THE HUMAN LIFE REVIEW

VOLUME XLVII No. 1 ◆ WINTER 2021

◆FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE◆

Politics in the Time of Covid: Two Views

Nicholas Frankovich and George McKenna

William Murchison on
HOW TO ASSESS THE 2020 ELECTION

Maureen Mullarkey on
JOHN LEO: PRINCIPLE AND PRESCIENCE

Wesley J. Smith on
DEFEATING TECHNOCRACY IS CRUCIAL TO LIFE

David Quinn on
IS EUTHANASIA NEXT FOR IRELAND?

Mary Kenny on
RECLAIMING FEMINISM'S CHRISTIAN ROOTS

Ellen Wilson Fielding on
ON-SCREEN CHARACTERS/OFF-SCREEN LIFE

◆ALSO IN THIS ISSUE◆

Booknotes: John Grondelski reviews *Broken Bonds: Surrogate Mothers Speak Out*
Maria Maffucci reviews *What It Means to Be Human: The Case for the Body in Public Bioethics*

From the HLR Website: Maria Maffucci ◆ W. Ross Blackburn ◆ Joe Bissonnette ◆ Diane Moriarty

Appendices: Stephen Vincent • Stacy Trasancos • David Mills • Madeleine Kearns
Matthew Hennessey • Cardinal Timothy Dolan

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. . . Our fervent New Year's hopes for better days ahead came crashing down just six days later, as we watched with horror the violent scenes unfolding in Washington DC. As senior editor William Murchison puts it in the Coda to "How to Assess the 2020 Election" (a prophetic article about mixing politics and religion, p.5): "One can hardly get already aching arms around the whole crazy mess." January 6 would also have been the 60th birthday of my late my brother Robert Arthur McFadden, who died from cancer at the tender age of 34. On page 64, I share my thoughts about this year's Epiphany day and what Robert might have made of it all.

In another bit of unprecedented news, this year's March for Life was almost completely virtual—50 pro-life leaders representing millions of pro-life Americans processed solemnly to the now fenced-in Supreme Court. We commend the March for Life Education and Defense Fund for meeting the challenges of the times and putting together an impressive virtual event, and especially for honoring Supreme Knight Carl A. Anderson of the Knights of Columbus with the Pro-Life Legacy Award at the Virtual Rose Dinner Gala (see p. 96).

Winter has already brought the loss of two great defenders of life (see pp. 73-74). Joseph Scheidler died on January 18 at 93; the "godfather of the pro-life movement" is described by Stephen Vincent as the "Supreme Victor" in the three-decade-long court case *NOW* v. *Scheidler* (from our archives. p. 75). John Patrick Mackey, who died January 1 at 73, was an early champion of the unborn in Washington DC, serving as Special Counsel for the Ad Hoc Committee in Defense of Life, a lobbying organization created in 1974 by the *Review*'s founding editor J. P. McFadden.

John Grondelski reviews *Broken Bonds: Surrogate Mothers Speak Out*, edited by Jennifer Lahl and Melinda Tankard Reist (both of whom are *Review* contributors) and Renate Klein on p. 57. Tankard Reist is co-founder and Campaign Director of the grassroots movement Collective Shout, which advocates against the objectification of women and the sexualization of girls (www.collectiveshout.org).

Our thanks start with The National Association of Scholars for permission to reprint Maureen Mullarkey's article "John Leo: Principle and Prescience," which first appeared in *Academic Questions*. For our appendices we thank, in order: the *National Catholic Register* for "How Aborted Children Are Used in Medical Research in 2020" by Stacy Transacos;"; David Mills and *The Stream* for "How Abortion Disappears Children: A Lesson from Argentina"; *National Review* for "Where the Disabled Have a Right to Be Born" by Madeleine Kearns; *First Things* for Matthew Hennessey's "Magdalena"; and finally, His Eminence Timothy Cardinal Dolan for his permission to reprint "Why We Catholics Are So 'Hung Up' on Abortion." And we thank, as always, cartoonist Nick Downes for his needed reminders to chuckle now and then.

I close here with words from Cardinal Dolan that pinpoint both our challenges going forward and the moral incoherency on life issues of President Joseph Biden's administration:

"How can we sustain a culture that recoils at violence, exclusion, suicide, racism, injustice, and callousness toward those in need, if we applaud, allow, pay for, and promote the destruction of the most helpless, the baby in the womb?"

Maria McFadden Maffucci
Editor in Chief

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Introduction 2
Anne Conlon
How to Assess the 2020 Election
William Murchison 5
What We Owe the Unborn and the Infirm Elderly
Nicholas Frankovich. 11
On Physical and Moral Plagues
George McKenna 18
John Leo: Principle and Prescience
Maureen Mullarkey 25
Defeating Technocracy Is Crucial to Life
Wesley J. Smith 30
Is Euthanasia Next for Ireland?
David Quinn 39
Reclaiming Feminism's Christian Roots
Mary Kenny 46
On-screen Characters/Off-screen Life
Ellen Wilson Fielding. 50
Booknotes 57
John Grondelski
Maria McFadden Maffucci
From the HLR Website 64
Maria McFadden Maffucci
W. Ross Blackburn
Joe Bissonnette
Diane Moriarty
Appendices 75
Stephen Vincent
Stacy Trasancos
David Mills
Madeleine Kearns
Matthew Hennessey
Timothy Cardinal Dolan

