillips for Refusing to Make Transgender Cake,” by Michael Gryboski, *The Christian Post* online, March 5, 2019; “United Methodists Tighten Ban on Same-Sex Marriage and Gay Clergy,” by Timothy Williams and Elizabeth Dias, *The New York Times* online, February 26, 2019; and “Methodists Make History, Vote Against Allowing Homosexual ‘Marriage,’ LGBT Clergy,” *LifeSiteNews* online, March 1, 2019.
12. For a thorough analysis of this topic, see Ryan T. Anderson’s book *When Harry Became Sally: Responding to the Transgender Moment* (Encounter Books, 2018).
13. See “Democrats Overplay Their Hand on Abortion” by Alexandra DeSanctis, *The Atlantic* online, February 4, 2019; “States’ Move Toward Abortion Extremism Heats up ‘Cold Civil War’” by Charles Camosy, *Religion News Service* online, January 31, 2019; and “An Infanticide Question Awaits Democratic Nominee in 2020” by Maureen Ferguson, *The Hill* online, March 2, 2019.
14. See Corinthians 6: 9-11. It should be noted that this passage ends on a strong note of Christian hope, highlighting the ability of sinners to turn their lives around: “And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of Our God.”
15. See “The Trouble with Catholic Politicians” by Dan Hitchens, *The Catholic Herald* online, July 12, 2018.
16. I applaud efforts by individuals and groups to expand the number of vital issues faith-based communities need to address. At the same time, some movements which promise to adopt an all-encompassing Christian approach to our common good have not, in fact, lived up to their ideals. The best example is the so-called “seamless garment” or “consistent-ethic-of-life” movements which, though admirably concerned about reducing abortion, euthanasia, the death penalty, racism, poverty, and environmental destruction, consistently fail to highlight Christianity’s teachings on sexual morality. On this issue, see my critique, “Sex and the Seamless Garment,” by William Doyno Jr., *First Things* online, May 7, 2012.
17. See Bishop Barron’s remarks in *To Light a Fire on the Earth*, op. cit., p. 135.
18. For documentation of Francis’s many statements on these issues, see, for example, “Pope Francis and the Gospel of Life,” *Inside the Vatican* online, March 1, 2014; “Pope Francis Blasts Abortion, Euthanasia as ‘Sins Against God,’” *Catholic News Agency* online, November 15, 2014; “Pope Francis Criticizes Gay Marriage, Backs Ban on Contraception,” by John Allen, *Crux* online, January 16, 2015; “Pope Francis Complains About Homosexuality Being ‘Fashionable,’” by Rhuaridh Marr, *Metro Weekly* online, December 3, 2018; “Pope Calls Gender Theory a ‘Global War’ Against the Family,” by Ines San Martin, *Crux* online, October 1, 2016. In his book, *To Change the Church: Pope Francis and the Future of Catholicism* (Simon and Schuster, 2018), *New York Times* columnist Ross Douthat criticizes Francis for allegedly weakening Catholic teaching on the indissolubility of marriage and proper reception of the Holy Eucharist; but see my interview with Douthat, accompanied by my extensive critique of his charges against Francis, in “Ross Douthat on Pope Francis,” by William Doyno Jr., *Inside the Vatican*, June-July, 2018, pp. 12-17. In addition, Cardinal Robert Sarah, a hero to conservative Catholics, has strongly defended Pope Francis’s orthodoxy and praised the pontiff for his traditional moral teachings. In his May 17, 2016, speech to the National Catholic Prayer Breakfast, Cardinal Sarah affirmed: “In his post-synodal Exhortation on the Family, *Amoris Laetitia* (‘The Joy of Love’), Pope Francis states clearly: ‘In no way must the Church desist from proposing the full ideal of marriage, God’s plan in all its grandeur . . . proposing less than what Jesus offers to the human being.’ This is why the Holy Father openly and vigorously defends Church teaching on contraception, abortion, homosexuality, reproductive technologies, the education of children and much more.” (For the full text of the address, see “Cardinal Sarah at the National Catholic Prayer Breakfast,” *Catholic World Report* online, May 18, 2016.)
19. For evidence that Pope Francis has long been an active culture warrior, strongly defending traditional

values in the public square, see my article, “The Pope’s True Agenda,” by William Doino Jr., *First Things* online, December 1, 2014. On October 10, 2018, *Yahoo News* online, underscoring my point, reported that “Pope Francis has compared abortion to hiring a hitman to ‘take out a human life to solve a problem. . . .’ It was the second time within recent months that Francis has expressed the Church’s longstanding opposition to abortion in violent, stark terms. In June, Francis denounced how some couples resort to pre-natal testing to see if their unborn babies have malformations and then choose to have an abortion, which he said was the “‘white glove’ equivalent of the Nazi-era eugenics program.” These are not the words of a Pope who has withdrawn from the culture war.

20. See “Sed Contra, Bishop Barron,” by Fr. Christopher Roberts, *Crisis Magazine* online, November 27, 2017. For another insightful critique of Bishop Barron’s views, note Dr. John Grondelski’s comments: “This book [*To Light a Fire on the Earth*] supplies a good background into a very popular, effective and erudite spokesman for the Catholic message today. My one reservation is its repeated downplaying of Catholic sexual morality. Yes, I agree it’s not where evangelization need begin. But anyone who has followed contemporary culture knows that the defense of the ‘sexual revolution’ is the hill on which much of the American chattering and opinion-making classes will die. To pretend that sex is not ground zero of the contemporary battle for human dignity is to deny reality.” (“Bishop Barron’s Basics: How to Share the Faith in the Modern Culture,” *National Catholic Register* online, November 24, 2017).

21. See “When the Archbishop Met the President” by James Taranto, *Wall Street Journal* online, March 31, 2012.

22. See “New York Cardinal Dolan Says Church Failed to Teach Against Contraception,” *LifeSiteNews* online, April 2, 2012.

23. See “The Sexual Harassment Racket is Over” by Peggy Noonan, *Wall Street Journal* online, November 30, 2017; and also “The Connection Between the Sexual Revolution and ‘MeToo’: An Interview with Mary Eberstadt” by Jeanette Flood, *Catholic World Report* online, June 11, 2018.

24. See *To Light a Fire on the Earth*, op. cit., p. 37.

25. See *Love and Responsibility: A New Translation of John Paul II’s Classic Work* (Pauline Books and Media, 2013), a revised and updated edition of the Pope’s original 1960 work, written when he was still known as Father Karol Wojtyla.

26. For the full texts of these teachings, see *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body* by John Paul II; Michael Waldstein, Translator (Pauline Books and Media, 2006).

27. See the video “Bishop Barron on Porn and the Curse of Total Sexual Freedom,” *YouTube*, posted on June 9, 2016.

28. According to the Pew Research Center’s most recent Religious Landscape Study (2014), which polls more than 35,000 Americans in all 50 states, the gap between Catholics and Evangelicals on key moral and social issues is striking: Only 30 percent of Evangelicals believe abortion should be legal “in all or most cases,” whereas a majority of Catholics—52 percent—believe it should be legal in those circumstances. Eighty-two percent of Evangelicals believe homosexual behavior is sinful, but only 44 percent of Catholics do. Only 18 percent of Evangelicals believe same-sex marriage should be legal, whereas 52 percent of Catholics believe it should be. A more recent survey (2017), after the Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage with its *Obergefell v. Hodges* decision (2015), still found the general pattern holding: Catholic support for the legalization of same-sex marriage increased to over 60 percent, while still only 31 percent of Evangelicals supported it. (See “Most American Religious Groups Support Same Sex Marriage, Oppose Religiously Based Service Refusals” by Joanna Piacenza and Robert P. Jones, PRRI news release online, February 3, 2017). Another Pew Research survey found differences in beliefs about eternal life: while 85 percent of Catholics believe in Heaven, only 63 percent believe in Hell; in contrast, 88 percent of Evangelicals believe in Heaven and 82 percent believe in Hell. (See “Most Americans Believe in Heaven and Hell” by Caryle Murphy, Pew Research Fact Tank online, November 10, 2015.) For the early history of the pro-life movement, which was led by Catholics, before Evangelicals began to equal, if not exceed them in their opposition to abortion, see *Defenders of the Unborn: The Pro-Life Movement before Roe v. Wade* by Daniel K. Williams (Oxford University Press, 2016). Also see “Roman Catholics and Evangelicals Move Apart in Their Political Priorities,” by Tom Gjelten, National Public Radio online, May 25, 2018, which notes: “Indeed, there is some evidence that Evangelicals may be replacing Catholics as the base of the anti-abortion movement. Since 2010, the states passing new abortion restrictions generally have had smaller Catholic populations. None of the eight most heavily Catholic states in the country have enacted such laws.” For a summary of the Catholic Church’s vacillating opposition to the sexual revolution, see Chester Gillis’s book, *Roman Catholicism in America* (Columbia University Press, 2000).

29. The line appears in Chesterton’s *What’s Wrong with the World* (Dodd, Mead and Company, 1912), p. 48.

30. See *Saint Francis of Assisi: A Biography* by Johannes Jorgenson (Longmans, Green and Company, 1913), p. 154. Also see my article correcting erroneous views about Francis of Assisi, “Imaginary Saints,” by William Doino Jr., *First Things* online, May 21, 2012.
31. For a thorough rebuttal of Mother Teresa’s detractors, see my article, “Mother Teresa and her Critics,” by William Doino Jr., *First Things* online, April 1, 2013; as well as my follow-up piece, “The Saint Who Outlasted Her Critics,” *Catholic Herald* magazine, September 2, 2016, p. 21.
32. See *The Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska: Divine Mercy in My Soul* by Sr. Maria Faustina Kowalska (Marian Press, 2008), entry 741; as well as the commentary on this entry, “If God Is So Merciful, Why Is There a Hell?” by Dr. Robert Stackpole, director of the John Paul II Institute of Divine Mercy, *Library of Divine Mercy* online, February 3, 2010.
33. This is a point emphasized by Dostoyevsky’s fellow Russian writer, Vladimir Soloviev, who stressed that Dostoyevsky was a “religious man,” who wrote within the context of “one Christian idea,” commenting: “In his convictions, he [Dostoyevsky] never separated truth from good and beauty; in his artistic creativity, he never placed beauty apart from the good and the true. For Dostoyevsky, these were three inseparable forms of one absolute idea. The infinity of the human soul—having been revealed in Christ and capable of fitting into itself all the boundlessness of divinity—is at one and the same time both the greatest good, the highest truth, and the most perfect beauty. Truth is good, perceived by the human mind; beauty is the same good and the same truth, corporeally embodied in solid living form. And its full embodiment—the end, the goal, and the perfection—already exists in everything, and this is why Dostoyevsky said that beauty will save the world.” (From *The Heart of Reality: Essays on Beauty, Love, and Ethics* by Vladimir Soloviev, Translated by Vladimir Wozniuk (University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), p. 16.
34. One of the best examples of this criticism is “Red Carpet Catholicism is a Loss for the Church: The Catholic Church Won’t Win Respect by Abetting the Mockery of its Symbols,” by Kyle Smith, *National Review* online, May 9, 2018.
35. Two excellent works which outline the history of the culture war in its modern phase, and reveal how damaging it is for Christians to refuse to engage it, are: *The Clash of Orthodoxies: Law, Religion and Morality in Crisis* by Robert P. George (Intercollegiate Studies Institute, 2002); and *It’s Dangerous to Believe: Religious Freedom and Its Enemies* by Mary Eberstadt (Harper, 2016).
36. For a powerful defense of this heritage, see *In Defense of Faith: The Judeo-Christian Idea and the Struggle for Humanity* by David Brog (Encounter Books, 2010).
37. From “Dave Rubin, The Pelvic Issues, and Larry David,” by Bishop Robert Barron, *Word on Fire* Ministry online, February 1, 2017.
38. See Matthew 5: 27-30
39. See the entire Chapter of Romans 1; along with the astute commentary by Evangelical scholar Gregory Koukl, “Paul, Romans and Homosexuality,” posted on his *Stand to Reason* website, November 1, 2003.
40. See “The Controversial Text that Saved Me: I’m a Catholic thanks to *Humanae Vitae*. It’s About a Lot More than Birth Control,” by Ashley McGuire, *Wall Street Journal* online, July 26, 2018.
41. See *Sunday Will Never Be the Same: A Rock and Roll Journalist Opens Her Ears to God* by Dawn Eden Goldstein (Catholic Answers Press, 2019).
42. See the interview with Dr. Goldstein, “A Rock and Roll Journalist Opens Her Ears to God,” by Christopher Morrissey, *Catholic World Report* online, March 18, 2019.
43. See my two tributes to Trower, “A Witness, in Life and Letters,” by William Doino Jr., *First Things* online, December 15, 2014; and “A Catholic Gentleman: The Inspiring Life of Philip Trower,” by William Doino Jr., *Catholic Herald*, online, February 25, 2019.
44. See “Same Sex Attracted Youth to Synod: Don’t Change Church Teaching ‘In Any Way,’” by the Register Staff, *National Catholic Register* online, October 5, 2018.
45. For more about the lives of these exceptional Christians, see *Saint Margaret of Cortona* by Francois Mauriac (Philosophical Library, 1948); and Dawn Eden Goldstein’s *My Peace I Give You: Healing Sexual Wounds with the Help of the Saints* (Ave Maria Press 2012), which recounts the stories of St. Josephine Bakhita, Blessed Laura Vicuna and St. Maria Goretti.
46. From *G.K.’s Weekly*, June 19, 1926.

Would You Like to Save a Life?

Mary Meehan

Have you ever read about a terrible accident that killed a child—and wished you could have been there to snatch the child from the path of the oncoming car? Have you ever wondered if you would have the courage to risk your own life to save someone else?

Unless actually tested, we never know if we would respond well or just freeze in terror. Yet there are many times when we can save lives in a less dramatic way. This is especially true in the case of abortion, where kind help can save a child's life and also save the parents much regret and guilt. People who have been involved in pregnancy counseling for many years have much good advice about how to do this.

First Steps

Dr. Margaret Hartshorn, a former college English professor, was president of Heartbeat International for many years and now chairs its board of directors. She and her colleagues have built Heartbeat into a huge network of pregnancy help centers around the world. Dr. Hartshorn told me that women who are considering abortion realize they have “three alternatives: abortion, keeping the baby, or releasing the baby for adoption.” She said that such women see pregnancy as “the end of my life as I know it” and view abortion as “the least of the three evils.” She added that life as they know it might mean “their working life, their professional life, their student life, their image as the good girl” and one who always has “pleased Mom and Dad.” She stressed that “the important thing to do, if you know someone who’s considering abortion, is to not try to do all the talking and convince them otherwise,” but first “listen to their story.” She added: “The three magic words are: ‘Tell me more’ . . . You sit down with them in a quiet place, get good eye-to-eye contact, and just say, ‘Tell me more.’ And try then to draw them out . . . ‘How did you *feel* about that? . . . And what were you thinking at that point? . . . How does that relate to your values?’” Often, Hartshorn noted, a pregnant woman will tell a good listener, “Nobody has really listened to me. . . . Nobody has really, really understood how I’ve felt, except you.”

The next step is talking about possible alternatives. In Hartshorn’s words: “What are you thinking of? . . . There’s abortion, yes. You’ve talked about abortion. Let’s

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talk about some of your other options. You know, what would it be like if you did continue the pregnancy?" If she is speaking with a teenager, she says, "Of course, you would need to tell your parents . . . That would be the first thing you'd need to do." Yet that may also be the hardest step for a teenager. If the helper is a family member or a friend of the parents, Hartshorn believes it may be appropriate for that person to go with the daughter to tell the parents. "But I have actually never done that," she said. Instead, she usually helps the girl problem-solve by asking her which parent she would tell first. "Would you tell your mother, or would you tell your dad? And *when* could you do that?" She also stressed the importance of affirming that "You can do this. You don't *have* to have an abortion. There *is* help available. And I'll stand with you and find that help . . ." If the person is religious, she suggested saying, "You know, God will help you. Let's pray about this. . . . I know he will provide a way."

Dr. Hartshorn has heard many women say that what they remember most about a helper is the message that "I could do this. She told me I could do it. She told me I didn't *have* to have the abortion." Hartshorn also noted that the helper need not be an expert on the resources available for pregnant women. That is the job of pregnancy help centers, and her group's Option Line (1-800-712-HELP) refers women to the centers closest to them. Hartshorn remembers one young woman who was living in her car because her parents had evicted her from their home on account of her pregnancy. A friend mentioned a local pregnancy center and urged her: "Just go there and see what they could do." The young woman followed her advice and received the help she needed. Many years later, she and a relative attended a banquet for the same pregnancy center, and she told everyone at the banquet about the long-ago aid. She added, "And now this is my son, who wouldn't be here if it weren't for you."¹

More Good Advice

Writer Shana Schutte, in an article for Focus on the Family, offered good suggestions about helping a friend. "The first way you show that you care," she says, "is by not judging her. When one of my friends came to high school pregnant the fall after our junior year, I was relieved that she didn't choose abortion. I was also certain that given the right circumstances and temptations, any girl in our class could've ended up in a similar situation." Schutte added: "An important thing to remember is that your friend is experiencing grief. She may feel like she's losing many things: her youth and a good relationship with her boyfriend and parents. You can be a safe place by listening without correcting and not talking behind her back."