INTRODUCTION

Recently while listening to a Jordan Peterson podcast I heard the bestselling author say this: "Those who formulate the best arguments win. They win everything." Well then, I thought, why haven't *we* won? Why hasn't the movement for life turned back the movement for death? This journal's archive bulges with best arguments—some formulated by our senior editor William Murchison, who recently retired his syndicated column after fifty years of newspapering. In "How to Assess the 2020 Election," Murchison, like me, asks why *Roe* v. *Wade* remains "legally, constitutionally, in place after nearly a half century." His answer? "Hearts and minds have been changed. Just not enough of them." And the way to change enough of them, he insists, isn't through elections. "What the society at large *believes*, and believes *strongly* is what the political class will attend to. Can't be otherwise in a democracy." What "made possible *Roe* v. *Wade*," Murchison argues, "was the withdrawal of hearts and minds from affection for and attachment to the principle of life. It wasn't the politics," which at the time, he recalls, "was light and loose." There was resistance to the "chance" the Supremes took with *Roe*, to be sure, "just not enough to procure an overturn at the political-judicial level." And there still isn't.

Politics—specifically, in the time of Covid—is of keen interest to *National Review* editor Nicholas Frankovich, who penned the following essay, and to George McKenna, professor emeritus of political science at City College of New York, whom we asked to comment on it. "Overnight," Frankovich writes in "Our Freedom, Their Life: What We Owe the Unborn and the Infirm Elderly," the "public-health crisis was politicized." Donald Trump could have used "the presidential bully pulpit to declare a public-health equivalent of war," he says, but "efforts to reduce the spread of the virus would depress the economy and thereby harm Trump's reelection campaign." To which McKenna replies: "That's no doubt true, but was that the only conceivable motive Trump could have had? What about guarding the country against excessive and unnecessary regulations that damage the economy and make people's lives miserable? . . . In a democracy, politicians are supposed to pay some attention to public opinion."

But Frankovich doesn't have Trump in his sights so much as the Trump-supporting pro-life movement: "In their single-minded commitment to the tactical imperative of reelecting a man they trusted to deliver anti-abortion policies and judges," he contends, prolifers were "cornered into affirming an economic assumption underpinning a longstanding pragmatic argument for abortion"— that is, they "emphasized the common sense that life, though precious, wasn't priceless." By backing "a president who discounted the severity" of a lethal virus killing thousands of nursing-home residents, pro-life leaders and voters "adopted the perspective from which many people sensitive to the plight of women with unwanted pregnancies in difficult circumstances defend abortion rights." Frankovich "has written a very thoughtful [and] provocative" essay, McKenna observes at the outset of "Of Physical and Moral Plagues," one that "deserves a respectful response." Which is exactly what he gives it.

The much-admired journalist John Leo has been watching over American democracy for as long as William Murchison. In her beautifully rendered appreciation "John Leo: Principle and Prescience" (inspired by Leo's retirement last year as editor-in-chief of *Minding the Campus* and originally published by *Academic Questions*), Maureen Mullarkey, painter, critic, and senior contributor to The Federalist, considers the man whose "writing was at the center of much that had stamped my wits and my interests over decades." Turning to her "much-thumbed hard-cover edition of *Two Steps Ahead of the Thought Police*," a collection of Leo's work that "has kept me company since it appeared in 1994," she proceeds to show how, "out of the starting gate," the former *U.S. News and World Report* columnist "took aim at bureaucratic tyranny, those totalitarian impulses that seep like salt into our institutions and our lives." (Several of Leo's columns were reprinted in these pages over the years.) "It unnerves me to realize," she goes on, "the degree to which his cautions are still needed."

Bureaucratic tyranny and totalitarian impulses are on Wesley J. Smith's mind here as well. In "Defeating Technocracy Is Crucial to Life," our longtime contributor warns of an increasingly empowered "expert" class that seeks to "impose substantial control over most important aspects of life" and exert "ironclad enforcement of cultural orthodoxies and policies, not only in law, but voluntarily via powerful segments of the private sector." (Like Mullarkey, Smith wrote well before the Amazon/Google/Twitter brigade answered the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol with a coordinated counterattack on Parler and other conservative social-media platforms.) From the World Economic Forum's "Great Reset Initiative," which aims to combat climate change by "transforming" every industry on the planet, to Dr. Anthony Fauci's "stunningly hubristic" plan to combat dangerous infectious disease by, in his words, "rebuilding the infrastructures of human existence," radical reformers, says Smith, envision "nothing less than an international technocratic authoritarian supra-governing system—with the power to direct how we interact with each other as family, friends, and in community."

Ireland was late to join the Euro-American consensus, but as David Quinn observes, his country "helped to set down a new template for how a more liberal abortion regime should be greeted." When exterminating the unborn became legal in 2018, "ecstatic" crowds, "gathered in the courtyard of Dublin Castle, . . . shouted and roared and literally wept with delight." For these merrymakers, "it was a simple matter of good triumphing over evil." Quinn, founding director of Dublin's Iona Institute, reports in "Is Euthanasia Next for Ireland?" that the same argument used to sell abortion to the Irish people—everyone should have "the right to choose to do whatever you want with your own body"—is now being used to push legislative action on assisted suicide. But, he observes, "the topic has not made it to the top of the news bulletins or the front pages of the newspaper in the way it deserves . . . Instead, it is almost as though the media have ordained that the less attention they give it, the less likely there is to be much opposition."

Mary Kenny, *Catholic Herald* columnist and author of *Goodbye to Catholic Ireland*, follows Quinn's report on present-day politicking with an article inspired by "the retrospective glance," which, she says, "is one of the blessings of the senior years." In "Reclaiming Feminism's Christian Roots," Kenny recounts how she "first became a feminist as a rebellious young woman at an Irish Catholic convent school . . . back in

the 1950s, just edging into the early 1960s." And while she and her adolescent mates thought the nuns "very old-fashioned," and in need of "updating," she now sees them as part of a long line of religious sisters who established "the first staging post" of women's emancipation by "pioneering" women's education, and so "practiced a form of feminism by example." Historically nuns were "free to study and to research in a way that wasn't often available to lay women," Kenny reminds us, and in reality, were "following in a tradition of what we would now call women's empowerment."

How to describe our final essay? In "On-screen Characters/Off-screen Life," senior editor Ellen Wilson Fielding finds herself "pondering the destinies of . . . sitcom characters being streamed into my household by members of my family during this Covid-19 year of limited entertainment options." She focuses on the cast of *Friends*, whose "pleasantly pacifying format" showcases recent generations' "replacement of the hierarchical family [with] peers as primary supports and guides." But "what would happen," she wonders, if one of these "winsome" figures—their choices and behavior so predictable in sitcom-land—"had a true epiphany . . . a life-changing illumination like, 'Why am I sleeping with everyone I date?'" Alas, we won't find out. Because sitcom writers and producers, even and maybe especially those who believe their product is "edgy," are "chiefly collaborating in an echo chamber of accepted opinion," the one that exists "on our side of the screen." In her inimitable way, Fielding invites us to ponder an ordinary pastime—and discover, along with her, extraordinary meaning there.

* * * * *

In this edition of Booknotes John Grondelski reviews *Broken Bonds: Surrogate Mothers Speak Out*, the first-hand "accounts of sixteen women from nine countries [whose] stories show the multifaceted invidious face of gestational surrogacy." Maria Maffucci pronounces O. Carter Snead's *What It Means to Be Human: The Case for the Body in Public Bioethics* "an engaging dive into the history and philosophical undergirding of . . . America's contemporary bioethics," which is "consistently putting vulnerable human lives in peril." Our editor in chief also heads up From the Website with a remembrance of her brother Robert McFadden: a passionate defender of vulnerable lives who died young but wise, as you will see in passages she quotes from his work. Other contributors here are Rev. W. Ross Blackburn, Joe Bissonnette, and Diane Moriarty, whose excellent work continues to enhance the *Review*'s online presence. Finally, we're pleased to have room for a full complement of appendices—articles and columns we think it important to share. "Scheidler's Supreme Victory," reprinted from our own archive, recalls a late pro-life hero's signature fight for justice. Following that is an eye-opening report on "How Aborted Children Are Used in Medical Research." Then "A Lesson from Argentina: How Abortion Disappears Children," followed by a look at Poland, "Where the Disabled Have a Right to Be Born." People, for instance, like "Magdalena," a young girl who has Down syndrome. And ending this section is a bracing answer to the question, "Why We Catholics Are So 'Hung Up' on Abortion." An answer, actually, as to why *all* prolifers are hung up on abortion.

Anne Conlon
Editor

How to Assess the 2020 Election

William Murchison

I'm just coming off a long Andrew Sullivan blog post, and I beg my gentle readers not to think less of me for poking into the thought processes of a writer who is not, by general definition—or for that matter his own—the hottest new pledge bro for Knights of Columbus.

I don't want, for present purposes, to get into theological details here, and, indeed, don't have to, belonging as I do to that very mixed theological bag known as The Episcopal Church, once widely celebrated for its gray grandeur. Our remaining Gothic wonderlands not only encourage more spiritual nourishment than many outsiders might suppose; they afford ready access, as well, to the thinking of brothers and sisters who bunk way out there in left field. We right-fielders say, *that's* how they think?! Eavesdropping on their discourse can be, let's just say, eye-opening.

Enough of that. While framing this commentary on how pro-life folk might go about assessing the late elections, I read Mr. Sullivan's musings on the phenomenon of hard-core—I mean harrrrrrrddd-core—social Christian convictions among the evangelical bloc of voters. I said, wait a minute. This has implications that go beyond who won what congressional seat last November. I am more and more interested at my present stage of life in how people think and believe than in how they vote: occasionally in contradiction of what they purport to think and believe.

Mr. Sullivan, on the occasion I mention, was following up on an earlier post having to do with the aborning belief in evangelical land that Donald Trump is God's anointed choice to restore the kingdom here in America. I know, I know. Bear with me, nevertheless.

"In a manner very hard to understand from the outside," Sullivan writes, "American evangelical Christianity has both deepened its fusion of church and state in the last few years, and incorporated Donald Trump into its sacred schematic. Christianists [his term for political Christians] now believe that Trump has been selected by God to save them from persecution and the republic from collapse." You might well recall, in this context, Walker Percy's depiction of the Knothead Party in that great dystopic fantasy *Love in the Ruins*: a rich, raucous projection of American life into a very near future.