Instead of just giving a friend a telephone number to call, Schutte advises going with her to a pregnancy center. "If she is reluctant to go, remind her again that she's not alone, and that she doesn't have to make any decisions right

away.” And if she decides for life, “remember that she’ll continue to need you as she walks through her pregnancy.”² A Life Cycle brochure offers another key point: “You can help your friend see her ability to carry the baby to term by highlighting other areas in her life where she has shown strength.”³ As an old song advises, “You’ve got to accentuate the positive” and “Latch on to the affirmative.”⁴

Looking at Different Options

If you are dealing with a pregnant teenager whose parents are extremely upset, what is the best way to help her? If you are also a friend of the teen’s parents, you might serve as a good listener and a mediator. In addition, you can give her parents information about the local pregnancy center and suggest that they, as well as the teen, speak with a pregnancy counselor about pro-life options and ways the center can help. In addition to free counseling and ultrasounds, many pregnancy centers provide free maternity and baby clothing. Some also offer free prenatal and parenting classes. All of this is especially helpful to young parents when they and/or their own parents are struggling financially.

Single motherhood may be the path that worries a teen’s parents the most, but also the one where they can be the most helpful. They can help ensure—through legal action if necessary—that the father of the child makes regular child-support payments. If the grandparents host mother and child in their own home, those payments will ease their financial burden as well as their daughter’s. After initial shock and dismay have ebbed, the natural love of grandparents for both daughter and grandchild should help solve many other problems.

Dr. Hartshorn noted that girlfriend-boyfriend communication about a pregnancy is “often very, very poor” and that the girl “may be *assuming* that he wants her to have the abortion.” Sometimes, when Hartshorn has had a chance to talk with the boyfriend, she has found that he wants the baby to live. Yet he told his girlfriend, “I’ll support whatever you decide to do.” Hartshorn added, “Men often think that that’s the best thing to say. *And most women interpret that as abandonment.* You know, ‘He doesn’t love me. He won’t help me. He’s just now leaving it all up to me.’”⁵ A good counselor can be very helpful in such cases.

How about Marriage?

Debra Braun is the education director of Pro-Life Action Ministries (St. Paul, Minn.), which sponsors sidewalk counseling at abortion clinics. She said that if a boyfriend is supportive, she would encourage the couple to think about the possibility of marriage. “If it’s a compatible couple and if they had been thinking about marriage anyway . . . that’s certainly better for a child to be brought into that situation, if it’s a good marriage,” she remarked.⁶

Roland C. Warren, the president and CEO of the large group of Care Net pregnancy centers, is a strong marriage advocate. He has spent much of his life in encouraging men to be good fathers—first through the National Fatherhood Initiative and more recently through Care Net. He told me that the Supreme Court’s 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision separated men from abortion. Under *Roe*, he said, the “father has no agency or say”—and the culture has told him that he *shouldn’t* have a say. Many men in this situation, though, make it clear that they want the woman to have an abortion. When a man says that “I don’t want to be a father,” Mr. Warren suggested, the best response is to “help him understand that he *is* a father right now” and that the real question is “what *kind* of a father” he will be. While the man has grown up in a culture where he is expected to say, “I support whatever decision you make,” Warren observed, saying this means that he takes no responsibility for the child. He called this essentially “a Pontius Pilate” decision. He also said that many of today’s men, having themselves grown up without fathers, fear that *they* will not be good fathers. So it is important to persuade them that they can learn how to be good dads.⁷

The pregnancy-center movement, Warren noted, generally focuses on “woman plus baby” and often has no “on-ramps for men.” Care Net, he continued, is trying to get more men into its centers to counsel other men. He wants to be sure that the fathers will not just sit in their cars out in parking lots—whether at pregnancy centers or at abortion clinics. In an article for *Outcomes Magazine* several years ago, Warren said of proliferators: “Frankly, you know, from a satisfaction perspective, it’s easier to kind of say ‘touchdown’ once a baby is saved. And by the way, that’s what the other side accuses us of. You know they even try to blame us for contributing to the growth of the single mother households. And you know what? That can happen if we’re not casting a broader narrative that talks about creating strong families.”⁸

Adoption Options

Denise Cocciolone, president of the National Life Center, has been active in pregnancy counseling for about 50 years. She believes the best way to help a woman or girl who is considering abortion is to “let her know the baby is worth as much as she is and that she’s going to love that baby no matter what. . . . You know, no one can describe the depth of love.” But if the woman feels that she cannot raise the child, Cocciolone said, adoption is “not a bad recourse. It really is not.” She added, though, that “very few girls place for adoption today. Very few. If you have one or two in the course of a year, that’s like a miracle.”⁹ And Dr. Hartshorn said research shows that when the alternatives are raising the child, releasing the child for adoption, or having an abortion, pregnant women view adoption as “the worst of the three alternatives.”¹⁰

Debra Braun said that women have asked her, when she mentions adoption,

“‘Why do you think I’m gonna . . . carry this baby for nine months and then just give it away?’ So if they’re not open to adoption, we tell the sidewalk counselors, ‘Drop it. Don’t pursue it, because she might think you’re only concerned about her baby and not about her.’” Braun said that “we certainly mention adoption, but we do not push it if the woman is not interested in it.”¹¹

There are many cases where adoption seems to work well for all parties involved, so it is hard to understand why attitudes toward it are often so negative. But young women’s friends and pregnancy counselors have to work with reality as it is, not as they might wish it to be. It is important, though, for everyone to know that today’s adoption practice is in many ways better and more flexible than in the past. It offers more respect to the birth mother than the old system did. It also includes the option of semi-open adoption, in which the birth mother is kept posted about the child’s life (usually through a third party). Sometimes it involves open adoption, in which the birth mother has some direct contact with her child and the adoptive parents.¹²

Help on Campus

Relatives and friends of pregnant college students can find help in the resources of two pro-life groups that champion those students. One is Feminists for Life, which has worked for decades to make college life easier for student mothers. It holds pregnancy resource forums on campuses around the country, both to make students aware of available campus help and to press for more assistance. One of its websites, www.womendeservebetter.com, offers advice on topics such as “Taking Care of Yourself While Pregnant in College” and “Building a Support System at School” and “Your Rights as a Pregnant Student & Mother.” Those pregnancy rights are based on Title 9, a federal law which forbids sex discrimination on campuses that receive money from the federal government. Nearly all U.S. colleges and universities do receive such money. Their pregnant students cannot be expelled because they are pregnant, nor be denied campus housing during their pregnancy. It is wise for an expectant mother to meet with the Title 9 coordinator on her campus so that she will understand her rights and how to deal with any problems she may encounter.

Title 9, though, does not require campus housing after the child is born, and most campuses do not have housing suitable for student parents and their children. There are outstanding exceptions, though, featured on the website “Best Colleges for Students with Children.” The fourteen institutions listed there in early 2019 ranged from the College of St. Mary (Nebraska) to Middle Tennessee State University and the University of Michigan.¹³ Let’s hope that many more campuses will follow their fine example.

Students for Life of America (SFLA) has a Pregnant on Campus Initiative to help student moms. The website, pregnantoncampus.studentsforlife.org, provides

a wealth of information about help for pregnant and parenting students on specific campuses, including information about off-campus housing. Anna Allgaier of Students for Life, who does the research for the website, said “fear of the unknown and fear of being alone” are among the greatest causes of apprehension in a pregnant student. She said the first step in helping that student should be reassuring her that her “life is not over”; that it is “going to be okay”; and that she does not have to figure everything out in just one day. Allgaier also noted that a pregnant student’s fear of being alone “can be crippling”—thus underlining the importance of going with her to a pregnancy center.¹⁴ Many Students for Life campus groups have their own programs to help student moms, and this often includes arranging baby showers for them. Shower gifts, of course, are a practical and financial help to the mother. Beyond that, a baby shower is a wonderful, joyous way to celebrate life.

Both long-time counselors and energetic students have developed helpful ways to counsel girls and women who are pregnant and to give them the practical support they need. All of us can encourage and support the lifesaving work the helpers do. We also should learn from their rich experience so that we, too, can help save lives.

NOTES

1. Author’s telephone interview with Margaret Hartshorn, 7 Dec. 2018; and www.heartbeatinternational.org (“About Us/Our Leadership/Board of Directors”).
2. Shana Schutte, “How to Help a Friend Who Wants an Abortion,” <https://www.focusonthefamily.com/pro-life/pre-born/how-to-help-a-friend-who-wants-an-abortion>.
3. Life Cycle Books (Canada), “If Someone You Know Considers Abortion,” 2010.
4. Johnny Mercer, “Accentuate the Positive Lyrics,” www.lyricsdepot.com/Johnny-mercere/accentuate-the-positive.html. Harold Arlen wrote the music for the song, which borrowed its key words from a sermon given by Father Divine, a famous African American religious figure of the 1930s and later.
5. Hartshorn interview (n. 1).
6. Author’s telephone interview with Debra Braun, 3 Dec. 2018.
7. Author’s telephone interview with Roland Warren, 21 Dec. 2018.
8. Ibid. and Roland C. Warren, “Care Net’s Roland Warren Looks to the Future,” carenet.com (reprinted from *Outcomes Magazine*, Winter 2014).
9. Author’s telephone interview with Denise Cocciolone, 14 Dec. 2018.
10. Hartshorn interview (n. 1).
11. Braun interview (n. 6).
12. Adam Pertman, *Adoption Nation* (Boston: Harvard Common Press, 2011); Mary Meehan, “Adoption: Where Is Solomon When We Need Him?” *Human Life Review*, vol. 39, no. 4 (Fall 2013), 61-70; and Julia Smucker, “The Complexity of Adoption: A Patchwork of Voices,” *The American Feminist*, Spring/Summer 2016, 16-18.
13. See: www.bestcolleges.com/features/students-with-children.

Maternal Femininity and Paternal Masculinity: **Recovering Authentic Gender in the Abortion Age**

Emily Oncale & Robert Delaney

Underlying our abortion culture lie layers of radically wrong thinking about the human person, what constitutes the good life, and how we can best relate to one another. Most recently, the rise of the gender fluidity/transgender movement has brought home just how far we have strayed from understanding and respecting the perennial distinction between man and woman, as well as their unique procreative union. In this article, we seek to recover what constitutes authentic masculinity and femininity in the relationships of father, mother, husband, and wife.

Being free and rational creatures, we are responsible for our actions, determining whether the action is good or evil by using the intellect to answer certain questions—such as “What ought I to do?” and “What is good?”—through coming to know the natural law. What is of interest for our project is the personalistic norm of Karol Wojtyla (the future John Paul II): that “a person should always be only the end of an action and never exclusively a means to an end.”¹ In other words, the other person cannot be seen as an object of use, because the other person, as a conscious subject, has the ability to self-determine his own actions.

Despite biological abnormalities, a human person is always created male or female. This sexual difference is not an arbitrary one, but “entails a certain orientation of the whole [human] being itself.”² The difference does not stop at biology, however, as the human person has a soul, which means that corporeal differences reveal incorporeal differences.

Using the Thomistic principle that the soul is the form of the body and that matter serves form, one can infer that the biological differences of men and women also include spiritual differences. Men and women both share the same rationality, freedom, and dignity, as they share the same human nature. But as the body is for the soul, it follows that the bodily difference of sex serves a deeper spiritual difference.

The soul must conform to the body it is given, as the body must conform to the soul it is given. Since humans are embodied souls and the soul is the actualizing form of the body, the soul cannot simply be neutral: The physical differences of

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man and woman uniquely reveal something about the masculine and feminine soul.

Dietrich von Hildebrand states that, “. . . it would be incredibly superficial to consider the difference between men and women to be merely biological; in fact, we are confronted with two complementary types of the spiritual person of the human species.”³

The ways in which the soul’s traits manifest as gender are unique to each individual person. The particular aspects of a feminine soul will shine through each individual woman in specific ways:

The interwovenness of the heart . . . of the woman is distinctly a female trait, yet it is not generically the same in all women; it naturally manifests itself differently according to the individual woman and to her state in life, as in the case of a single woman, a consecrated woman or a married woman.⁴

Edith Stein (the personalist philosopher, Catholic convert from Judaism, and Carmelite nun killed at Auschwitz) explains that “the human soul is not a complete, static, unchanging, monolithic existence. It is being in the state of becoming and in the process of becoming; the soul must bring to fruition those predispositions with which it was endowed when coming into the world; however, it can develop them only through activation.”⁵

This understanding of the process of human life and development has important implications for many current social debates. Both the arguments behind abortion advocacy and the efforts to normalize transgenderism show the same misrepresentation of growth and change in relation to potentiality and actuality. Before any being has the potential for change, it must actually exist. And its potential to change is determined by its principle of actuality. The *actual* mustard seed has all the *potential* to become a sturdy tree with deep roots, but it does *not* have the potential to become a child or an eagle or any other existing thing. This potentiality only exists and is actualized by the fact that the seed *actually* exists; its growth is evidence that the seed informs the potential tree of its nature. Actuality precedes potentiality, and it is neither vague nor unintelligible. Therefore the child in the womb cannot be aborted on the basis of its supposed potentiality, for such potentiality ended at the moment of conception. In like manner, there is no such thing as gender floating in pure fluidity or potentiality. The person, unborn or not, is actually either male or female, and through that actuality has the potential to uncover its meaning or to obscure it.

The Feminine Person

The motif of womanhood echoes through all creation. Like a far-off, tender prelude, it hovers above the opened womb of the bridal earth and broods over the fond mother beast of the wilds, which in its motherhood almost breaks its animal barriers. It is poised over the loving bride and wife, suspended in abounding measure over every human mother

*eclipsed in the radiance of her child. It is recognizable still in the sensuously prodigal mistress and lingers over the most trivial, most transient act of giving—upon the smallest, the most childlike kindness, even upon its barest premonition. It mounts from out the natural sphere to that which is spiritual and supernatural.*⁶

It follows that if the soul is in the process of constantly developing, each individual soul must develop in its own unique way. This means that for men the development of soul will look different than it does for women. For example, Stein states that “with woman, the soul’s union with the body is more intimately emphasized.”⁷ Women, therefore, are more affected by what happens to their bodies, whereas men tend to a stronger sense of detachment, regarding their bodies more as an instrument that helps them to complete their work.⁸ Biologically, a woman’s reproductive organs are naturally veiled, enclosed inside her. In the conjugal act she takes on an active passivity; she is actively participating in the act while receiving her partner’s sperm. This role in procreation reveals something about the woman: She is more sympathetic and prone to place herself at the service of others precisely because she plays this role in procreation. She gives of herself to her future child both in body and in soul; as Stein puts it, “her body and soul are fashioned less to fight and to conquer than to cherish, guard and preserve.”⁹

Because her reproductive organs are veiled, her unborn child is also veiled. While she provides protection and nutrients to her child, it is the child who is growing and moving. A woman’s soul, like her reproductive organs, is of a predominantly internal nature, which disposes her to be more in tune with her emotions. A male, on the other hand, tends to have a greater ability to detach himself, to an extent, from his emotions. Both male and female, however, can show inauthentic ways of detaching.

The Masculine Person

*The great adventurers of the modern world are fathers of families.*¹⁰

The male person’s being strives for paternity, whether biological or spiritual, and he can either accept or reject this calling. Let us explore how his outward somatic structure reveals something about the male soul.

The male anatomy, compared to that of the female, is directed outward. The male also takes a more distant role in the process of conception and pregnancy. This distance explains why the male can more easily separate his feelings and emotions from his actions and his thoughts. (As with the woman’s greater connectedness, this can be both a strength and a weakness.) The traditional form of fatherhood, therefore, conveys that the male takes the initiative in the life of the family to provide and care for his loved ones. He has a predisposition to go outside of himself and seek the good of those he cares about. Women have a

similar predisposition, but, as we have addressed, it is more interiorly oriented.

This also reveals how men love differently from women. As religious scholar David Delaney has put it, in the “masculine mode [of being] an initiating love predominates and in the feminine mode an actively receptive love prevails. . . . This sexual structure establishing one’s appropriate manner of acting is important for self-fulfillment.”¹¹ The male person’s way of loving, therefore, is usually directed outward for the sake of the other.

Because a man’s paternity is effected outside of himself, his fatherhood is less instinctual. Because of this reality, Wojtyla says, “fatherhood must be specially molded and educated so that it constitutes in the interior life of a man a position as important as motherhood is in the interior life of a woman.”¹² A man must learn from his wife how a parent should act. Through observing and participating in her motherhood during pregnancy and after birth, the father learns how to care for his child by first caring for his pregnant wife. More precisely, however, a man’s fatherhood is lived out when he takes on his masculine role of sacrificing for his family’s good. In the words of William Macy, “the father . . . has the primary responsibility to protect and provide for his wife and children.”¹³

Fatherhood also takes on a spiritual role, since, according to Wojtyla, fatherhood is “not limited to the biological function, to transmitting life . . . [it is] the mark of a particular spiritual perfection, which always consists in some ‘generation’ in the spiritual sense, in forming souls.”¹⁴ This means two things: first, that a man’s natural fatherhood needs to be accompanied by a spiritual fatherhood; second, that one can be a spiritual father without being a natural father. A spiritual father takes on the special interest of forming and providing for those he encounters so that they can flourish mentally, spiritually, emotionally, and physically. The neglect of these ends leads to the family being unprovided for—in desertion, for example—or to an abusive relationship, or to man’s being complacent or complicit in the abortion of his child.

Spiritual fatherhood has primacy over natural fatherhood. Since this is the case, men have a responsibility to cultivate father-like attributes throughout their whole lives, but especially prior to considering begetting a child. Practically speaking, this cultivation means that a man learns to be sacrificial for others, to be responsible in his duties, and to respect women and to love them as they deserve. While no man will reach the “ideal” image of fatherhood, each man has the responsibility to emulate it as best as possible.

There are weaknesses and temptations that undermine the man’s ability to love and to be loved in a way that is suitable. Man has the propensity to use persons purely for their sensuality, and a man has the propensity to be used for affectivity. While broadly speaking these are generally the ways in which one sex uses the other, it is important to clarify that they are not mutually exclusive to either sex: A man can also be used for his sensuality and a woman for her affectivity.¹⁵

Man, Woman, Faith, and the Emergence of Universal Exemplars: A Note on Context

Virtually *all* religions testify to the true meaning of love and life and family. The Judeo-Christian culture envisions, articulates, and embodies the meaning of love and family, of men and women, with an artistry moderns may reject but only by their grand refusal to see. And so we introduce the following theological-religious examples not as commandments but as the exemplars of love that embody the beauty and meaning of genuine femininity and masculinity and the holy innocence of the unborn child.