There's no special point in hashing over the strategies that fascinate Sullivan's

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William Murchison, a former syndicated columnist, is a senior editor of the *Human Life Review.* He will soon finish his book on moral restoration in our time.

subjects. Mainly what they wanted was somehow to ward off Joe Biden's inauguration as president. Writing in December, I am loath to lay much money on their prospects.

I am almost equally loath to mock such people, the general run of whom I'm on good terms with—up to an obvious point. In their response to the election, nevertheless, I read the curse of political enthusiasm. If you think it's time I came to the point, that's the point.

I wish that our political enthusiasts—of whom probably as many dwell on the left as on the right—would get a good grip. We're not getting anywhere this way. I'm a great deal more interested, if I may repeat myself, in what Americans think and believe than in how they vote.

That's not downplaying the significant electoral gains pro-life candidates racked up in 2020—doubling the number of pro-life women in Congress while knocking off eight "pro-choice"—to employ their own self-description—Democrats. This has to come as excellent news. The fewer pro-choice candidates in circulation, the better.

There are offsetting considerations, nevertheless. The first is that which we have already noticed—the entanglement of the pro-life movement with Donald J. Trump, a defeated, emotionally shaky candidate making things worse for himself through incessantly repeated declarations that he won the election that in fact he lost. I do not see the Trump entanglement, shall we say, clarifying for general consumption the premise that unborn life deserves protection.

The second consideration offsetting, it seems to me, the congressional gains of last fall is the coming to power of an avowedly pro-choice administration: the result of voter decision. "By all indications," says the sagacious Marjorie Dannenfelser, head of the pro-life Susan B. Anthony List, "[Joseph] Biden and Kamala Harris have not changed their plans to lead from the extreme left on issues like abortion . . ."

No, I think on abortion at all events, she's right. Just wait until Xavier Becerra gets started, should he be confirmed as secretary of Health and Human Services! It won't be pretty.

Politics, politics! After half a century of experience of writing about this grubby pastime, I have concluded politics gets you just so far. Then it dumps you in the street with only four bits for cab fare. You wonder how you got there. And you should, because we're up to our necks in politics; we're drowning in it. I want to talk a little bit here about why morally and theologically religious Americans should head for shore, preserving their political swimwear—because after all we can't, and shouldn't try, to ignore government.

Political obsession—a thing different from legitimate concern over political attempts to downgrade general respect for life at all stages—is the folly we need to resist, the game we need to refuse. The way is hard and long-term: so different

from the achievement of a Supreme Court appointment we hope—*hope*—will result in greater judicial amity wherever these questions arise.

It might. But that's not enough. Not nearly enough, I submit, out of concern for a number of things, among them the realities of life.

This is where we came in (as movie-goers used to say, before slipping out of the theater). A lot of Americans are currently distraught and distracted on account of not getting their way politically back in November 2020 in an election virtually all saw as critical. Nor were the state and federal courts amenable to pleas for adjustment of the losers' outrage. (Remember I'm writing in December.)

Election apoplexy is the outcome ever to be expected when the whole smoking, steaming mess known as life can be viewed as depending on the vote count. When the count goes against you, a state of personal collapse sometimes ensues. Oh, my Lord! So now "they're" in charge! Pass the sour mash.

You see, in a society nervous over and obsessed with politics, the votes, and the way they fall, determine everything. That means Democrats now in charge: progressive, to whatever extent, Democrats. This would seem to argue for questioning whether what happened really happened. In other words, wasn't there some fraud, some robbery going on, as Trump certainly asserted? Had to be! The federal courts proved not to agree, but that datum only reminded many that we're surely there because of the courts and the great makeover of abortion law they effected in 1973 and because of how, in consequence, politics swallowed up the judicial system.

At that, the projected civil war didn't break out—the war some were forecasting on the heels of Trump's clamor over potentially throwing out the election returns. I don't know how many Americans truly thought the ouster of the president, pursuant to generally accepted vote counts, would lead to a civil war. However, no governmental handover at such a point as this one can be considered a mere ceremonial occasion, with firecrackers and lemonade,

Most of us began hearing, in the election aftermath, not-quite-explicit calls for a division of the house: red states splitting the sheets with blue ones. I heard and read a number of times the word "secession." Ummm-hmmm: as if the unpleasantness of 1861-65 had never taken place and the world's most powerful armed forces were observed as indulging in a long siesta.

So. What now, with respect to a large number of the questions we seem to think—without evidence—are central to any national future we hope for? A civil war we're not going to have. Nor secession. It seems to me the priority is, first of all, to speak, not just of guidelines for the big national handover of political authority but, rather, of how we imagine ourselves as a nation and people.

That may sound facile. I do not think so. Often on life's journeys, moments occur for saying, whoa, where's this road taking me, and what's up ahead? We are at just such a national moment, it seems to me.

Major stuff is going on in our country. Our freedoms, and our long-term moral integrity, are at stake. The people Sullivan has his eye on—who are not yet, of course, a dispositive majority and likely will never become such—have counterparts on the political left: Black Lives Matter; the National Abortion Rights League, known as NARAL; for that matter, the united force of the universities, to say nothing of the mainstream media. The conversational topic in which all indulge freely is power—force; compelling others in some manner to acquiesce, sullenly or quietly, with their programs and objectives. Thus the quest for power. Power means you win and, just as important, your competitors lose.