Finding Authentic Feminine Exemplars

There is a dramatic complementarity of the sexes that, if men and women come to know and respect the other, allows them to come to know and respect themselves better. Yet, these complementary characteristics are the very things under attack in today's society. Secular feminism, such as the feminism promoted by Simone de Beauvoir, tries to fight the view that women are the weaker sex:

To be feminine is to show oneself as weak, futile, passive, and docile . . . Any self-assertion will take away from her femininity and her seductiveness.¹⁶

But a woman's innate empathy should not be conceived as a failing. There is an interior strength to that delicacy, properly ordered, that is wholly bypassed in the current culture's demand that gender not inform our nature. This delicacy is being deliberately eradicated and instead, women today are encouraged to disengage from those around them—including those most intimately bound to them by nature and by need within their own womb in order to commit an act of barbarism contrary to their very natures.

When either women or men are perniciously re-defined, their natural complementarity is deformed. For example, authentic feminine delicacy brings out men's best qualities, encouraging them to be chivalrous, kind, and charitable. Similarly, authentic femininity sees the beauty and dignity given to women from the very moment of creation. This is the feminism that can truly liberate women from the idea that they are somehow inferior to men because they possess qualities associated with "weakness." Through the sexual revolution and the demand for liberation, women no longer view themselves as set apart, but as vying in the same arena with men on the same terms and judged by the same standards. They reject qualities such as humility, which they associate with weakness. Many contemporary feminists believe that the more women shed such "weak" qualities and become like men, the more men will respect them, but, as Alice von Hildebrand maintains, "In fact, experience proves that feminism benefits men and harms women."¹⁷ One example is the fight women have waged for the right to destroy their children in the womb. Not only does abortion harm a woman physically and spiritually, it does a disservice to the

man who impregnated her by dismissing his responsibility of fatherhood. The birth control pill is an even more widespread example: It physically takes a toll on women's bodies by disrupting the typical hormonal balance to prevent pregnancy. Its gravest consequence, however, is that it engenders the myth that both women and men can have sex without consequences.

Many feminists of today do not consult Scripture to better understand women, but rather to interpret it to fit their feminist agenda. It is easy to use Ephesians 5:22, "Wives, be subject to your husbands," as evidence that the Catholic Church supports the oppression of women. Nonetheless, it is only in seeing woman through the lens of Scripture that the world can see how truly beautiful she is. In Alice von Hildebrand's words, "As soon as we abandon a secularistic interpretation of the Bible, we can perceive that, from a supernatural point of view, *women are actually granted a privileged position* in the economy of redemption."¹⁸ In the New Testament, there is no better image of "the glorious role assigned to women"¹⁹ than that of Mary herself.

Historically, in many times and places, women were definitely dealt the lesser hand in life; however, this was never in accordance with Catholic teaching, which always upheld the equal dignity of both men and women. There were of course still those who agreed with the typically secular view which saw women as homemakers, less intelligent than men, and pretty much only useful for procreation. In the last several decades women have made strides in their professional and personal lives. All of modernity seems willing to help women—they have an equal right to the same education men can receive, the gender wage gap is closing, women can participate in a certain "sexual freedom" made possible by contraception—but despite all this there has been an overall decrease in women's happiness (by happiness here it is meant general pleasure and contentment with the overall state of one's life).²⁰ According to a study of the past thirty-five years done by the General Social Survey, "women's happiness has fallen both absolutely and relative to men's in a pervasive way among groups, such that women no longer report being happier than men and, in many instances, now report happiness that is below that of men."²¹

So, what is happening? Why during a time of such social advancement of women are women so unhappy? Perhaps it is because these advancements—especially the embrace of the contraceptive lifestyle—can get in the way of—and even thwart—what woman was created for: motherhood. Motherhood here includes both biological and spiritual motherhood. In the religious realm, spiritual motherhood can be seen most purely in women who dedicate their lives to Christ by becoming a sister or a nun. They are still able to act as mother and mentor to others. This is because motherhood is embedded in the woman's soul; she has, in Stein's words, "a longing to give love and to receive love, and in this respect a yearning to be raised above a narrow, day-to-day existence into

the realm of a higher being.”²² She is called to that which is transcendent (that which her soul was created for), but in the sexual revolution of today, she is told that motherhood is a *burden*.

Return again to the contention surrounding the label of the “weaker sex.” Though women are typically weaker than men physically, this does not mean they are “less intelligent, less talented, less reliable, less moral, etc.”²³ In Alice von Hildebrand’s words, “Their weakness appeals to pity; it can touch men’s hearts and appeal to what is best in them, namely their chivalrous instinct to help those weaker than themselves.”²⁴ Rejecting such “weakness” is one of the tragedies of contemporary feminism—it leads women to take on the aspect of detachment that is a trait of the masculine soul rather than demanding more of men. The perfect picture of the true beauty of weakness can be found in Scripture:

My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.²⁵

Feminists have fought long and hard to secure women the same rights as men, which of course they deserve, but at some point it became less a fight for equality and more a fight to be liberated from men. The feminists of today claim they are trying to empower women, offering them birth control, abortion, and the lie that their true vocation of motherhood is just a chain holding them back. Yet, when a woman buys the lie and, for instance, freely chooses to abort her child, she not only commits a grave sin but deeply wounds her feminine nature.²⁶ This kind of liberation hurts both man and woman because it is only in their relationality that each is truly realized.

This dichotomy between men and women is a result of our fallen nature. We live in a broken world in which relationships can be based on mere use. It is a world that needs men and women who seek to discover true worth in their living, dynamic, and relational complementarity. If women truly want to be empowered, they must embrace an authentic feminism that respects the entirety of their being—body and soul.

Finding Authentic Masculine Exemplars

Karol Wojtyla’s ethical and philosophical anthropology calls for human beings to learn the moral norm of love from exemplary people. As he says in *Man in the Field of Responsibility*, “The establishment of norms is realized, to a significant extent . . . by way of imitating personal exemplars . . . Man is an example for man, an example that attracts or one that repels.”²⁷ Contemporary man seems to have multiple examples of what a man should not be, but no one to exemplify the authentic masculinity that we have described. An active masculinity provides and protects, but does so from a stance of love and not of

use. There are two New Testament figures who incarnate the masculinity we are searching for: Jesus Christ and St. Joseph. While each exemplifies what it means to be both husband and father, for clarity's sake, we will use Jesus to examine how men as husbands should treat women, and Joseph to reveal how men should lead their family as fathers.

The Bridegroom

It is fitting to discuss the Person of Jesus Christ as an exemplar of how to love, for, as Wojtyla explains, Christ as “the new Adam, in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and of his love, *fully reveals man to himself* and brings to light his most high calling.”²⁸ There are two examples of Christ that we think will illuminate an authentic masculinity: Jesus’ encounter with the adulteress in John’s Gospel and Paul’s spousal analogy of Christ’s love for the Church in Ephesians.

Jesus, in John 8:1-11, is found in a dire predicament. The Pharisees, who desire his death, attempt to trick him by bringing to him a woman caught in adultery and asking if they should reject the law of Moses and not stone the woman to death. Jesus responds, “Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.”²⁹ The crowd that had gathered for the stoning slowly leaves, knowing that they are sinners. Jesus then asks the adulterer if anyone had condemned her and she replied that no one had. Jesus then responds, “Neither do I condemn you. Go and from now on do not sin anymore.”³⁰

We see here three lessons that Jesus exemplifies concerning the protection of women by men. First, a true man stands up and protects the dignity of a woman when she is being ridiculed or attacked. Even if she has done wrong, a man insists on her being treated with justice and kindness. Second, authentic men do not avert a call for justice. Christ’s lesson here is important. Though a man may protect the dignity of a woman, he never tries to undermine *legitimate* justice and responsibility by rebelling against the law. Third, a man protects more than just the physical well-being of woman, he also cares deeply for her spiritual well-being. Christ does not simply tell the woman to go, but to change her life. Men who desire to promote the safety of a woman can do so only if they also realize her need to be virtuous. If he leaves her in sin and vice, he has protected her from physical harm, but left her in spiritual danger. This episode can be described as Christ loving the woman by desiring her spiritual and physical good.

The next example is directly related to how Christ calls husbands to love their wives in Ephesians 5. Paul tells the married men in this community: “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church and handed himself over for her to sanctify her, cleansing her by the bath of water with the word, that he might present to himself the church in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.”³¹ Christ’s love for the

Church is related to the love that a husband *should* have for his wife.

What does this entail for men? It means that a true man will die for the good of his wife and children. While this can mean physical death, it always means (in a spiritual sense) that the man is called to sacrifice ease and comfort to provide for their good. His love is always oriented toward the service of those whom he leads, like Christ humbly washing the feet of his disciples. Christ always asks his Bride, the Church, to strive for her own perfection, so she can be truly happy. However, Jesus' love is faithful to the extreme, leading even to the Cross. He loves his Bride despite the physical, emotional, and spiritual pain that comes about through this love. Christ is not merely one example among many for husbands, he is the exemplar.

St. Joseph Patron of Fathers

There is very little in the Gospels about Joseph, who never actually speaks. Joseph participates in the mystery of Mary's "yes" to God; however, his "yes" is expressed in deed rather than in word. Even though Joseph's fatherhood is strictly spiritual, in that he is the adoptive father of Jesus, he shows both natural and spiritual fathers what it means to be a father.

St. Joseph acted to ensure the safety of his family. When he was alerted to the danger posed by King Herod, he led them into an unknown land where he provided for their well-being. Joseph's silence about this great feat speaks wonders. He never complains and never boasts, he simply shows his love through action. Furthermore, his fatherhood is on display as he works for a living and teaches his son a trade. Through this process, surely the father was teaching his son more than how to cut wood: Life lessons were being learned. Joseph taught Jesus to be a man of integrity, honor, and loving action.

Joseph's example continues to teach a man much about fatherhood (whether spiritual or natural). A father is one who will take risks to secure the well-being and safety of his wife and children. A father places high priority on caring for his family physically, emotionally, and spiritually. A father is invested in assuring his children's ability to care for themselves one day, and their knowing what it means to be a good man or woman. Joseph is a father because he *does* what a father is supposed to do.

Male and Female Complementarity

To be truly human is to be in relation, as He who created us is in relation. From the beginning, man and woman have been created as companions, and as equals. They are uniquely different, but their differences bring out the best in each. However, before considering the unique vocations of man and woman, it is important to note that there is one vocation for all of mankind. As Edith Stein tells us, "Whether man or woman, whether consecrated or not, each one

is called to the imitation of Christ.”³² With this in mind, we can now look at the way Stein sees the complementarity of man and woman starting from the very moment of creation. God created man in His own image, and because God is Trinity and therefore in constant relation, so too were men created for relation. As Stein states:

God is three in one; and just as the Son issues from the Father, and the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son, so too, the woman emanated from man and posterity from them both. And moreover, God is love. But there must be at least two persons for love to exist.³³

Yet, in the created order “a certain preeminence is indicated in that man was created first.”³⁴ This is not a question of sovereignty of man over woman; he is not her ruler. “She is named as *companion* and *helpmate*, and it is said of man that he will cling to her and that both are to become *one* flesh.”³⁵ This was the image for the created world, but when sin entered the world, the natural order was disturbed and the relationship between man and woman became potentially exploitative. After sin entered the world, both man and woman were aware that they could be *used* by the other. It is only through the new Adam (Christ) and the new Eve (Mary) that relationship between man and woman is restored.

It is said that, “the man named his wife Eve, because she was the mother of all living” (Gen 3:20). In this simple statement Adam gives woman her vocation. In light of this, the sexual revolution of today should be seen as a degradation of women. As Alice von Hildebrand writes:

Feminism was born the day that the enemy convinced some ambitious women that they will never achieve greatness unless they liberate themselves from the burden to give birth that was so unfairly placed on their shoulders.³⁶

This feminism is born when the image of woman is separated from her revealed honor in the Scriptures. The feminine soul, from the moment of creation, is destined to become a mother in some way, shape, or form. “There is a metaphysical bond between womanhood and life, and this is an honor indeed.”³⁷

As with femininity, the mystery of masculinity cannot truly be penetrated here on earth, as the fatherhood of men reflects in some real way the fatherhood of God. Nevertheless, in a time of crisis for masculinity, we have attempted to give an image of what authentic masculinity looks like: Bound by the precepts of the personalistic norm, man is always externally seeking to give himself away to another. Nowhere is this better revealed to us than by Jesus and his father Joseph. Through their example, we learn what it means to be men.

Concluding Remarks

Each human life is personal, unique, and unrepeatable. On a daily basis we are presented with the unrepeatability of each human face, the genetic code specific to each person, the recollections and situations that are each uniquely one’s

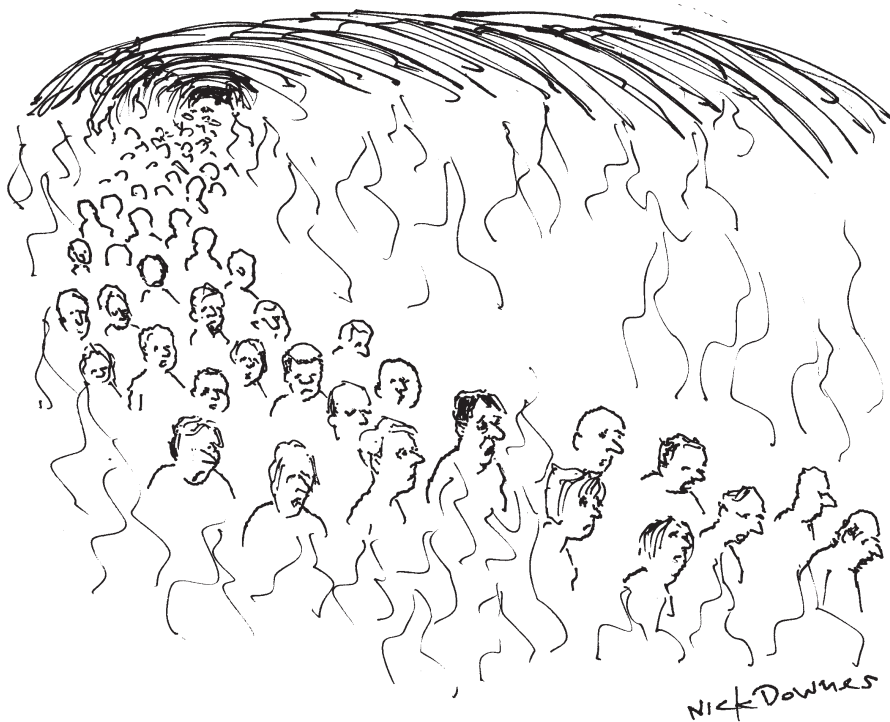
own. Gender fluidity deconstructs authentic masculinity and femininity within the same logical framework as abortion. A rediscovery of the maternal femininity and paternal masculinity that has cultivated the very best of civilizational meaning, cannot help but be pro-life, pro-reason, and pro-truth to its very heart and soul. In the words of J. Milbank,

What comes after transgender? Surely no gender at all, but only the lone self, wandering trapped in a labyrinth of endlessly binary forking paths, by which it is more controlled than it can ever be controlling. With gender vanishes sex, save for self-pleasuring, and with both sex and gender vanishes the most fundamental mode of *eros* and relationality: that between man and woman. Most non-tyrannical human self-government has been built on male-female relationality, as Ivan Illich showed. It also provides the metaphors on which most of religion is founded, from Hinduism to the Wisdom literature of the Bible. And with this vanishing, reproduction would be more and more removed from the sphere of free and loving relationships and handed over to market forces and state scientific control. Increasingly isolated individuals would still want babies and it would be in the interests of both commerce and the state to provide them with the artificial means to do so and to seek to exert influence over that process and its outcome. This is just what Aldous Huxley predicted in his *Brave New World*, whose title of course ironically invokes the founding cultural shock of the recognition of sexual difference in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. His brave new dystopia is really a world that puts an end to the true human novelty.³⁸

NOTES

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"You think you got a raw deal—I was damned with faint praise."

The Plight of Africans with Albinism

Mark P. Mostert

Historically, people with disabilities, particularly those with visible disabilities, have been at best marginalized in their communities. At worst, they have been severely abused and/or killed for no other reason than that they are perceived to violate societal norms. Deep-seated bias emanates from the stigma which people in their ignorance attach to those who exhibit characteristics associated with disability. The idea of stigma originally referred to any physical or behavioral anomaly—often some form of disability that made its carrier an undesirable member of the community.¹

In many places today, and especially in the developed world, attitudes have become much more enlightened, and people with disabilities are now embraced by society as never before. This is not so, however, in much of the Third World. One of the most ignored yet urgent issues in this regard is the abuse suffered by Africans with albinism.

Although positive perceptions of disability are not entirely unknown in Africa, negative bias is much more prevalent, having deep cultural and community roots which significantly determine how persons with disabilities are perceived and treated. For example, in Ghana, Ashanti men with physical disabilities are prevented from becoming chiefs, and nondisabled chiefs can be removed if they become disabled. Continent-wide, children with visible disabilities are often killed or abandoned. In many African contexts, a disabled child is perceived as a curse upon the whole family—a cause of shame and embarrassment. Other cultural beliefs regard disability as a sign of immoral behavior by the mother or as punishment for immoral behavior by other family members. Many attribute disability to a general sense of evil, or otherworldly punishment for breaking social taboos (e.g., having sexual intercourse during pregnancy).