The quest for power is at the center of politics and elections. If one party wins, the instruments of power will be at its disposal. And just watch then! Pow! Wham! Things are going to be different—or such is the mythology, as shared by true believers across the political spectrum.

To many with whom we are familiar, and not just from reading Andrew Sullivan's blog, the political survival of Donald Trump some time ago became related to the survival of America. It was to these—no doubt, to some, still is—an "existential" question: reflecting the way the word is often bent these days, in a non-Kierkegaardian sense, to convey alarm as to basic survival. Donald Trump as savior was always a curious concept, given the president's personality and habits, but it partly, I think, reflected alarm at the opposite prospect; in other words, an Elizabeth Warren or a Bernie Sanders presidency; even one with Genial Joe ("C'mon, man") Biden in charge of the federal apparatus. (Biden's decision, whether personal or forced, to name the pro-abortion, pro-left-everything Becerra as secretary of Health and Human Services gives point to concerns about Biden's amiability as to throwing his Catholicism over the side, like a plastic water bottle.)

Presidential appointments do matter—especially when it comes to federal judges. Trump excelled at appointments favorable to the pro-life cause. Imagine Biden saying to Amy Coney Barrett, "How would you like a Supreme Court seat?" Gratitude for good appointments, nevertheless, becomes an existential question only in moments when political capital is everything, and the power of the executive order exceeds the power of the reasoned explication of how human life itself derives from the sovereign grace of its creator, known customarily as God.

The tenuous religiosity of our times strikes me as altogether a larger problem for the pro-life cause than the activity and energy of, say, the Democratic Party. That tenuous religiosity can be seen, I imagine, in the eyes of those whom Andrew Sullivan sees as "Christianists," wedded to understanding the Republican Party, and in particular the Republican president America declined to reelect in 2020, as basic to hopes for the future. No Trump, no—what? No pro-life secretary of Health and Human Services? No protection for the Hyde Amendment? Perhaps. That is still not the same thing as saying political engagement, followed by political victory, is rightly the No. 1 Christian priority. It seems to me there

is a great deal more to this question than the uses of the democratic franchise.

The problem with turning over life questions to political people is, among other things, the complexity of the political game. A game it is, with many competing aims in view. A "pure" political decision, untainted by trade-offs and log-rolling and wimpy compromises, is not of this world—the political world, I mean. Not even where the dictator reigns supreme can it be assumed that "purity" of intentions and means survives human wresting for advantage.

Christian author-blogger Rod Dreher, eying the same political phenomena as Andrew Sullivan, cogently observed (in a post titled "Donald Trump is not the Messiah") that he, Dreher, was not "telling people to be politically passive. But it's frustrating to see people giving themselves over to political passions and would-be solutions that don't actually have a lot to do with what most threatens the church and the moral condition of our country."

The moral condition of our country. That would be the consideration most explanatory of the bafflement of hopes for recovery of respect for human life. Not the lack of Republican majorities in both houses of Congress. Not even the lack until recently of Supreme Court justices in sufficient number to do something, of some kind, about *Roe* v. *Wade.*

It is worth noticing that *R.* v. *W*. remains, legally, constitutionally, in place after nearly a half century. Why would that be? What is lacking? Certainly not the tireless efforts of good hearts and good minds (such as those that have long guided that estimable journal the *Human Life Review*). Splendid things have been accomplished by the pro-life movement—through its diligence and persistence, through the radiance of its love for lives formed by God Himself. Through its witness, hearts and minds have been changed.

And . . . wait! There it is! Hearts and minds have been changed. Just not enough of them. Not yet. Maybe in a few years, who knows? The end of the political quest in pro-life affairs will come when so many of us agree in heart and mind that life is a wonderful thing: to be fostered and encouraged rather than violently extracted and disposed of. There will be no need for politics when the voters instruct their representatives that their obviously superb talents are required in some line other than the placation of Planned Parenthood. The thing wanted is getting the voters to the belief, or acceptance of the belief, that, in pro-life matters and all aspects of what we pleasantly call cultural conservatism, life matters more than any competing consideration.

What the society at large *believes*, and believes *strongly,* is what the political class will attend to. Can't be otherwise in a democracy. A pro-life electorate may take for granted the overthrow of *Roe* v. *Wade*. But we don't have such an electorate, which leaves pro-life forces nibbling around the edges of success: seizing, and settling for, what's possible.

If reversal of that condition sounds easy, I apologize. The factor that made

possible *Roe* v. *Wade* was the withdrawal of hearts and minds from affection for and attachment to the principle of life. It wasn't the politics. The politics of abortion back then was light and loose. The High Court took a chance. Voila! Many critics and opponents resisted: just not enough to procure an overturn at the political-judicial level. There still aren't enough opponents. That is my somber view and, I would bet, yours also.

What's possible in a secularizing society like our own isn't the same as what was possible back when social-religious consensus, if nevertheless imperfect, made possible the passage of strong laws encouraging—I like to put it in the positive, not the negative, nay-saying vein—the protection of life. Contemporary Christianity, sapped by that same self-regarding secularism whose life force is the desire for inner self-determination, lacks the vim and vigor to enforce societal regard for unborn life. We take what protections the politicians can be persuaded to deliver or, alternatively, to leave in place out of, half the time, a visceral fear of losing jobs and pensions.

This is not a happy ending to the story, but I would plead that it is not necessarily the only possible ending. A civil war would settle even less than blocking the inauguration of Joe Biden would have settled. What is wanted, in the most generous, spatial sense, is a philosophical, moral, and, above all, religious reformation—against all the odds, against shouts of derision by the intellectuals, against the frothing of the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* and MSNBC. Such a reformation—literally, a re-forming of that which has been deformed and unformed—would settle much, if not, mathematically, everything.

And that would come about, and be pursued . . . how? I am writing in Advent. I hear around me stirrings for which no human can truly account; persistent stirrings of an origin hard to pin down, however familiar they may be. You can never know, surely, what's to come when heartfelt pleas reach the place where heartfelt pleas are reliably reported always to be welcome, not to mention encouraged.

CODA

And after all this, as if any more were needed, came January 6—Epiphany; a day of non-theological manifestations covering some of what I said above: the U.S. Capitol overwhelmed by hard-core believers in the myth of the Stolen Election, egged on at a nearby rally by the fake "Messiah" himself: Who now seems set, despite notable achievements in office, to become a historical study in turpitude. One can hardly get already aching arms around the whole crazy mess. With just this exception, a gift from Holy Writ: "O put not your trust in princes, nor in any child of man; for there is no help in them . . . Blessed is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, and whose hope is in the LORD his God . . ." (Ps. 146: 2, 4).

Our Freedom, Their Life:

What We Owe the Unborn and the Infirm Elderly

Nicholas Frankovich

"My body, my choice," reads the sign. A cardboard rectangle, taller than it is wide, it looks handmade. At its base, the line "Trump 2020" stands in counterpoint, red and blue letters against a white background. You stop short, but maybe not. You've seen the rhetorical device before: Two ideas that seem to contradict each other are juxtaposed to imply agreement, inviting you the reader to supply the logical connection and thereby participate in the discovery of a further, third idea, the *synthesis*, which is now the product of your mental labor—light labor, granted, but yours—and therefore harder for you to let go of and wave aside. In this case, the challenge is to reconcile an abortion-rights motto (*thesis*) with an endorsement of Donald Trump (*antithesis*), a politician whom the leadership as well as the rank and file of the antiabortion movement, on the whole, embraces with verve. Pro-choice and pro-Trump: Riddle me that.

The paradox might have any number of possible solutions. The one that's correct for the purposes of the sign is laid out in the middle of it. There a standard-issue, powder-blue surgical face mask is sketched inside the international hieroglyph for "No," a red circle with a slash running through it. You can find the photo online at Getty Images. In the caption, the young woman holding the sign is identified as a protester at the Texas state capitol in April 2020, shortly after city and county officials in Austin issued orders requiring that people wear face masks in public. An American flag waves from a stick that she holds in the same hand.

Wearing a baseball cap backwards, dark glasses, a thin nose ring, and a patterned neckerchief, she has a look, casual but well put together, that I'll call "metropolitan," for lack of a better word. In her posture, you see poise; in her facial expression, quiet intelligence. She could be a model for a certain positive stereotype of that other, more familiar kind of pro-choice activist, the one dedicated to preserving the legality and accessibility of abortion in the United States.

The photo is a masterpiece of ambiguity. We can't be sure which of two possible ironies the protester represents. Is it that of someone who supports abortion rights but also Trump? Does she tolerate the contradiction because, in her zeal for personal freedom in general, she rejects Austin's face-mask mandate and finds a champion in Trump, who promotes a hands-off, laissez-faire government

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response to the pandemic?

Or is the irony that of someone who leans right and appropriates the other side's language to promote her (as she sees it) libertarian cause? From the sum of her message, pro-Trump and anti-face-mask, I would guess that she's a red-state partisan after all. The wording on her slab of white cardboard and the whole design of it appear to be copied from products—posters, T-shirts, and face masks (which take on the added meaning of "I'm wearing this but under protest")—that are sold online, and I assume that the market for them is a segment of the pro-Trump right.

As an argument against face-mask mandates, "My body, my choice" collapses, for the same reason that it collapses as an argument to justify abortion. The body of the person asserting freedom of choice is not the only body in question. I may prefer to be free from the inconvenience or encumbrance of covering my face and think that I have a natural right not to adopt the practice. I may decide that the freedom to expose my mouth and nostrils to direct contact with the air outweighs the risk that I would get the virus and fall ill, but of course the reason to wear a mask is to protect not only oneself. It's to protect others as well, or others even foremost, by taking care not to become a vector, someone who spreads the virus. The older a person is, the more likely the virus is to kill him if he catches it. One could argue that the obligation of a younger person to avoid infection is less to himself than to his elders.

So is the coronavirus pandemic like assisted suicide, a pro-life issue that summons our concern for the sanctity of life primarily (though not exclusively) with respect to the elderly? The two issues bear some obvious resemblance. In discussions of both, nursing-home residents figure prominently. Through December 2020, nursing-home residents and employees accounted for approximately one third of the 340,000 deaths related to Covid-19 in the United States. The toll on nursing homes in Europe, too, has been disproportionate.

Some critics of public-health restrictions stress the mountain of cases and fatalities in nursing homes to argue that government responses should be focused on the elderly and that the rest of the population should, by and large, be left alone, for the sake of curtailing economic loss. Owners and employees of small businesses in the hospitality industry have been especially hard hit, though not only by lockdowns imposed by state and local officials. Many people assessed the risk for themselves and decided for prudence, spending less time elbow to elbow with strangers in bars, restaurants, and entertainment venues during the pandemic than before.