Such is the case in Africa with albinism—a genetic anomaly characterized by very low levels of melanin in the skin, hair, and eyes. People with albinism appear strangely pale and usually have very blond hair. Presenting health issues include eye problems (e.g., sensitivity to light, involuntary movements, poor vision) and a strong susceptibility to skin cancer from being exposed to the sun. Albinism is generally considered more a medical than a physical disability as its symptoms largely can be managed through prevention and medical treatment. However, in Africa the condition carries a stigma based in tribal

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and animistic beliefs. Africans with albinism are widely discriminated against, socially shunned and isolated, and can suffer violence and even death based on their appearance.²

Generally, the stigma of albinism attaches at birth because the affected child is obviously different from anyone else in the community—if for no other reason than the parents are black and their child is white. But other misperceptions and superstitions also attend the birth of a child with albinism. For example, many Africans believe that albinism is caused by maternal sexual relations with a white person. Some also believe it can occur from having shaken hands or shared a meal with a person with albinism.

Since the condition is often seen as a curse on the family, it is not uncommon for affected babies either to be deliberately killed or abandoned to die, as is the practice among the Maasai of Kenya. In other places, babies with albinism are subjected to an elaborate “death ritual,” whereby an infant is dropped into a lake to see if it will survive, its subsequent drowning being proof of its sub-humanness. Other superstitions suggest that people with albinism are other-worldly ghosts.

While not all people with albinism are killed, this does not mean that the stigma is very far away. In their communities, for example, they may be thought of as witches because of their characteristic red eyes, and they are often considered lazy because they avoid working in the sun to stave off skin cancer. In some tribal communities, their fate is delayed: They are permitted to become adults, only to be buried alive with a deceased tribal chief.³

Generally, therefore, Africans with albinism are seen either as a threat to the common good or as mysterious curiosities alien to the communities in which they live. And this idea of their being mysterious, even magical and in possession of special spiritual powers, makes them a prime target for human body-part trafficking.

In the developed world, voluntary donation of organs for transplanting is assured by numerous laws and policies that also dictate how organs are to be procured. Worldwide, demand for organs generally outweighs supply, providing the context for trafficking in human body parts—a significant international problem. However, in many countries, human body parts are sought not only for the usual altruistic reasons, but also to satisfy—as is the case of Africans with albinism—deep-seated beliefs that certain body parts, when mixed in potions or incorporated into lucky charms, are a way of ensuring such benefits as health, wealth, happiness, and sexual prowess.

The combination of albino mystique and the severe stigma attached to the condition has created, over the last 20 years or so, a huge demand for albino body parts among those who believe in these magic charms and potions. In this time period reports of attacks on Africans with albinism have escalated

significantly and in almost every country on the continent. While exact statistics on African albino killings, maiming, and abductions are unavailable, these practices are widespread. African countries known to be involved in relatively high levels of albino body-part trafficking include Tanzania, Burundi, Kenya, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mozambique, Malawi, South Africa, and Swaziland. Isolated reports of killings and attacks have also been documented in Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ghana, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, and Swaziland.

Three examples will suffice to illustrate the extent of the problem.

In Malawi, from early 2015 until May 2016, ritual killings of Africans with albinism resulted in 17 documented deaths and dismemberment along with 66 abductions and other albinism-related crimes. In one instance, a teenager with albinism was abducted while watching a soccer match. His mutilated body was later found, his hands and feet allegedly having been sold to a dealer in Mozambique. Elsewhere in Malawi, a 30-year-old woman was murdered and her breasts and eyes removed.⁴

In Kenya, there have been at least 75 murders of children and adults with albinism since 2000. In September 2015, three men attacked a 56-year-old homeowner, demanding money. After the victim refused, the attackers attempted to cut off a hand or ear to sell in neighboring Tanzania. The victim was cut deeply several times around his ear and his arms before the assailants fled. The problem has reached such proportions that the Kenyan government has moved many endangered citizens away from the Tanzanian border to protected areas.⁵

Body-part trafficking in Burundi had been fairly contained until recently when the neighboring Tanzanian government cracked down on trafficking, causing Burundi attacks to escalate. In 2012 six heavily armed men attacked a group of children in their home. One child was kidnapped and later found dead, absent her arms and legs. There have been other reports of albino bodies being disinterred and mutilated. Over the last 10 years 21 people with albinism were murdered, another 13 survived attacks, and several albino graves were robbed of their corpses.⁶

The chief exemplar of this human catastrophe is found in Tanzania. The first reports of widespread albino killings were reported in October 2006, in and around the city of Mwanza on the shores of Lake Victoria. Significantly, this region of Tanzania had the highest per-capita number of witchdoctors in the country. The maltreatment of Tanzanians with albinism finally garnered international attention in 2008, when the wave of killings could no longer be ignored. Responding to significant international pressure, the Tanzanian government reacted swiftly. In a practical show of support, then-President Jakaya

Kikwete appointed a woman with albinism to the National Parliament, thereby giving Tanzanians with this condition a political voice at the highest levels. In 2009, Kikwete's government went even further, banning all traditional healers and witchdoctors from practicing their trade. This well-meaning gesture, however, was difficult to enforce given that traditional beliefs and perceptions about albinism are deeply entrenched in the communal consciousness. Subsequent to the banning of witchdoctors, the Tanzanian government declared the killing of persons with albinism to be a capital crime.⁷

As is the case elsewhere in Africa, body-parts traffickers in Tanzania focus on a marginalized and excluded group whose very isolation makes it easier for them to become targets for mutilation and killing. Their already precarious situation is made worse by significant health issues, physical and psychological abuse, overt discrimination, and general rejection by their communities. Obviously, the most egregious of all these misfortunes is the hunting down and killing or maiming of Africans with albinism for their body parts. This gruesome business is neither unorganized nor random. Instead, there is a clearly defined trafficking cycle,⁸ which begins with a buyer request and ends with the delivery of a customized magical potion or charm, usually at great cost.

The trafficking of body parts harvested from Africans with albinism is first and foremost an economic problem. If there were no demand for magical charms or potions, nor customers willing to pay exorbitant amounts of money for them, there would be little impetus for body-part procurement. However, the demand is very real and drives the various trafficking players in a commercial cycle. This cycle involves a number of stakeholders who all share in the financial windfall of trading in albino body parts.

As noted, the entire trafficking process begins and ends with buyers looking to acquire charms and potions thought to contain magical qualities. These purported magical potions or charms are made to order, based upon the specific needs of each customer. Thus, one buyer might seek a particular potion to enhance family harmony, another might want a charm to increase libido or curse a rival. For each request, the witchdoctor determines the specific body parts needed then sets in motion the trafficking cycle that will eventually deliver these to him or her.

Once the necessary body parts have been specified, the witchdoctor employs attackers who will carry out the maiming or killing. The attackers in turn consult with scouts, who know the location of the potential victim. The scouts will provide reconnaissance information not only about the victim, but about the nature of the community in which he or she lives, and any possible issues that could thwart the attack. Perhaps the most important part of a scout's job is to identify sellers in the community, that is, those closest to the victim who, for a fee, will provide real-time updates on where the victim may be found.

Once all this information has been gathered, the attackers plan and execute their assault, procuring the to-order body parts. Once the body parts have been harvested, they are often passed on to transporters, who deliver them to the witchdoctor. The witchdoctor then proceeds to mix the potion or construct the magical charm and delivers it to the customer.

Possible Basic Solutions⁹

Going forward, it is important to establish what needs to be done to stop the trafficking of albino body parts across the continent and internationally. This is an immense challenge, first and foremost because throughout Africa, beliefs related to magic and otherworldly processes affect every aspect of daily life. Yet in spite of these powerful and essentially destructive perceptions, there are a number of more practical steps that can be enacted to ameliorate what is clearly an African crisis.

Protection: Unfortunately, protecting Africans with albinism is a major challenge given that local governing entities are often understaffed, possibly corrupt, and may themselves adhere to negative stereotypes about albinism. Long-term, a culture that understands and values albinism must be developed. This will likely lead to improved tolerance and, eventually, to the full inclusion of people with albinism in their communities and society. Such improvements will help them to be better protected from those seeking to harm them.

Civil Society Cooperation: Cooperation between citizens and authorities at the local level is the bedrock for ensuring that everyone regards people with albinism as valued members of society. This includes law enforcement agencies, the legal system, as well as community, political, local, and regional leaders.

Raising Awareness: Awareness programs should proceed along two related paths. First, they must present accurate information about the characteristics of albinism and the plight of those who suffer from the condition. Second, the scourge of body-part trafficking must be exposed by those who have intimate knowledge of it. Here again, this will be a monumental task, given opposing societal, cultural, and economic forces. Well-planned and executed awareness campaigns would begin to address the challenge of changing attitudes for the better.

Strengthening the Justice System: While it is true that every African justice system contains laws related to maiming, abduction, and trafficking, lawmakers should consider legislation specifically aimed at protecting people with albinism.

International Considerations: Not all body-part trafficking is local. Therefore it is important for regional and international cooperation to address the problem. This should not only include close working relations between governments themselves but also among relevant international agencies. While such

progress is characteristically slow, forward momentum will result in increasing international pressure on non-cooperating countries.

Legal Consequences: African countries have statutes that cover murder and kidnapping, and while some specifically have statutes addressing organ procurement and trafficking, negative perceptions may influence how justice is served and punishment meted out. For example, law enforcement personnel, and perhaps even members of the judiciary, may hold negative stereotypes of albinism which can influence both criminal verdicts and sentencing.

Rehabilitation: There is little doubt that the heinous crimes committed against Africans with albinism deserve harsh punishment. However, it is also important to rehabilitate convicted criminals where possible. Here nuanced application of the relevant laws must be considered. For example, while many perpetrators are involved in the trafficking cycle, the actions of the actual killers are qualitatively different than, for example, the scouts, and this must be reflected accordingly in sentences and rehabilitation potential.

Reconciliation: Reconciliation can be an effective tool in mitigating future animus and crime. This is especially apropos given that perpetrators and victims may well be known to each other and may even live in close proximity in the same community. The best applicable example here is the Gacaca Courts (community tribunals) established in Rwanda after the 1994 genocide. Aside from their justice-based applications, Gacaca Courts contained significant elements related to reconciling victims and perpetrators, especially when both parties continued to live in close proximity to each other.

In sum, while much of the developed world has made significant progress in including people with medical and physical disabilities, there are many places where this is not the case. The continued ostracism and abuse of Africans with albinism requires urgent action so that these people may take their rightful place as valued members of their communities and societies. However, given current circumstances, this is likely to be a long and difficult process.

NOTES

1. Mark P. Mostert, "Stigma as barrier to the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in Africa," *The Africa Rights Disability Yearbook*, 2016, 3-22.
2. Ibid.
3. Mark P. Mostert and Martha Weich, "Albinism in Africa: A proposed conceptual framework to understand and effectively address a continental crisis," *The Africa Rights Disability Yearbook*, 2017, 101-117.
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5. "Attackers in Kenya try to hack off body parts from albino for sale in Tanzania as polls near," *Mail and Guardian* <http://mgafrica.com/article/2015-09-14-attackers-in-kenya-try-to-hack-off-body-parts-from-albino-for-sale-in-tanzania-as-polls-near> 14 September 2015.
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<http://www.underthesamesun.com/sites/default/files/%20Attacks%20of%20PWA%20-%20extended%20version.pdf>

7. Mark P. Mostert, "Stigma as barrier to the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in Africa," *The Africa Rights Disability Yearbook*, 2016, 3-22.

8. Jeanne Bell "Motivated by profit and witchcraft beliefs: East African networks target people with albinism," http://www.flinders.edu.au/ehl/fms/law_files/Criminal%20Justice/Motivated%25%2020by%20profit%20and%20witchcraft%20beliefs_Burke.pdf 2008

9. Mark P. Mostert and Martha Weich, "Albinism in Africa: A proposed conceptual framework to understand and effectively address a continental crisis," *The Africa Rights Disability Yearbook*, 2017, 101-117.



"On the other hand, he never takes a sick day."

FILM/BOOKNOTES

UNPLANNED

Directed by Cary Solomon and Chuck Konzelman

Reviewed by Kathryn Jean Lopez

There was a moment during a pre-screening of *Unplanned* when a theatre-full of pro-lifers all gasped. These were either activists or people who had otherwise embraced the pro-life cause. And yet the scene, showing two workers in a Planned Parenthood “products of conception” backroom reassembling the parts of an aborted baby, was a bit much for them. During the following Q&A period—the screening and discussion were sponsored by the Human Life Foundation—one woman even needed assurance that, as she put it, “no babies died in the making of this film.” The scene was that convincing.

Unplanned, as you may have learned by now, is the story of Abby Johnson, a longtime Planned Parenthood employee and clinic director in Texas, who ends up walking away from the death-dealing business after unexpectedly participating in an ultra-sound guided abortion.

There are two other scenes in the film about which I warn potential viewers, especially women. (You never know who may have suffered a miscarriage or had an abortion.) In one of these, we can see on a sonogram monitor the baby pulling away from the abortionist’s deadly tool. There’s no question that this is a life, no question that the tiny creature senses the intrusion. It’s an image of fear, whatever that looks like in the womb. And an indictment of the inhumanity we allow in our law, and so often cover up euphemistically in our language. We are not honest with women or ourselves about what really happens during an abortion.

The third scene—the one about which I have warned women who have miscarried in mind—concerns Abby’s own abortion, actually her second, a chemically induced one. She explained during the discussion afterwards that in reality her experience was even more harrowing than the bloody sequence we recoil from on the screen. Nothing was “over the top,” she said, in how the film depicts her experiences, which she first revealed in her best-selling book *Unplanned: The Dramatic True Story of a Former Planned Parenthood Leader’s Eye-Opening Journey across the Life Line*.

As disturbing as these scenes are, they must be seen. And now I’ll confess: The second time I saw *Unplanned*—at the pre-screening mentioned above—I walked out midway through. Not in protest. We were viewing it at the Sheen Center for Thought & Culture on Bleecker Street in Manhattan. Just next door—

on the other side of the wall from where a movie about life inside an abortion clinic was being shown—is a Planned Parenthood clinic where abortions are performed. I've been writing about these issues for over two decades, and have attended many events at the Sheen Center, but that evening the window into what happens right next door was overwhelming. I got up and went to the Center's chapel, where I wept for our culture and prayed that we remember every day to think about what we can do to build and nurture a culture of life.

The beauty of *Unplanned* is that while it exposes the truth about abortion it does not condemn those who don't see its ugliness—or its evil. The film is a journey of conversion. It has the utmost compassion for the well-intentioned people who believed they were helping women by working at Planned Parenthood. Abby Johnson was one of them, a woman who had two abortions and saw herself as someone who could help others through a difficult experience. She did her job so well that she became one of the youngest clinic directors in the organization's history. Both of her parents and her husband—even before he was her husband—were not happy that Abby was working at Planned Parenthood. But they loved her all the same. And they were there for her when, overcome by the sight of an unborn child reacting to danger, she was ready to leave, finally understanding why they opposed abortion.

Unplanned is the kind of movie that may be even more powerful after it is gone from the theaters and available for people to watch at home, perhaps in small gatherings where both men and women can explore their reactions to the story. Each time I've seen it, I can't help but think of John Paul II's *Evangelium Vitae* (The Gospel of Life), where he writes:

I would now like to say a special word to women who have had an abortion. The Church is aware of the many factors which may have influenced your decision, and she does not doubt that in many cases it was a painful and even shattering decision. The wound in your heart may not yet have healed. Certainly what happened was and remains terribly wrong. But do not give in to discouragement and do not lose hope. Try rather to understand what happened and face it honestly. If you have not already done so, give yourselves over with humility and trust to repentance. The Father of mercies is ready to give you his forgiveness and his peace in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. To the same Father and his mercy you can with sure hope entrust your child. With the friendly and expert help and advice of other people, and as a result of your own painful experience, you can be among the most eloquent defenders of everyone's right to life. Through your commitment to life, whether by accepting the birth of other children or by welcoming and caring for those most in need of someone to be close to them, you will become promoters of a new way of looking at human life.

Only this time, in *Unplanned*, it's a woman who has experienced abortion delivering the invitation, by modeling the walk she herself continues to walk. There's probably another film to be made, this one about And Then There Were None, the ministry Abby Johnson has established to reach out to willing clinic

workers to help them leave the abortion business. (It's one of the best-kept secrets of the pro-life movement and I pray this movie about Johnson's story helps get the word out.)

Unplanned had a powerful opening weekend. But its power has only just begun.

—*Kathryn Jean Lopez is a Senior Fellow at National Review Institute.*

BLACK AND PRO-LIFE IN AMERICA: THE INCARCERATION AND EXONERATION OF WALTER B. HOYE

Robert W. Artigo

(San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2018, 253 pp; hardcover, \$16.96. Also available as an e-book.)

THE ABOLITION OF WOMAN: HOW RADICAL FEMINISM IS BETRAYING WOMEN

Fiorella Nash

(San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2018, 234 pp; paperback, \$15.26. Also available as an e-book.)

Reviewed by John Grondelski

In today's identity-driven political environment, a certain party line contends that women who oppose abortion cannot be "feminists" and that African-Americans are an almost invisible presence in the pro-life movement. The authors of these two books seek to counter such perceptions.

Robert Artigo, an investigative journalist, examines the life and pro-life ministry of Pastor Walter B. Hoye (b. 1956), a Baptist minister incarcerated for 19 days in 2009 for peaceful sidewalk counseling outside an Oakland, California, abortion clinic. Fiorella Nash is a British feminist and bioethicist. Both authors shine much-needed light on the pro-life perspective in the African-American and feminist communities.