"We cannot let the cure be worse than the problem itself," President Trump tweeted on March 22, 2020, in the early weeks of the pandemic. "I would love to have the country opened up and just raring to go by Easter," he said from the

Rose Garden later that week. "I still like playing it down," he admitted in an interview with Bob Woodward earlier that month, referring to the virus, "because I don't want to create a panic."

Efforts to reduce the spread of the virus would depress the economy and thereby harm Trump's reelection campaign, and so he and his supporters felt an incentive to downplay the pandemic and to criticize those who took and recommended precautions. A rhetoric of freedom versus fear came to characterize the spontaneous movement against lockdowns and face masks. The notion circulated that to wear a mask was to concede that you belonged to the sheeple, while my face in all its brazen bareness signified that I was free, frank, fearless, my own man—the Gadsden flag, with its script reading "Don't tread on me," was a frequent flyer among the anti-lockdown protesters at state capitals that spring. Men don't wear face masks but cowards do, a journalist suggested on Twitter.

Overnight, the public-health crisis was politicized. Trump and his supporters minimized its seriousness, said their detractors, who, in turn, were accused of exaggerating it. Even if you thought that the call to vigilance and caution was misguided, it was understandable. It was defensible to the extent that it could be disentangled—it often couldn't—from partisanship, from an apparent wish that Covid's domination of the news would harm Trump politically. Pundits observed that he could have played the pandemic to his political advantage: Had he used the presidential bully pulpit to declare a public-health equivalent of war, he could have made himself, in effect, a wartime president, rallying the nation behind him, to join in a common cause, as during World War II, although by 2020 the spirit of 1941 had receded into a past almost beyond living memory. We're divided and cynical to a degree that would have horrified the Silent Generation in its prime.

"I would expect conservatives to be more worried about virus X coming in from abroad," social psychologist Jonathan Haidt told Ezra Klein in a piece at Vox (May 21, 2020). A correlation between anti-immigration views and fear of infectious diseases has been demonstrated by social-science researchers. "When Obama was president and America was threatened by Ebola, it was conservatives freaking out," Haidt recalled, "demanding a more vigorous government response to protect us, while Obama kept steady on following scientific advice." But "Trump laid out his view very early: This is nothing to worry about, it's a plot to discredit me, and it will magically go away."

Skeptics of widescale public-health restrictions seized on statistics showing that the crisis looked far less severe when cases and fatalities in nursing homes were subtracted from the national totals. Sometimes the fact was stated without commentary, leaving the reader or listener to infer that the value of what was left of the lives of those already near their life expectancy was minor when compared with the harm that efforts to control the pandemic would inflict on

everyone else, on our livelihoods and quality of life. Imagine a nursing-home resident who has dementia, heart and respiratory conditions, and ten weeks to live. She dies sooner than that after contracting Covid. In the autopsy report, it's listed as one of several comorbidities. Her case is then added to the hundreds of thousands of deaths that the Centers for Disease Control counts as having been caused, in whole or in part, by the coronavirus. Is the gravity of her death equal to that of the death of, say, a middle-aged man who commits suicide after losing his livelihood, and subsequently his marriage, to the economic downturn caused by people staying home to avoid contagion?

Economists have devised formulas for determining the monetary value of a person's life, or of her remaining life. "Attaching a price to human life will strike some readers as uncomfortable, if not offensive," Chris Conover writes in *Forbes* (March 27, 2020). "Indeed,

> Governor Andrew Cuomo recently tweeted "you cannot put a value on a human life." And he is right in important and fundamental ways. But when it comes to public policy, it quickly becomes impossible to think that way.
>
> For example, if we said that it was worth spending a trillion dollars per person to prevent unnecessary deaths, we'd run out of money in a day.

"It is sometimes said that life is priceless," writes Robert VerBruggen in *National Review* (April 20, 2020). "But of course this is not true," because

> every day, we behave in ways that could shorten or end our stays on this earth, whether that means stuffing our faces with Doritos or simply traveling across train tracks, through the air, or at high speed down a highway. We do these things because we value their benefits more than we fear the risk of death they entail. And every year, this country's legislators and regulators decide to enact some life-saving rules but not others, because some of these rules are deemed worth the costs and some are not. Making trade-offs between lives and other things we value is simply a fact of, well, life.

Risk avoidance, in other words, usually imposes a cost, even if it's only the ten seconds you need to spend to walk over to the stove and turn it off before leaving the house. The cost of risk avoidance may be monetary, or monetary in part. To reduce the risk that a resident will contract the coronavirus, the mayor orders bars and restaurants to close or to reduce their capacity to enable social distancing. Would-be patrons lose opportunities to enjoy the amenity of dining out. The cost to them is a reduction in their quality of life. The cost to owners and employees of the establishments is monetary but could, as a knock-on effect, also cut the lives of some of them short, as the quality of the nutrition and health care within their means diminishes. Some are liable to die "deaths of despair" if the economic hardship resulting from the lockdown has made them susceptible to mental illness or substance abuse and, in turn, to suicide or a loss of their motivation to take care of themselves.