Black and Pro-Life in America focuses on Hoye's trial and imprisonment for violating the City of Oakland's "bubble" ordinance: a municipal law designed to "protect" abortion clinic clients from sidewalk counselors—people who try to provide these women with alternatives to abortion—by making it a crime to come within eight feet of them. The ordinance, like California's Freedom, Accountability, Comprehensive Care, and Transparency (FACT) Act, which was eventually struck down by the Supreme Court (*NIFLA v. Becerra*, 2018), put the state's police power firmly on the side of abortion advocacy.

Hoye was a regular Tuesday counselor outside Oakland's "Family Planning

Specialists,” where he carried a sign bearing the threatening inscription, “God loves you and your baby. Let us help you,” while wearing a baseball cap that asked “got Jesus?” Counselors had about 20 feet, from curbside to clinic entrance, in which they could offer their message to clinic-bound women. Clinic “escorts” would often try to undermine them by interposing their own blank signs in front of those carried by counselors and/or by making noises to drown out their appeals.

The clinic, supported by the pro-abortion Democratic establishment in Oakland (and California generally), prevailed on the city council to ram through a middle-of-the-night ordinance imposing an eight-foot “bubble” around clinic-bound women and/or staff (which included the escorts). Enforcement, however, was a problem from the start, and, as Artigo relates, the clinic worked with local politicians to demand police training and, eventually, to have Walter Hoyer arrested.

Hoyer’s arrest and subsequent trial centered on allegations that he had entered the prohibited radius of two clinic escorts on two days in 2009. During the trial, details of the alleged “criminal” events varied; the clinic’s executive director arguably perjured herself; and videos from building surveillance cameras were never examined while that of a prolifer documenting events from nearby was almost suppressed. When conviction finally came, suspension of sentence pending appeal (typical in this level of misdemeanor case) was denied. As defense attorney Michael Millen put it, “This is the way the system grinds those it doesn’t like: get people in the [police department], the county and city, and a private business working together to get rid of this guy.” Oakland, Millen went on, “spends money it doesn’t have to prosecute a gentle man offering options to help women keep their babies.”

Packed off to prison immediately on sentencing, Artigo reports that Hoyer was released after 19 days for “good behavior,” although one suspects the state and the biographer understood the term differently. For California, Hoyer was hardly a troublemaker, and a prison fast he had embarked on could possibly make him a martyr. Artigo, though, describes Hoyer’s nearly three weeks in jail as an opportunity to exercise pastoral ministry to men who really needed religious care—it was effective enough to get Hoyer’s bloc mates voluntarily to remove the pornography on public display.

Hoyer’s conviction was eventually overturned on technical grounds related to the specification of the offense and jury instructions. Oakland did not attempt to retry him. The city had made its point: Future Walter Hoyes would think twice before going through the expense and experience of a similar gauntlet. Hoyer’s challenge of the ordinance on constitutional grounds technically failed, in that the ordinance was left on the books. But the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals subsequently ruled that the way in which Oakland had enforced the rule was

invalid because it was not “content-neutral,” i.e., while Hoyer had to abide by it with his pro-life message, pro-abortionists did not. As the brief challenging the ordinance’s constitutionality observed:

A panhandler may aggressively approach a woman entering the clinic and demand money, but a sidewalk counselor may not politely approach her with an offer of assistance. Someone may run up to a car approaching a clinic and start washing the windows and ask for payment, but a sidewalk counselor may not simply approach the car to offer the driver a free pamphlet. A peddler may approach and say “would you like to buy a flower?” but Plaintiff may not approach and say, “would you like some information.”

The rest of Artigao’s biography discusses how Hoyer became active in the pro-life movement (see <https://www.issues4life.org/>), while at the same time tracing the Hoyer family’s history from Southern slavery to de facto segregation in Michigan. The author devotes particular attention to Hoyer’s journey to ministry and his study—at the undergraduate and graduate levels—of Martin Luther King’s vision of nonviolent resistance to injustice, one that served him well in his own ordeal.

Also discussed, though not to the extent one would wish, is the relative silence of many African-American leaders about abortion. Hoyer came to pro-life advocacy in part because as a minister he found black churches negligent in addressing the needs of African-American women who resort to abortion, and in part because he observed the disparate impact of abortion on the future of black communities. Inspired by another black minister, New Jersey’s Rev. Clenard Childress, the founder of BlackGenocide.org, Hoyer became the West Coast’s go-to minister for pro-life advocacy, putting him in the crosshairs of the abortion establishment. As Hoyer’s wife Lori observed as she excoriated the silence of the local black pastors about her husband’s work and conviction: “They want to sit around and say, ‘Black life is important.’ How is it important? A hundred lives a week are taken at that clinic!”

While there have been black Americans ready to stand up and speak out for life—e.g., former Representative Mia Love, Senator Tim Scott, and the late Dr. Mildred Jefferson, the first black woman to graduate from Harvard Medical School and president of the National Right to Life Committee—one must admit that the loudest voices in African American politics and churches have kept silent about abortion.

A similar phenomenon exists among women. While abortionists arrogate a monopoly claim to speak for “women,” pro-life women like Sens. Marsha Blackburn, Joni Ernst, Deb Fischer, and Shelley Capito, former Representative Mary Rose Oakar, and the late Connecticut governor Ella Grasso *et al.*, are simply ignored. Geraldine Ferraro is lauded as a woman who broke barriers; Lindy Boggs, who crashed into the barrier of the Democratic Party’s litmus test on abortion, is politely forgotten.

Well, Fiorella Nash won't go gentle into that night of pro-life feminist oblivion. *The Abolition of Women* is a comprehensive, provocative, and bracing challenge to how feminism's hearty embrace of abortion damages women's rights.

Nash is blunt. She fiercely rejects, as a denial of women's agency, mainstream feminist attempts to equivocate about what exactly abortion is. Refusing to play word games that promote "choice," Nash demands: "The right to choose *what*? My right to decide *what*? For women to be truly free, we must be intellectually free, and that means challenging and breaking loose from decades of indoctrinating propaganda that stems from that generous, memorable, and wholly meaningless slogan, 'a woman's right to choose.'"

But while directing her primary attack on the *omertà* that refuses to acknowledge what is chosen, Nash also cites—and takes to task—the few feminists who not only admit abortion kills an unborn human child but also defend the killing. "This is not the language of feminism," Nash insists, "nor is it in any sense the language of social justice. The argument that the vulnerable can and should be sacrificed in an act of undeniable violence for the sake of maintaining control is misogynist, not feminine or feminist in any sense of the word. It involves the establishment of the most brutal of hierarchies, and that was something feminism was intended to oppose."

Nash's book exposes all the areas in which women remain oppressed due to what she calls the "de fide" status of abortion "within feminist discourse." It is a faith which means: ignoring women who suffer post-abortion syndrome, telling them—as once rape victims were told—to suck it up; refusing to investigate, rigorously and scientifically, potential health complications (including cancer) abortion might pose; silencing honest discussion and squashing real diversity within the feminist community itself; being only partially honest with women, as when extolling the ease of drug-induced abortion without mentioning the painful bleeding and expulsion of the unborn child that follows; and reckoning with a "liberty" that demands accepting the gendercide of sex-selection abortions, disproportionately involving girl children, as prerequisite to "empowering" women.

Nash provides plenty of examples of feminist intellectual mush; my favorite is her discussion of how some abortion clinics promise "respectfully to dispose of a woman's 'foetal tissue' in case of late-term abortions (assuming they do women this courtesy) when the idea is nonsensical from either side of the debate. If the product of an abortion is mere tissue, it no more requires respectful disposal than the product of a tonsillectomy. If it is more than tissue, such respect is rather misplaced under the circumstances."

But Nash does not limit herself to abortion. She scores "outsourcing reproduction," noting how artificial reproductive technologies—especially cloning, egg donation, and surrogacy—commodify women in general and by class in

particular. Nor does she limit her critique to the carping of economically comfortable, white Western women. Outsourced reproduction has implications for those in developing countries, whose feminine capacity to create and/or sustain life is sold to the lowest bidder. Meanwhile, mainstream “developed” countries will spend plenty of money to promote third-world abortion, but little to address other factors that are real causes of high maternal mortality rates in developing countries. Then there are the authoritarians who claim, in the name of the “common good” as determined by a select few, the right to limit childbearing and compel abortion, which Nash opines “can surely be classified as a form of surgical rape.”

The suppression of free speech and intellectual thought on many American college campuses today should come as no surprise: America’s abortion history since *Roe* has been a thorough dress rehearsal for tolerating only “correct think,” especially among “victimized” classes. Both of these books challenge us to take a fresh look at hoary orthodoxies and ask again where the real victims lie. Ignatius Press deserves applause for putting them both on the market.

—*John M. Grondelski (Ph.D., Fordham) is former associate dean of the School of Theology, Seton Hall University, South Orange, New Jersey. All views herein are exclusively his own.*

THE LOST HISTORY OF LIBERALISM: FROM ANCIENT ROME TO THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Helena Rosenblatt

(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 368 pages; \$35)

Reviewed by Nicholas Frankovich

“Liberalism made the modern world,” the editors of *The Economist* wrote last fall, “but the modern world is turning against it.” Is it? The assumption that liberalism is in retreat has been repeated so often lately, in a spate of articles and books, by professed liberals as well as anti-liberals, that the casual observer can be forgiven if he suspects they’re in on a secret from which he’s been excluded. If all of them use the word *liberal* to mean the same thing, what is it? He spins his wheels and tries to deduce.

He gives them too much credit. People use the word *liberal* to mean many different things. Moreover, in many cases they are unaware that what they mean by it is not what others understand by it, and vice versa. In American politics, of course, *liberal* means “left of center”; sometimes the word is used to refer specifically to the center-left; other times, to the entire left side of the political spectrum, from Hubert Humphrey to Henry Wallace. Meanwhile, in much of

Europe, to be “liberal” is close to being what “conservative” was not so long ago here in the States: convinced that government should be limited, taxes lower, and regulation lighter, that trade should be free, and that freedoms of speech and religion should be, well, liberal—in short, laissez-faire in economics and, some of the time at least, laissez-faire on social issues as well. (Margaret Thatcher, for example, was pro-choice on abortion, though reticent about it.)

Broad assaults on “liberalism” are these days launched mostly from the right. In effect, they are directed either at progressivism or (too often this ambiguity is left unresolved) at the liberal tradition itself—that is, at the soul of the political arrangement and moral philosophy represented by Great Britain and the United States during the Second World War, when they allied with the Soviet Union, the great totalitarian power on the left, to stop Nazi Germany, the great totalitarian power on the right. Does today’s right-leaning critic of liberalism mean to say that America and Britain chose the wrong side? That they *were* the wrong side? Would he please clarify?

Then consider the present-day notion of “classical liberalism,” with its emphasis on economics. Scrape off what little fat can be found on those dry bones and you’re down to libertarianism, with its emphasis on rights of the individual. Unless those rights are balanced by an acceptance of corresponding duties, and stark individualism by an embrace of warm relations with other persons, that philosophy—call it liberalism or libertarianism or what you will—is hell, or leads to hell. So a twenty-first-century skeptic of “rights talk” might agree with an eighteenth-century adversary of the French Revolution that the “liberalism” represented by each of those political phenomena is “Satanic,” although the skeptic probably doesn’t mean “Satanic” literally, and it would be special pleading to argue that the two liberalisms are related to each other much more closely than you are to a random man or woman on the street who happens to share your first name.

The babel of disputation about liberalism knows no end, exit, destination, or conclusion. To enter the debate is to get lost in a maze. Is there some way out of it? We need a map.

Helena Rosenblatt, clear-eyed, has drawn one. It’s detailed and helpful. At its core *The Lost History of Liberalism: From Ancient Rome to the Twenty-First Century* is a philological exercise in the service of political philosophy. In the introduction she explains that she’s undertaking “a *word history of liberalism*. I feel certain that if we don’t pay attention to the actual use of the word, the histories we will tell will inevitably be different and even conflicting. They will also be constructed with little grounding in historical fact and marred by historical anachronism.”

The word *liberal* derives from *liberalis*, Latin for “freeborn” and, by extension, for the possession of a set of personal attributes associated with aristocracy.

In antiquity and the Middle Ages and even as late as the nineteenth century, “being liberal was a kind of *noblesse oblige*,” Rosenblatt notes. A liberal man was by definition expansive, frank, freely giving—generous, not stingy. (Women were not much thought of as persons to whom the adjective *liberal* applied, until they were, thanks to the progress of the liberal spirit over the course of the early modern era, as someone who claims the label “liberal” might argue.) A bit of the word’s earlier usage survives in such expressions as “a liberal dose of salt” and “she’s a liberal tipper.”

The giving nature of the liberal thus defined entailed an inclination to be outward-looking, public-spirited, civic-minded. Before the word *liberalism* had been coined, men aspiring to be virtuous aspired to *liberalitas*, or liberality, whose opposite was slavishness, a regard only for “oneself, one’s profits, and one’s pleasures.” To claim to be liberal was to assert your superior rank while submitting to the demand that you subordinate your own welfare and interests to the common good. Your commitment to public service, as we now call it, was proof of your nobility.

The road from early *liberalitas*, which was robust and sanguine, to the austere “classical liberalism” of late, Anglo-American provenance winds and dips and climbs and narrows, taking us through the busiest precincts—some of them scenic, some horrifying—of European and American social and political history. Rosenblatt as tour guide directs the reader’s attention to more points along the way than could be listed in a review of this length. As she should, she stresses the French contributions to our modern conceptions of liberalism. She singles out Benjamin Constant and his partner and collaborator Anne Louise Germaine de Staël—Mme. de Staël to you—as the most consequential figures in its origin story.

Rosenblatt does not dredge up the John Adams quote that has been cited so often in recent years that it’s become a cliché, but it’s germane to her narrative, so here goes: “Our *Constitution* was made only for a *moral* and *religious* People. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.” I quote that here also because it sums up a principle that is essential to an understanding of how the pro-life movement, still relatively recent and occupying as yet only a small patch on the canvas of Western history, has been shaped by tenets of the liberalism that prevailed when it came of age in the second half of the last century, after the idea of “a moral and religious People” had begun to fall out of favor with a growing number not only of elites but also of average citizens.

Read in isolation, those two sentences of Adams’s could be interpreted as a statement only that the Founders had manufactured a product, the Constitution, that they hoped would reach its natural market. Bear in mind, though, that the Constitution was written also *by* such a people. It flowed from their experience of themselves and one another. Their character preceded and determined the content of the legal document, an attempt to spell out, in explicit terms, something of

the honor system that was in the air they breathed and the water they drank. In case it wouldn't last, they bottled a little. That was the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, the *Federalist Papers*. Even taken together, they would be far too meager to sustain a whole society by themselves, but they would be a clue for future generations should that elusive special ingredient someday be depleted from their air and water supplies and they found it necessary to reconstitute, from scratch, civic life and the good society.

We can bicker later about how many of the Founders were spiritual or devout. Adams didn't say they were. They were religious in the sense of putting a high value on dutifulness, on being assiduous and attentive to conscience, or at least they acknowledged the desirability of such inner resources and encouraged them in others. True, many were slaveholders and therefore hypocrites, but the tribute that in their vice they paid to virtue was not nothing.

The liberalism of the Founders included a strong dose of zeal for the protection of personal freedoms that they saw as natural rights, but it was integrated into a larger whole that included a presumption that your neighbor's natural rights were equal to yours and that the two of you would muster the decency and goodwill to avoid rancor and improvise your own diplomatic negotiations where necessary. In the earliest philosophies, tendencies, and movements to which some form of the word *liberal* was attached, Rosenblatt finds a surprisingly high ratio of moral sentiment to political assertion of self-interest. We could learn from them.

The abortion-rights movement that emerged in the middle of the last century soon gave rise to its mirror image, the right-to-life movement. It was an era of social movements marked by varying degrees of genuine indignation. The civil-rights movement was the most disciplined and compelling. The antiwar movement during the Vietnam era had a core of sincerity but a large fringe of activists who gave the impression that their main message was "Look at me." The women's movement, likewise, alas.

Having absorbed the political fashion of their day, the pioneers of the pro-life movement expressed their conviction in the form of a demand for a right, the right to life for unborn children. The power of that demand now slowly erodes as public acceptance of a corresponding right, the right to die, increases. The logic of the dual rights implies an overarching right to choose between them. If the unborn child has a right to die as well as a right to live, let the mother be his proxy and make the choice for him: That's the reasoning for which groundwork has been laid by euthanasia and assisted-suicide advocates. Abortion-rights advocates have understood it for a long time, at least intuitively. You recognize this line of argument: "Abortion is a moral issue. It would be an injustice to my unborn child to inflict on him life in the hellish world that I inhabit and would necessarily bring him into if I had no compassion."

“Liberalism has never been a fixed or unified creed,” Rosenblatt writes. “Since the very beginning, it has encompassed lively debates. What *is* new is the way liberals today describe themselves and what they stand for. They overwhelmingly stress a commitment to individual rights and choices; they rarely mention duties, . . . self-sacrifice, or generosity to others.” The pro-life movement was founded on the hollowed-out version of liberalism that Rosenblatt decries. To their credit, later generations of pro-life activists have repaired and to some extent remodeled their movement, particularly through the expansion of social and medical services they provide for pregnant women, but their pursuit of rights is heard more loudly than their good works and provokes activists on the other side of the issue to raise the volume on *their* demand for competing rights.

The way out of the maze? Look to earlier “liberals”: Preach duties, self-sacrifice, generosity. It’s not as hard a sell as you might think. Just stay humble. Experiment with the power of quiet. “Preach always,” St. Francis of Assisi urged his brothers in religion, according to legend. “Use words when necessary.”

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

FROM THE HLR WEBSITE

Carved in Stone

Donald DeMarco

Gutzon Borglum is not exactly a household name, though the quartet of faces he carved on Mt. Rushmore is familiar to virtually every American. His artistic achievement is probably the most spectacular of its kind ever produced. The lifelike busts of presidents Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt stand 60 feet high from a mountain height of 5,725 feet, and can be observed from miles away. The project required the assistance of 400 workers and the blasting away of 450,000 short tons of rock. Granite was the canvas and dynamite the chisel. It took over a dozen years, from 1927 to 1941, for Borglum and his assistants to complete the work. The more than two million tourists who visit the site in the Black Hills of South Dakota annually no doubt scratch their heads and think, “How on earth did human ingenuity manage to carry out such a colossal project while compromising neither beauty nor accuracy?”

Borglum was fascinated with both heroic nationalism—he named his only child Lincoln—and creating artistic works on a gigantic scale. According to his thinking, the massive sculpture was an appropriate way of incarnating the following words of America’s first president: “The preservation of the sacred fire of Liberty, and the destiny of the Republican model of Government, are justly considered as deeply, perhaps as finally staked, on the experiment entrusted to the hands of the American people.” Liberty was thus carved in stone. And no security guards would be needed, as they are at the Louvre, to prevent theft.

The idea of something being carved in stone indicates rectitude, permanence, immortality, and indestructibility. If something is carved in stone, there can be no argument against it. It cannot be changed. For these reasons, it was fitting that God delivered His Commandments to Moses on stone tablets. However, the Fifth Commandment, “Thou shall not kill,” has lost its commanding force in today’s world and is routinely violated, especially with regard to abortion. Abortion is not seen as killing, but rather as a choice that allows the aborting woman to seize control of her destiny. The prohibition against killing babies is no longer generally perceived as “carved in stone.” So how do we realign our national thinking so it once again accords with the Fifth Commandment?

It is a fundamental principle of phenomenology that it is *relationship* rather than *being* that initially provokes attention. Beings never appear in isolation, but always within an interconnected network of other beings. Is it possible to evaluate a politician, we wonder, apart from his party affiliation? When we change the relationship, we change our perception and understanding. A candle

is holy on an altar, romantic on a piano, eerie in a jack-o-lantern, and elegant on the table. Toys are clutter in the living room, inventory in the warehouse, items at a garage sale, but under the Christmas tree they are gifts. We interpret the *figure* by its relationship with its *ground*. Our society has lost the ground against which we can properly evaluate the figure of the unborn child. Thus, people see the unborn child in relationship with its “owner” and therefore perceive it as an intruder. Or it is seen in relation to a cultural background of convenience and regarded as a burden. Or it is seen in relation to a chosen career and considered to be an enemy of freedom. But what is the background against which we can see the truth of the unborn child?

An artist named Dubian Monsalve has taken a page from Gutzon Borglum. In 2012, he carved in the mountainside near the town of Santo Domingo, Colombia, a figure of the human unborn child within its mother’s womb. The fetus appears to be in the 35th to 40th week of development. Its fingers, toes, and ears are clearly and meticulously articulated. It is a recognizable human being. Monsalve calls his work—which is readily viewable from the highway it borders—“Pregnant Mountain.” For him, it is a tribute to “the woman that gives life, because life is valuable from its conception to its end.”

The scale of “Pregnant Mountain” does not compare in size or propitious location with Mt. Rushmore, but its message has been transmitted to millions of viewers through Facebook and the Internet. It has also become a tourist site. The artist’s immediate concern had been to beseech local farmers not to abandon their land or their beliefs, “not to abandon their identity as Christians and as farmers who feed this country.” Monsalve’s message has reached far more people than he could possibly have expected. In stating that “earth itself gives life,” he is paraphrasing the biblical notion that “all flesh is grass” (Isaiah 40:6). But he is also indicating that earth is the ground of life, which implies that God is the ground of earth. It is critical to get one’s ground rules straightened out.

In Isaiah 49:16 we read, “I have carved you on the palm of my hand.” Here God’s palm serves as the background by which we properly understand the figure, which is the unborn human child. In this case, in addition to indicating protection, the hand is also the ground that extends the value of dignity to the life that it holds. We see human life rightly, therefore, when we see it in relation to its Creator. Without God, all values are arbitrary.

Monsalve is obviously dealing in symbolism. Nonetheless, it is a symbolism that expresses what is real, which is the aim of every true artist. It also awakens something that is carved in the human heart. Referred to as the Natural Law, it is what makes it possible for us to know, instinctively, that killing innocent human beings is wrong.

Given its unusual background, the unborn child in “Pregnant Mountain” stirs our consciousness and makes us see him in a new way, not as a burden but as

something that must be protected. It brings the child to life, so to speak. As Erin McKinnon, writing for *Interim* (April 2018), has observed, “By deliberately placing this familiar human image in a not-so-familiar view . . . Dubian has widened the angle of society’s lenses, enabling people to discern and contemplate an often overlooked image reflecting the prospect of human life from conception.”

We can thank Dubian Monsalve for reminding us that the sacredness of life is, indeed, carved in stone, and that its corollary Commandment, “Thou shall not kill,” remains eternally viable.

—Dr. Donald DeMarco is Professor Emeritus, St. Jerome’s University and Adjunct Professor at Holy Apostles College. He is a regular columnist for St. Austin Review. His latest book, Apostles of the Culture of Life, is posted on amazon.com

Navigating Between Complacency and Despair

Ellen Wilson Fielding

Once I heard a futures trader explain the thought processes behind his job, and the way he explained it illuminated a mindset about earning a living alien to my own. Oh, I already knew the basics about his daily activity: buying and selling futures of commodities, with the aim, of course, of buying as close to the low and selling as close to the high as possible, so as to maximize profit.

But it soon became clear that my futures trader viewed success and failure in extreme and even perfectionistic terms: If he didn’t judge the bottom and the top pretty nearly exactly, and if he didn’t manage to locate the buyers and sellers he wanted at the optimal points for making the highest profit, he concluded that he had “lost” money. Failing to make as much money as it was theoretically possible to make on a trade, on a day, on a cycle was equated with “losing” some of the profit he could have made. That’s an interesting pocket of perfectionism that I had not previously encountered. It must make for perpetual second-guessing and dissatisfaction. All this because of a disproportionate view of reality that is, if not untrue, at least not the whole truth. He reminded me of the economists who fabricate models according to the purely rational choices of “Economic Man.”

But I do recognize the temptation to all-or-nothing self-judgment in another context. Something like that mindset often threatens those of us defending the unborn, the handicapped, the old and seemingly useless whom others view as ripe for assisted suicide. Despite many intermediate successes over decades on the pro-life front in state legislatures and even in Congress, despite many

election wins and many court appointments over the years, despite ever more ingenious strategies and campaigns to raise awareness, persuade hearts and minds, and offer support to women in crisis pregnancies, our minds naturally ruminate on the defeats and on the enormity of the breakers ahead of us. And of course Gov. Cuomo's recent success in ramming through New York's abortion-bill-on-steroids and Virginia's looming expanded abortion bill (temporarily but probably not permanently taking a back seat to the multiple scandals among the state's Democratic leadership) can rouse in us memories of King Canute demonstrating his inability to halt the incoming tide.

In the assisted-suicide arena, perhaps a better analogy is to inhabitants of a besieged town watching the encircling army come closer and closer to successfully overrunning the castle walls as, year after year, legislative proposals are reintroduced in state after state. It is true that most of the 270-plus legislative proposals introduced throughout the U.S. since 1994 have been defeated (the numbers are from Rita L. Marker's recent count in her Patients Rights Council *Update* for the beginning of 2019) and that, even now, "only" seven states and the District of Columbia allow doctors to prescribe lethal overdoses to enable the suicide of their patients. However, the chip-away, chip-away approach goes on (my own state of Maryland currently has a House and a Senate assisted-suicide bill pending, for it feels like the umpteenth time).

Understandably, it can be difficult, when watching the waves of new legal, political, scientific, and medical attacks on the rights and dignity of human beings at all stages and in all conditions, not to focus on what we have not yet achieved, on what lives we have not successfully defended. Even when there are documented improvements in the pro-life scene—such as the decrease in post-*Roe* yearly abortion rates from, at the height, 1.5 million-plus in the late 70s to the mid-90s, to current levels below a million per year (according to the Guttmacher Institute). That's progress, of a sort, though I'm not sure how my futures trader friend would feel about it. But it is hard not to dwell on those who don't make it safely through the birth canal—and perhaps particularly hard not to dwell on this unproductively.

At the end of the movie *Schindler's List*, there is a memorable scene where Oskar Schindler, the Nazi-era businessman who ended up saving some 1100 Jews, breaks down as he cries over and over, "I could have got more out. I could have got more . . . I didn't do enough!" At that moment the great number of Jews that owe their lives to him seems paltry next to those his mind sees filing into the gas chamber. And of course in the face of the enormous tragedy that was the Holocaust, of the *millions* of Jews that died despite the efforts of those who stepped forward in various ways to intervene, we more naturally dwell on the dead with frustrated, impotent sadness, than take inspiration from the human lives snatched from death.

And yet, the Jewish Talmud reminds us (as does *Schindler's List*, which also references this quote) that “Whoever saves a single life is considered by Scripture to have saved the world.”

We do not want to ever become complacent with our accomplishments in the pro-life arena—but complacency is not currently a besetting sin of those active in this movement. Of course there is always room for rethinking approaches, analyzing where we have gone wrong—and even where we have gone right. But when such rethinking leaches our energy, as it sometimes does, by causing us to beat ourselves up, doubt the usefulness of our efforts, or despair at the thought of how much is left undone, it is counterproductive to ourselves and the innocent lives we attempt to defend. Our perfectionism and our anguish at the extreme imperfection of our country's treatment of the unborn can then interfere with how well we work to ameliorate it.

There is a delicate balance to be struck between complacency and despair, between deciding that what we have is good enough—the best that can be expected, after all—and withdrawing in weary despondency. Paradoxically, achieving that balance requires rejecting utopian illusions about the possibility of completely and forever eliminating the evil of abortion from the face of the earth. Someday, whether 5 years from now or 10 years or 50 or 100, when abortion is again illegal, some women will still be driven to the desperate measure of killing their unborn children. As Jesus once said, “The poor you will always have with you,” meaning not that nothing need be done for them, but that we should never conclude that our efforts are unnecessary because the problem is solved, nor useless because the problem is unsolvable. And when—we hope it will be soon, however much we fear it may be later—the time comes when abortion *is* illegal, there inevitably will be other profound human evils crying out for relief, other still-tolerated ways of preying upon human innocence through human depravity.

Abortion and assisted suicide are matters of life and death. Nationally or (in the case of assisted suicide) in certain states, they are quite legal. Our sense of urgency and responsibility in the face of such injustice must not lead us, especially in these challenging times, to think either that victory is hopeless or that, if we just did this or that, if we just formulated the perfect pro-life pitch or the cleverest legislation or the most unanswerable legal argument, if we just spent more hours doing more things, the problem would be solved. There is always more to be done, in this as in most other areas of our lives. And though there always will be defeats, there will always be victories too. And each victory, for that moment, is enough—because each life saved is as though the whole world was saved.

—*Ellen Wilson Fielding is a senior editor of the Human Life Review.*

Mercy-Killing Five-Year-Olds

David Mills

She tried the “Where do you draw the line?” argument. A young Facebook friend reported that she’d just got home from a college class that had taken up abortion. Most students treated it as self-evidently good.

If aborting an unborn child is all right, she asked them, what about killing a five-year-old? Classmates argued that yes, if a mother found her five-year-old too difficult to raise, killing him would be “more humane.” More humane, apparently, than letting him live with imperfect parenting. Or giving him to a family who wanted him.

I’ve heard similar stories from younger friends and from those who talk a lot about abortion to other people. Years ago when I and others used that argument, the pro-choice people saw the trap below their feet and swerved away.

They agreed that we can’t kill newborns. That would be wrong. No one at the time would even have thought of suggesting five-year-olds as the example, because no one was that barbaric. Even the most ardent pro-choicer would have thought that the kind of thing only Nazis or Communists did.

But they didn’t think that through. If we can’t kill five-year-olds, we can’t kill newborns. If we can’t kill newborns, we—this is the logical conclusion they desperately wanted to avoid—can’t kill children just before birth, and we can’t kill them even weeks or months earlier when they could survive outside the womb. And if we can’t kill them then, how can we kill them before they can survive on their own? Why is that the line? And if being able to survive on their own is the line, why can’t we kill the disabled and others who can’t survive on their own?

The pro-choicer can’t win this argument. When I used it, they wisely didn’t try. They tried to redirect attention. Some denied the humanity of the unborn, most famously through the crude claim that the child was only a “clump of cells.” Others insisted on the mother’s right to bodily autonomy or self-determination, refusing to notice the child at all. The majority of the Supreme Court tried to distinguish the unborn by the trimester they’d reached.

The pro-choicers all tried to avoid the question of the continuity of the child’s humanity from his conception through his birth. They knew how decisively that undermined their claims.

Now, a couple decades later, judging from observation and the stories people more involved in public arguments tell, many pro-choice people don’t bother questioning the continuity. Formed by the generation who tried to deny it but failed, and by decades of legal abortion and the sexual culture it enables, many admit the baby not yet born shares the same humanity as the born baby. And

conclude that therefore the born baby may be killed.

Some academics have argued this directly. Peter Singer notoriously, but others also, and they get a respectful hearing. A few years ago, two Australian bioethicists argued this in the *Journal of Medical Ethics*, one of the world's major journals of its sort.

The two concluded that "If criteria such as the costs (social, psychological, economic) for the potential parents are good enough reasons for having an abortion even when the foetus is healthy, if the moral status of the newborn is the same as that of the foetus and if neither has any moral value by virtue of being a potential person, then the same reasons which justify abortion should also justify the killing of the potential person when it is at the stage of a newborn." They added, to avoid having to work out their argument's grim implications, "we do not put forward any claim about the moment at which after-birth abortion would no longer be permissible."

Seeing the continuity doesn't make these people rethink abortion. It makes them comfortable with infanticide, and in at least one college class, the "mercy killing" of five-year-olds. They don't move the moral line that they think justifies killing backwards, they move it forwards.

Most of them, I think, would refuse to apply their logic to any five-year-old they knew. They speak inhumanly because they don't have living human beings in mind. And good. Still, they say what no one I spoke to years ago would have said. They accept the killing of children as a thing their theory of life approves. Why would this be? How could this be?

My guess is that we human beings can't not see the humanity of other human beings. We know they're the same kind of creature we are. After a certain point fairly early in pregnancy the unborn look like us. We remember that we were once as they are now. When we think about the matter at all, we follow or at least intuit the chain that connects the five-year-old with the newborn with the almost born with the fetus with the embryo with the zygote.

We have to work to deny it. Denying it requires blinding ourselves to something we see. Look at the struggle of the old apologists for slavery and the later apologists for segregation to make the distinction between races. Their arguments look comically (and tragically) implausible now. Even accounting for inherited prejudice and cultural blindness, at some level they must have known better.

If you see the continuity, and know you see it, yet approve of aborting the unborn, you will feel free to disregard the morally arbitrary lines of viability or birth or even childhood. You will not privilege anyone simply because she happened to be born and live a few years, if you have what you think a "humane" reason to kill her.

—David Mills, former editor of *First Things*, is editor of *Hour of Our Death* and the "Catholic Sense" columnist for the *Pittsburgh Catholic*.

Abortion: How Can They See and Do It Anyway?

Cecile Thompson

Seventeen students would be attending the March for Life, accompanied by three young Sisters of Charity, taking the all-night bus, and arriving in Washington in time to brush their teeth in the downstairs bathroom of the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception. Spirits were high: The trip is an annual pilgrimage, but with pillows and popcorn, blankets and ear buds. The girls were eager, bustling, overflowing with enthusiasm—and so I assigned them Richard Selzer’s sobering essay “Abortion,” from his 1976 collection, *Mortal Lessons: Notes on the Art of Surgery*.

Dr. Selzer did not intend to write a piece condemning abortion. “I . . . wrote what I had meant to be a literary rendition of the event,” he explained twenty years later, “not an argument against the procedure.” It is just this, though, that argument was not his intention, which makes the essay so effective—and powerful.

The students trust this writer, the surgeon, having already read his “Lessons from the Art.” Selzer’s essays can have a jauntiness about them as he describes the marvels of the liver or the chagrin of going bald. “Abortion,” which I am reading aloud to them in class, is not jaunty:

Horror, like bacteria, is everywhere. It blankets the earth, endlessly lapping to find that one unguarded entryway.

I continue reading as Selzer recalls the start of an ordinary day—the “grind” of an early morning garbage truck, getting dressed and having breakfast, the walk to the bus stop. “It is all so familiar,” he writes. And then

All of a sudden you step on something soft. You feel it with your foot. Even through your shoe you have the sense of something unusual, something marked by a special “give.” It is a foreignness upon the pavement.

The room is quiet. The girls are listening.

You look down and you see . . . a tiny naked body, its arms and legs flung apart, its head thrown back, its mouth agape, its face serious. A bird, you think, fallen from its nest. But there is no nest on 73rd Street, no bird so big. It is rubber, then. A model, a . . . joke. Yes, that’s it, a joke. And you bend to see. Because you must. And it is no joke. Such a gray softness can be but one thing. It is a baby, and dead.

I hear a soft intake of air. I am not sure who it is.

The seniors will read Orwell’s *Politics and the English Language*; they will read a *New York Times* editorial supporting the Reproductive Health Act. They will note with scorn the default euphemism used by those who support abortion. But the people in Selzer’s essay who see the dead babies on the sidewalk do not use euphemism. They do not speak “in strangely altered voices” about the

products of conception, or of fetal tissue. I continue reading.

Now you look about; another man has seen it too. "My God," he whispers. Others come . . . "Look!" they say, "It's a baby!" There is a cry. "Here's another!" and "Another!"

I teach at a Catholic school, run by the Sisters of Charity of Mary the Mother of the Church. The all-girl student body tends towards ebullience. The biannual Pro-Life Café is a festive, happy event. Yet, the reality of abortion, the actual procedure, is never a happy event. No one likes to dwell on it. Somehow, you don't like telling the students about it. They are young, untouched by horror.

This class of sophomores maintains a high pitch of energy. They talk and sing and laugh. Some are more quiet, such as Lara, with her long curly hair and doe eyes, who lost her father to a motorcycle accident, and Lenna, from Rwanda, elegant in a grey skirt and navy sweater. Annie and Jenny are from a close-knit group of Vietnamese families. Caroline, lean and sporty, is learning to read the Divine Office with one of the young sisters. Monique, also athletic, and dramatic, is an honors student, her glossy hair pulled back in a no-nonsense ponytail, eager for the day's work. Their experience of abortion is "Save the babies!" and, for a moment, you don't want them to know. You don't want to tell them.

Nevertheless, I continue reading Selzer's essay. He describes the arrival of the police, and ambulances whose attendants remove the tiny bodies from the sidewalk and take them away. He goes on:

Later, at the police station, the investigation is brisk, conclusive. It is the hospital director speaking: ". . . the fetuses accidentally got mixed up with the hospital rubbish . . . were picked up at approximately eight fifteen a.m. by a sanitation truck. Somehow, the plastic lab bag, labeled Hazardous Material, fell off the back of the truck and broke open. No it is not known how the fetuses got in the orange plastic bag labeled Hazardous Material. It is a freak accident."

This "freak accident" happened on August 6, 1975, in New York City. Residents who witnessed it were told by the hospital director that it was "a once in a lifetime" occurrence:

Aborted fetuses that weigh one pound or less are incinerated. Those weighing over one pound are buried at a city cemetery. He says this. Now you see. It is orderly. It is sensible. The world is not mad. This is still a civilized society .

. . . Outside on the street men are talking things over, reassuring each other that the right thing is being done. But just this once, you know it isn't. You saw, and you know. And you know, too, that the Street of Dead Fetuses will be wherever you go . . . It has laid claim upon you so that you cannot entirely leave it—not ever.

This sounds like an ending but it is really only the end of a new beginning attached to the rest of the essay—Dr. Selzer's "What I Saw at the Abortion," a piece he published in the January 1976 issue of *Esquire* magazine, where the

Yale surgeon was a contributing editor.

The surgeon, the writer, is precise. As he has noted, the pen and the scalpel are the same size. He knows the art of surgery; he knows how to be precise. I begin reading again.

It is the western wing of the fourth floor of a great university hospital. An abortion is about to take place. I am present because I asked to be present. I wanted to see what I had never seen.

The patient . . . lies on the table submissively . . . A nurse draws down the sheet, lays bare the abdomen. The belly mounds gently in the twenty-fourth week of pregnancy . . .

. . . The doctor selects a three-and-one-half-inch needle bearing a central stylet. He places the point at the site of the previous injection. He aims it straight up and down, perpendicular. Next he takes hold of her abdomen with his left hand, palming the womb, steadying it. He thrusts with his right hand. The needle sinks into the abdominal wall. Oh, says the woman quietly. But I guess it is not pain that she feels. It is more a recognition that the deed is being done. Another thrust and he has speared the uterus. We are in, he says.

The girls are hushed now, waiting.

In the room, we are six: two physicians, two nurses, the patient and me. The participants are busy, and attentive. I am not at all busy—but I am no less attentive. I want to see.

And then...

I see something! It is unexpected, utterly unexpected, like a disturbance in the earth, a tumultuous jarring. I see a movement, a small one. But I have seen it.

And then I see it again. And now I see that it is the hub of the needle in the woman's belly that has jerked. First to one side. Then to the other side . . . Again! And I know!

It is the fetus that worries thus. It is the fetus struggling against the needle.

Here the writer pauses to describe the fetus in the fifth month. One pound. Twelve inches. Eyebrows, eyelashes. By the sixth month, the fetus can cry, suck, make a fist.

A reflex, the doctor says.

I hear him. But I saw something in that mass of cells understand that it must bob and butt. And I see it again! I have an impulse to shove to the table—it is just a step—seize the needle, pull it out. We are not six, I think. We are seven.

Now the surgeon witnessing the abortion imagines the fetus responding to what is suddenly happening in the womb.

A spike of daylight pierces the chamber. Now the light is extinguished. The needle comes closer in the pool. The point grazes the thigh, and I stir. Perhaps I wake from dozing. The light is there again. I twist and straighten. My arms and legs push. My hand finds

the shaft—grabs! I grab. I bend the needle this way and that. My mouth opens. Could I cry out?

Quietly, I point out that the writer has shifted the point of view. Finally, the abortion is over.

And yet . . . there is the flick of that needle. I saw it . . . I saw . . . I felt—in that room, a pace away, life prodded, life fending off. I saw life avulsed—swept by flood, blackening—then out.

The surgeon has seen an abortion, and he cannot un-see it. The students, too, have seen. They cannot un-see. I allow a moment.

“Miss Thompson.” Caroline breaks the silence. “I wish everybody would read this. Because . . . they don’t know . . . you try to talk to them and they don’t know. They don’t know what actually happens.”

“They don’t want to know,” says Lara, soft-spoken but certain.

“But Miss Thompson . . .” says Monique. Her young face looks pained. Her voice is quiet, and she struggles for the words. “They . . . know. The doctor with the needle. The nurses. They know, don’t they? They *know* the baby is there. They know the baby is . . . like, I mean . . . the baby is *fighting* . . . for its life. *How can they do it?*”

The question is stark and spare. I need to answer. I’m the teacher.

“Every age,” I begin to hold forth, “has its moral blind spots . . .” But I stop. It’s a lame answer. Facile. Inadequate. How can anyone not know that the dead baby on the sidewalk is a baby? How can the medical staff in the operating room of a great university hospital not see the movement, the flick of the needle?

I cannot answer.

—*Cecile Thompson teaches at a Catholic high school in Connecticut.*

The Psychology of Evil

W. Ross Blackburn

He sits in ambush in the villages; in hiding places he murders the innocent. His eyes stealthily watch for the helpless; he lurks in ambush like a lion in his thicket; he lurks that he may seize the poor; he seizes the poor when he draws him into his net. The helpless are crushed, sink down, and fall by his might. He says in his heart, “God has forgotten, he has hidden his face, he will never see it” (Psalm 10:8-11).

Pro-choice. It sounds so modest. Pro-choice people simply want people to have choices, and not to be forced into making decisions dictated by others. To be able to follow one’s conscience without constraint or pressure. Live and let live. Or so we are supposed to believe.

Why then is Planned Parenthood encouraging elementary school children to question their gender? Why is it aggressively seeking to instruct them about

sex, giving lip-service to abstinence while going into detail about how to use a condom? Why does Planned Parenthood push young teens toward sex (and all manner of sexual practices), presuming that a high-school freshman is old enough to know whether she is emotionally ready for sex (while being available if necessary to abort her baby in one of its clinics without the knowledge of her parents)? Why does Planned Parenthood insist that other people (taxpayers) pay for girls'—and women's—abortions? Why is the organization unwilling—even as it claims to respect and protect women—to support legislation to regulate abortion as a medical procedure? Why is David Daleiden facing possible jail time for exposing Planned Parenthood's evil—and illegal—trafficking in fetal body parts? Why is the new movement “Shout your Abortion” celebrating abortion and teaching children to do so? Why are crisis pregnancy centers, which offer women the real choice of bringing their baby to term, being threatened for their refusal to direct women to abortionists?

The answers to these questions are simple. Evil is by nature aggressive. And while evil persists because of the passivity of those who allow it to persist, the character of evil itself is aggressive. For instance, traffickers stand to profit from the vulnerable; they kidnap girls and women (or boys and men) and sell them into the sex trade to be raped for money. And why? Because they don't believe they will be held accountable by the law—or by God. Psalm 10 (quoted above) gets it exactly—those who sit in ambush in the village and murder the innocent do so because they believe that there is no God who will hold them accountable.

The underbelly of the abortion movement is dark, and I am sure the above litany of questions only scratches the surface. The point is this: Beneath the generous sounding rhetoric (careful, of course, not to speak plainly of the choice it promotes), lies a predatory ruthlessness that is anything but pro-choice. This is not to say that everyone who supports legal abortion is predatory and ruthless, for the abortion movement relies on deception, and many are deceived, knowing not what they do, or what they support. But at the (heartless) heart of the movement are people who know exactly what they are doing—exploiting the vulnerable for profit—and expect to get away with it because they believe they will never be held to account.

—Reverend W. Ross Blackburn, who writes a column titled “A Pastor's Reflections” for the Human Life Review website, has served as Rector at Christ the King Church in Boone, North Carolina, for fifteen years. He and his wife Lauren have five children.

APPENDIX A

[Fr. George W. Rutler is pastor of St. Michael's Church in New York City. He is the author of many books, the latest of which are *Grace and Truth: Twenty Steps to Embracing Virtue and Saving Civilization* (EWTN Publishing 2019) and *Calm in Chaos* (Ignatius, 2018). The following was published by Crisis Magazine on Jan. 30, 2019, and is reprinted here with permission.]

Governor Cuomo's Bridge

George Rutler

There was a literary symbiosis between G.K. Chesterton and Henri Ghéon somewhat like the musical one between Rimsky-Korsakov and Mussorgsky. Ghéon's biography of Saint John Vianney, *The Secret of the Curé d'Ars*, is enhanced by the brief commentary that Chesterton added to it. Chesterton mentions a mayor of some French town who not only commissioned a statue of the rationalist Emile Zola, but, intent on further provocation, ordered that the bronze for it be forged from the bells of a church. This rings a bell, if you will, when reminded that an ecstatic Governor Andrew Cuomo chose to sign into law our nation's most gruesome abortion bill on January 22, the anniversary of the *Roe v. Wade* decision, to raucous applause and cheering in the state capitol. In a fallen world, dancing on graves requires no instructors. Then Cuomo ordered that One World Trade Center in Manhattan and the Alfred E. Smith Building in Albany be illuminated in pink lights. The ancient Caesars dressed in red as the token of victory. Cuomo chose pink.

Mark the ironies: the Freedom Tower is at the site of the memorial to the dead of 9/11, and listed on that somber shrine are eleven "unborn babies" killed with their mothers. As for Al Smith's building, that chivalric Catholic personality would have resigned rather than endorse infanticide.

In Orwellian "Newspeak," just as a concentration camp is called a "Joycamp," the killing of innocent unborn infants is sanctioned by a "Reproductive Health Act." This macabre euphemism declares that it is legal to destroy a fully formed baby seconds before birth and, should it survive a botched attempt to cut it up, attendants are allowed to let it die. The abortionist does not even need to be a medical doctor. Under certain conditions an ambiguously defined "authorized practitioner" might qualify.

The legislation was deferred over the years by politicians who, if not paragons of empathy, were appalled by its excess. It has only passed because the Democrats now control both houses of the New York state legislature. Politics aside, the governor teased a religious question. Not only did he mention that he once was an altar boy, but he concluded the signing celebration by praying for the legislators: "God bless you." It was an echo of the time that Barack Obama invoked God's blessings over a national gathering of Planned Parenthood. A popular singer, Charlie Daniels, was so taken aback by this that he tweeted: "The NY legislature has created a new Auschwitz dedicated to the execution of a whole segment of defenseless citizens. Satan is smiling." Theologians may differ as to whether the Prince of Darkness can laugh, but he certainly can smile as a way of showing that, in a Miltonian sense, evil is his good. Meanwhile, the bleak

visage of Governor Cuomo should be shielded from children allowed to live, for it resembles with each declining day a grotesque icon of the Giver of Life in reverse.

From his rambling rhetoric, untutored diction, and scant intellectual formation, we may assume that Governor Cuomo has escaped the brush of Lord Acton's aphorism that power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Cuomo's power may not be absolute, although it has now proven deadly, but even power that is not absolute enjoys a blithe courtship with vice. His official website now displays the cook with whom he shares a home in a relationship that would have exercised John the Baptist. This has barred him from Holy Communion as a disciplinary norm, if not a canonical penalty, and in recent times he has observed this. But, as a pre-eminent canon lawyer, Dr. Edward Peters, has indicated, Cuomo's communicant status is further impeded by Canon 915 because of his promotion of the "Reproductive Health Act." Dr. Peters says: "Penal jurisdiction in this matter rests with the bishop of Albany (as the place where some or all of the canonically criminal conduct was committed, per Canon 1412), and/or with the archbishop of New York (as the place where Cuomo apparently has canonical domicile, per Canon 1408)." Canonical discipline should not be caricatured as a "weapon" since it is properly punitive to promote justice and prevent scandal as well as medicinal to reform and safeguard the spiritual state of the offender.

These matters are beyond the ken or jurisdiction of a parish priest, but it is clear that it is not sufficient for churchmen blithely to suppose that an adequate response to the massacre of innocents by the inversion of reason merits nothing more than an expression of "profound sadness." The faithful are entitled to the expectation that their bishops will qualify as vertebrates in more than a purely anthropological sense. Our Lord did not chase the moneychangers out of his Father's House with a whimper of melancholy.

Although our Founding Fathers rejected an hereditary form of government, it roams like a ghost through various corridors of state. One is hard-pressed to convince people that Andrew Cuomo would be presiding in Albany had his father not formerly occupied his seat. Just as Andrew engages a reverie of his days as an altar boy, so Mario invoked his membership in the Legion of Mary. However, Mario rightly resented any imputation of a family connection to the Mafia. He is to be credited for his familial piety. This writer was a good friend of Mario Cuomo's predecessor, Governor Hugh Carey, and I can attest that Carey much regretted not having blocked an abortion bill during his tenure. But when Carey was out of office, and devoting himself to pro-life witness, he was hounded and threatened about this by his successor Mario in a way redolent of The Godfather.

Perhaps Andrew Cuomo is succumbing to the temptation that some of the senators of classical Rome detected as evidence of decadence: the apotheosis, or divinizing, of emperors in an Imperial Cult complimentary to the traditional deities. Ignoring the objections of more than 100,000 petitioners, Andrew named the Tappan Zee replacement bridge over the Hudson River in honor of his father. The Romans also developed the custom of *Damnatio Memoriae* which erased the memory of disfavored predecessors. This fate was dealt out to 26 of the emperors before Constantine. The Egyptians did something similar when they erased the memorials of the pharaohs Hatshepsut and

Akhenaten. In like fashion, Andrew Cuomo eliminated the name of former Governor Malcolm Wilson from the old bridge which was blown up last month.

In dark ages, there was a superstition that a bridge would only be safe if sacrificial victims, preferably children, were buried in its foundations. Peter Ackroyd mentions this in his history of London; it was more than a legend as a child's body was found in the foundation of the Bridge Gate at Bremen. It was a ritualized practice in Japan, called Hitobashira. If Andrew Cuomo persists in ignoring the petitions of the people of Rockland and Westchester counties, and keeps the name of his father for the duration of the construction, there will be enough sacrificed bodies to ensure the soundness of the Mario Cuomo Bridge and all of them innocents. Herod Antipas could not have been prouder of his father (who did not enjoy a good reputation in Bethlehem).

One theory is that some Church leaders have been reluctant to annoy Governor Andrew Cuomo in the midst of civil investigations of the Church, given the recriminatory personality of the man. But accommodation is a weak strategy. After the Munich agreement, Winston Churchill said, "And do not suppose that this is the end. This is only the beginning of the reckoning. This is only the first sip, the first foretaste of a bitter cup which will be proffered to us year by year unless by a supreme recovery of moral health and martial vigor, we arise again and take our stand for freedom as in the olden time." Corroborating that warning, just three days after his "Reproductive Health Act," on January 28, Andrew Cuomo "celebrated" the passage through the state senate of the "Child Victims Act" aimed at Catholic Institutions.

While contemplating the Crucified Christ, Doctors of the Church have seen his flesh as paper, his blood as ink, and the nails as pens. So the Word of God is blotted out by the words of the morally illiterate. After Governor Cuomo signed the "Health" act, he handed his pen—having driven the nail into Christ—to a grinning and grandmotherly woman whose ample lap could have held several children. Alas, she had none.

APPENDIX B

[Madeleine Kearns is a William F. Buckley Fellow in Political Journalism at the National Review Institute. This article was published in the April 22, 2019, print edition of National Review magazine. Copyright 2019 by National Review. Reprinted by permission.]

The Youngest Guinea Pigs

Madeleine Kearns

Last year Jeanette Jennings, as part of the reality-TV show *I Am Jazz*, threw her 17-year-old child, Jazz, a “farewell-to-penis party.” Guests cheered as the teenager hacked at a phallus-shaped cake with a knife, shouting, “Let’s cut it off.” The party may have been a bit contrived even by reality-show standards, but the subsequent operation was all too real.

In any other context, we might consider the drug-induced stunting of a child’s penis, followed by its surgical removal, to be mutilation. But in an era of culturally and legally enshrined transgenderism, it’s not just permissible; it’s entertainment.

In February, Representatives Jackie Speier (D., Calif.) and Angie Craig (D., Minn.) participated in the “Jazz and Friends National Day of Community and School Readings,” sponsored by the Human Rights Campaign (a well-funded gay and transgender lobby group) and the National Education Association (a teachers’ union). They read aloud celebratory and euphemistic stories of transgender children (such as Jazz, with the amputated penis) on the House floor. But the mainstreaming of youth transgenderism goes way beyond Congress. In schools nationwide, children as young as five are being taught that they may have been born in the wrong body.

Transgenderism is the theory that each person has an innate gender identity that is distinct from that person’s sex. Theories about gender identity were pioneered by sexologists and academics in the mid-20th century, and they remain widely contested and poorly understood. Despite this, they are being applied in a radical and experimental way to children worldwide. Parents and professionals agonize over the fear that young people will suffer physical and psychological harm from the application of transgender theory, but all too often they are cowed into submission.

Some American girls have had double mastectomies as young as 13. Planned Parenthood operates on an “informed consent” basis—meaning that young people are briefed on “both the risks and the benefits” of cross-sex hormones and do not require a letter of referral from a therapist. The organization’s website states: “If you are eligible, Planned Parenthood staff may be able to start hormone therapy as early as the first visit.” Meanwhile, in 2015 the National Institutes of Health (NIH) awarded a \$5.7 million taxpayer-funded grant for a five-year study on “the impact of early medical treatment in transgender youth.” According to a progress report, the minimum age for the cross-sex-hormones cohort was decreased from 13 to eight.

The claims of prominent clinicians justifying such interventions are baffling. Diane Ehrensaft, a developmental psychologist and founding member of the Child

and Adolescent Gender Center clinic in San Francisco, claimed that toddlers can send a pre-verbal “gender message” by tearing barrettes out of their hair and saying things such as “I. Boy.”

In a presentation at the United States Professional Association for Transgender Health’s 2017 conference, Johanna Olson-Kennedy, the medical director of the largest transgender-youth clinic in the U.S. (and one of the doctors leading the NIH study), explained how she had interacted with an eight-year-old girl brought in by her mother.

According to her own account, Olson-Kennedy asked the girl, “Do you think that you’re a girl or a boy?” The child looked confused and answered, “I’m a girl because I have this body.” Olson-Kennedy then made up an analogy about Pop-Tarts being put in the wrong box, which prompted the girl to turn to her mother and say, “I think I’m a boy and the girl is covering me up.” After audience laughter, Olson-Kennedy remarked that this was an “amazing experience.”

In medical literature this new approach is called by the euphemism “gender affirmation.” It has three stages: socio-psychological treatment, which involves using a name, pronouns, clothes, etc. appropriate for the opposite sex; endocrinological treatment, using puberty-blocking drugs and then cross-sex hormones; and surgical treatment, removing or manipulating the minor’s sex organs. The latter stages are irreversible and can lead to sterility and sexual dysfunction. But the earlier measures can be harmful, too, as they make it less likely that the child will grow to accept his or her body.

Discomfort with one’s sex and development is a normal part of adolescence. In 1980, the psychiatric profession recognized the small minority of young children for whom these feelings are intense and described what they suffered from as “gender-identity disorder.” This was a rare condition that generally manifested in early childhood. Researchers found that by the end of adolescence, around 80 percent of these cases resolved themselves naturally with therapies such as “watchful waiting” and counseling. Children were not treated with drugs or surgery.

In 2013, however, the American Psychiatric Association’s *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* replaced “gender-identity disorder” with the more neutral name “gender dysphoria.” Today it is far more commonly reported and mainly affects adolescents. Transgender activists argue that this new diagnosis proves their theory that a gender-dysphoric girl is *really* a boy, and that the correct treatment is not to change the patient’s thoughts but to change the patient’s body—and everyone else’s thoughts.

In the 1990s, researchers in the Netherlands developed a way for children with very acute gender dysphoria to delay puberty. Designed as a “pause button”—with the rationale that developing sex characteristics could cause distress—these “puberty-blocking” drugs were intended to be reversible. Yet now, under the “gender affirmation” model, almost all young patients proceed from puberty blockers to cross-sex hormones.

Inexplicably, activists appear to be influencing and even dictating medical guidelines. For instance, the American Academy of Pediatrics’ 2016 guidelines were written by Gabe Murchison, a transgender activist with no medical training. In the guidelines, Murchison advises intervening sooner rather than later and baselessly casts aspersions

on cautious approaches backed by decades of research proving positive outcomes:

The problem with “delayed transition” is that it limits transition based on a child’s age rather than considering important signs of readiness, particularly the child’s wishes and experiences. A *gender-affirmative* approach uses this broader range of factors, with particular attention to avoiding stigma and shame.

The AAP’s 2018 policy statement races miles ahead of the current evidence, according to specialists within the field. Yet the AAP seems to have ignored its critics. The Endocrine Society, the American Psychological Association, and the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) are also shaping new standards by entertaining endocrinological and surgical intervention for minors with gender dysphoria.

These changes appear to be a result of politicization, rather than solid evidence. Sheila Jeffreys, a feminist and the author of *Gender Hurts*, recently told NATIONAL REVIEW that “you need to look at who the funders [of WPATH] are. . . . It’s drug companies.” She added that “the situation with children is . . . very, very profitable for drug companies” because young patients can become dependent on these drugs for life.

Is there a middle ground between this approach and the earlier, more cautious treatment?

In the U.K., the National Health Service has a “gatekeeping” approach to transgender youth in which psychological evaluations are conducted and irreversible treatment is not recommended for under-16s. However, according to the *Sunday Times* of London, doctors at Britain’s national youth-gender clinic have complained that even this degree of protection for young people is proving “woefully inadequate.” Reportedly, doctors suggested that patients could be subjected to “long-term damage” because of the clinic’s “inability to stand up to the pressure” from “highly politicized” transgender-activist groups. The governor of this clinic recently resigned in protest at its “blinker” neglect of doctors’ concerns.

An Oxford University sociology professor, Michael Biggs, has accused the clinic of suppressing its own negative findings. Biggs conducted his own research, which found that after a year of treatment at the clinic, there was a “significant increase” in the number of girls who reported self-harming and attempting suicide to the clinic’s staff.

In any case, “gatekeeping” aside, some basic principles are worth considering. First, minors, unlike adults, are unable to give informed consent to experimental treatments to their healthy and fully functioning bodies. Second, minors with acute gender dysphoria ought to be given every opportunity to work through their distress through non-invasive, researched therapies—a method that is proven to help the majority of young patients *without* permanently altering their bodies. Third, clinicians ought to base all treatment on evidence, not ideology.

What evidence supports “gender affirmation”? In a letter to the editor published last fall in the *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism*, the Endocrine Society’s leading journal, a group of endocrinologists who specialize in gland and hormone disorders state that “there are no laboratory, imaging, or other objective tests to diagnose a ‘true transgender’ child.” Therefore, they ask, “how can a physician ethically administer GAT [gender-affirmation therapy] knowing that a significant number of patients will be irreversibly harmed?”

Answering this question is urgent because gender dysphoria among youth is increasing at an astonishing rate. In the U.K., where medicine is centralized and highly regulated, the National Health Service's only gender clinic for children and young people saw 2,519 referrals in the 2017–18 fiscal year. This is an increase of 400 percent in the past four years. In the U.K., girls seem to be disproportionately affected. For instance, Britain's national youth gender clinic has seen a 45-fold increase in females seeking medical help for gender issues in less than a decade. In 2009–10 there were 40 girls; in 2017–18, there were 1,806.

In the U.S., where medicine is less regulated, numbers are harder to come by, but we have an idea. Last summer *The Atlantic* reported that there are around 40 youth gender clinics in the United States. (Until 2007 there were none.) This does not account for hospitals and other practices offering treatment, so there may be considerably more. In 2017 the Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law estimated that 150,000 youths between the ages of 13 and 17 identify as transgender. In 2019, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimated that 2 percent of American high-school students, or around 300,000, identify as transgender. Estimates vary, but just about everyone agrees that the youth transgender population is increasing fast.

In the summer of 2018, a preliminary study in the United States by Lisa Littman, a researcher at Brown University, noticed a similar trend among teens experiencing what she described as “rapid onset gender dysphoria.” Littman suggested that “social and peer contagion” could be a factor in transgender self-identification. In response to pressure from activists, Brown removed the study from its website, explaining: “The conclusions of the study could be used to discredit efforts to support transgender youth.” *PLOS ONE*, the journal that published Littman's paper, also conducted a highly unusual post-publication review in response to pressure, republishing the paper with a “correction” that issued “additional context” but did not alter the paper's findings. Littman called for further research, but instead millions of dollars are pouring into studies designed to support transgender theory, including Olson-Kennedy's study for the NIH.

On both sides of the Atlantic, many professionals fear reputational destruction if they speak up. For instance, Kenneth Zucker, a global authority on childhood gender dysphoria with over 40 years' clinical and research experience, was fired by his clinic in Toronto based on libelous claims that the clinic made public after activists launched a smear campaign against him. Zucker—who, incidentally, is open to transition treatments in acute cases of gender dysphoria, though he maintains that congruence between a patient's gender identity and sex is the ideal outcome—has since been vindicated in a lawsuit.

Intimidation is a common activist tactic. In the United Kingdom, “transphobia” can constitute illegal “hate speech” that warrants police action. A mother of two was arrested and held in a cell for seven hours after she identified a trans woman as a man online. A 74-year-old woman was contacted by British police after she wrote: “Gender's fashionable nonsense. Sex is real.” And these are not isolated incidents.

Parents who are unimpressed by transgender theory, or who suspect there are other reasons for their child's gender dysphoria, may not have a choice in the matter. Earlier

this year the *Daily Mail* reported that a British teenage boy with autism had been taken into care because his parents refused to treat him as a girl. And I spoke to the father of Sofia (not her real name), a 15-year-old girl living in Spain. “Our daughter,” he told me,

declared she was a boy when an older boyfriend came on the scene. We found violent and misogynistic pornography on her phone. Later we found out that at least two of this boy’s ex-girlfriends had had double mastectomies. . . . He seemed obsessed with girls getting their breasts cut off [and] advertised on social media where girls could get their breasts removed in Spain. . . . He [the boyfriend] then reported us to the police, . . . but when Sofia threatened suicide, social workers were brought in to help reconcile our family. The social workers turned out to be transgender activists. Now Sofia has been taken into state custody, where she plans to undergo sex-change treatments.

If Sofia had been born a generation earlier, she might have benefited from therapy designed to explore the root issues of her discomfort (which would presumably have exposed the influence of this sadistic young man). But today, transgender activists have made it nearly impossible for parents to get proper help for their children. Therapies designed to reconcile a child with his or her sex are now illegal in more than 15 U.S. states, where they are considered a form of “conversion therapy” (the controversial practice of trying to change a gay person’s sexual orientation). Tried and tested treatments that are designed to reduce the feelings of distress associated with “gender dysphoria” cannot coexist with the dogmatic principle that “gender identity” is innate and immutable.

Under such a grave misapplication of the term “conversion therapy,” therapists may have no choice but to provide “gender affirmation,” which in many cases amounts to an *actual* conversion: the attempt to turn a female child into a male child or vice versa by mutilating his or her body.

A recent paper in the *American Journal of Bioethics* goes one step further, arguing that “transgender adolescents” should have “the legal right” to undergo medical treatments without parental approval. Last month a judge in Canada created exactly that right, overruling a father’s attempt to stop his 14-year-old daughter from being injected with testosterone. Similar cases have occurred in the United States.

The justification for taking parental rights away is that when children are deprived of gender affirmation, suicide is supposedly likely. Reports of attempted suicide and self-harm among transgender young people are indeed alarming. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that over a third of transgender high-school students reported attempting suicide last year. However, as with just about everything gender-related, the causes of suicidality are complex, and it is irresponsible to suggest otherwise.

Kenneth Zucker, the gender-dysphoria expert, told me: “On average, children and adolescents with gender dysphoria have a variety of behavioral and emotional problems or mental-health diagnoses. And that general vulnerability to psychopathology can also be a risk factor for suicidal feelings.” Zucker added that the suicidality rates of gender-dysphoric youth are not necessarily greater than those of children with non-gender-related mental-health problems.

The Samaritans, a suicide-prevention charity, have pointed out that “research has

consistently shown links between certain types of media coverage of suicide and increases in suicidal behavior among vulnerable people.” However, with transgenderism, the complexities of suicidality are simplified and politicized.

For example, in 2014 Joshua Alcorn (a.k.a. Leelah), a transgender 17-year-old, walked in front of oncoming traffic on a highway, leaving behind a suicide note to be published on Tumblr. Alcorn’s death sparked an activist outcry. But a formerly transgender teen said recently in an interview that appeared on the blog *4thWaveNow*:

[Alcorn’s] death affected me, along with many others, as it was sensationalized and widely held up as a warning to parents: “This is what happens when you don’t let your kid transition.” This mantra continues to be repeated online and everywhere, and perpetuates the idea that suicide is the “only way out” for kids whose parents will not accept their gender identity—this is a false statement that should under no circumstance be peddled to impressionable young people.

Indeed, parents of young people have told me stories that are eerily similar: Their child spent a lot of time online, wrote down a list of demands related to gender affirmation, texted or emailed it to them, and said that if they did not comply, the child would kill himself or herself. One father said his daughter had been googling “how to fake suicide.”

In 2014 *Time* magazine published a cover story titled “The Transgender Tipping Point: America’s next civil rights frontier.” In the U.S., this framing has been rhetorically effective to the point where, by hijacking the language and legacy of civil rights, two completely distinct causes have been lumped together and many fearful of being “on the wrong side of history” are deciding to keep their doubts to themselves.

In the U.K., where there is a lively debate around transgender-policy issues and accurate reporting from mainstream outlets, the civil-rights Trojan horse has been less effective. Feminists, gay-rights advocates, and transsexuals have been speaking out. Debbie Hayton, a trans woman (i.e., a natal male) who is a science teacher, told me that “gender identity” is meaningless and that sex—not gender—ought to be the basis of law. Hayton believes that transgender extremism is counterproductive and will harm the relationship of trust and mutual respect between trans people and wider society.

According to a 2017 Pew Research poll, 54 percent of Americans believe that whether someone is male or female depends on his or her birth sex (and 44 percent do not). But the reluctance of Americans to stand up for this belief—and the silence of the American mainstream media—has allowed congressional lobbyists to promote a radical gender-identity policy agenda virtually unchallenged.

Earlier this year, after relentless lobbying by the Human Rights Campaign, the Equality Act was introduced in the House and Senate. It has the support of hundreds of Democrats and a handful of Republicans. Framed as an extension of anti-discrimination protections, the act, if passed, would require all federally funded entities to interpret “sex” to include “gender identity.” In other words, they would have to recognize—for the purpose of public spaces, accommodation, sports, etc.—a transgender woman (a biological male) as a female, and a transgender man as a male.

Kara Dansky of the Women’s Liberation Front, a self-described “radical feminist”

organization, wishes both the Left and the Right would wake up to what this will mean for sex-based rights and protections. “This issue affects *everyone*,” Dansky told NATIONAL REVIEW. Indeed, forced transgender acceptance is one of the rare issues that can bring together partisans from both ends of the political spectrum.

After a bipartisan event at the Heritage Foundation in January 2019—“The Inequality of the Equality Act: Concerns from the Left”—hosted by social conservatives and delivered by a panel of radical feminists, Andrew Sullivan suggested in *New York* magazine that cooperation between two camps that have long been sworn enemies “might be a sign of the end-times.” Sullivan is correct that opposition to transgender orthodoxy unites some gay-rights advocates (who seek to legitimize same-sex attraction), women’s-rights campaigners (who seek sex-based protections and rights), social conservatives (who oppose dangerous cultural revolutions, sexual or otherwise), and clinicians and medical researchers (who care about the integrity of their field). But, politics aside, the greatest victims in all this are the children.

Hair-raising stories from parents were read aloud by the panel. The event was organized by a “lifelong Democrat” and “progressive mom” whose autistic 13-year-old started thinking she was a boy after a school presentation, whereupon a “gender therapist” recommended a breast binder and drugs without any evaluation. One story from the event particularly stood out:

At age sixteen, my daughter ran away and reported to the Department of Child Services that she felt unsafe living with me because I refused to refer to her using male pronouns or her chosen male name. Although the Department investigated and found she was well cared for, they forced me to meet with a trans-identified person to “educate” me on these issues. Soon after, without my knowledge, a pediatric endocrinologist taught my daughter—a minor—to inject herself with testosterone. My daughter then ran away to Oregon, where state law allowed her—at the age of seventeen, without my knowledge or consent—to change her name and legal gender in court, and to undergo a double mastectomy and a radical hysterectomy.

My once beautiful daughter is now nineteen years old, homeless, bearded, in extreme poverty, sterilized, not receiving mental health services, extremely mentally ill, and planning a radial forearm phalloplasty [a surgical procedure that removes part of her arm to construct a fake penis].

What will future generations make of all this? I recently interviewed three formerly transgender teens of the Pique Resilience project for NationalReview.com. One by one, they told me how they’d been drawn into the transgender fad after spending huge amounts of time online. They were drawn in because it seemed like “the *in* thing to do,” and because—when struggling with anxiety, depression, exclusion, bullying, and their sexualities—“every problem that I had I just felt that it was automatically answered, explained by this trans thing. And not only was it explained but it also offered me a solution.”

Now these young women are infinitely grateful that their parents put the brakes on gender affirmation. Though one of them went on to have cross-sex hormones as an 18-year-old, she now regrets this decision and thinks “it’s messed up” that young people like her with “glaringly obvious” underlying reasons for not liking their bodies are

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being harmed. Luckily, these young women saw the light before it was too late. The heartbreaking part is that there are many thousands more for whom there will be no going back.



"He'll have abandonment issues."

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In a Ted Talk a decade ago, Sir Kenneth Robinson famously said, “Our bodies are merely transport systems to bring our heads from one meeting to another.” But that was before Apple introduced the smart-phone. Today, we live far less in our heads, which at least back then were our own. Today each of us inhabits a consciousness managed by predictive algorithms that identify patterns in our searches and anticipate our future choices. With every search we make, our profiles become deeper, and, through constant improvements in computing, this data can be more subtly interpreted and deployed. We are thus progressively relieved of the burden of thinking, which in turn weakens our ability to think at all.

—Joe Bissonnette, “The Religion of Progress”