Those to whom risk attaches and in whose interest the cost of the lockdown is imposed are the residents of the city and any visitors to it. They share the risk unequally. A thirty-year-old may be about as susceptible to infection as his grandparents are, but he's far less likely to get sick from it and even less likely to die. He misses hanging out with friends at the local dive, and most of all he misses his income from the restaurant where he waited tables. For him, the city's new risk-management arrangement is a bad deal—a cure worse than the problem, you might say—if we think of him as a rational actor whose self-interest is narrowly defined.

The ratio of benefit to cost increases for him, however, if he lives with his grandparents and cares about their health. The citywide lockdown reduces their risk of infection and alleviates his worry. He still suffers the loss of his job and weekends out on the town, but he understands the trade-off and accepts it as the fairest possible response to a bad situation. He could argue, but he doesn't, that the lockdown was unnecessary even for his grandparents because he would have worn a face mask outside the home, lessening the chance that he would get infected and then infect them, and they decided not to go out anymore anyway except for trips to the doctor and the supermarket. The three of them, that is, grandparents and grandson, would have taken precautions to reduce their exposure to risk. Even so, despite their efforts, they might not have been able to reduce their risk to what it is now, under the lockdown, in the absence of which more people would spend more time in public, spreading more of the virus than would have been spread otherwise. As an Australian epidemiologist remarked early in the pandemic, America's uneven patchwork of public-health measures is like having a no-urinating section in the community swimming pool.

Never has the pro-life movement in its approximately half century of existence met such a pointed challenge to its understanding of the sanctity of life. Republican elected officials, antiabortion with few exceptions, condoned or promoted the president's loosely defined vision of a Covid policy based on the assumption that one could take personal risks in splendid isolation, as if the possibility hadn't occurred to them that their decision to forgo wearing a face mask could have lethal consequences for someone in whose company they exhaled. To hear them miss the point as they touted rugged American individualism in the context of a raging pandemic was like reading a *New York Times* op-ed in which the author defends a woman's right to abortion while never once using the words fetus or unborn child. "I took an oath to uphold the constitution of our state, South Dakota," Governor Noem Kristi told Fox News. "I took an oath when I was in Congress obviously to uphold the Constitution of the United States. I believe in our freedom and liberties. What I've seen across the country is so many people give up their liberties for just a little bit of security and they

don't have to do that."

Voters for whom a candidate's antiabortion bona fides usually seals their support for him found themselves in an awkward position. They rehearsed rationalizations for the president's approach to or, rather, attitude toward the pandemic, but for the most part they failed to address their predicament. In their single-minded commitment to the tactical imperative of reelecting a man they trusted to deliver antiabortion policies and judges, they were blinded to a strategic complication: They had been cornered into affirming an economic assumption underpinning a longstanding pragmatic argument for abortion. They emphasized the common sense that life, though precious, wasn't priceless. In doing so, they adopted the perspective from which many people sensitive to the plight of women with unwanted pregnancies in difficult circumstances defend abortion rights. Does the pro-life community now better appreciate the resistance that its message meets from the wider world?

"We all like the notion of the intrinsic worth of human life," Peter Singer wrote under the heading "Fine Phrases," in his book *Rethinking Life and Death: The Collapse of Our Traditional Values (1995):*

> We accept such a noble idea without much critical scrutiny, as long as it does not restrict us from doing what we really think is important. Then one day we find it is making us do things that are manifestly pointless, or likely to lead to disaster. So we take a better look at the fine phrases we so readily accepted. And start to wonder why we ever believed them in the first place. Then we drop them.

We invoke the sanctity of life but make exceptions to it. We lay down the principle that to take the life of a human person is a grave injustice. Then we enumerate exceptions. Just war, self-defense, and capital punishment are the most commonly accepted. Most Americans would make an exception also for abortion, or abortion in some circumstances. They disagree among themselves about where to draw the line. A growing number would make an exception as well for euthanasia and assisted suicide, though, again, they disagree on how permissive or how restrictive the laws and regulations governing the practices should be. In theory, the argument for hastening death applies to all ages. In practice, its application to the infirm elderly is disproportionate.

The infirm elderly, especially those in nursing homes, resemble the unborn in some notable respects. The two populations are voiceless, or largely so. Passive recipients of our care or neglect or worse than neglect, they are largely unable to defend themselves or to act in their own self-interest. Abortion differs from elder abuse in that the abuser is motivated by malice whereas abortion providers and women who procure their services typically are not, but violence is wrought against the passive recipient in both cases all the same. Whereas the aborted child is the victim of a deliberate act, the nursing-home resident who dies from Covid is the victim at the end of a chain of decisions made by individuals who

may have only neglected to give sufficient thought to age-related fragility, hers and that of her peers.

While we recognize the humanity of both populations, the unborn and the infirm elderly, we are tempted to regard it as marginal, hovering at the borders between life and what we are tempted to imagine as nonexistence. If we imagine the life of the average person walking around in the world to be a bonfire, that of the unborn child is a mere spark; of the infirm elderly, a smoldering ember. If the pro-life community honors its principles, the infirm elderly belong to its natural constituency. Under the pressure of abortion politics, alas, the pro-life community defended a president who discounted the severity of a public-health crisis for which the bull's-eye has been the nursing-home population.

Those who argued from economic necessity to defend Trump's idea of what the government response should be to the pandemic were not all unreasonable or necessarily acting in bad faith. No one has a clear map of the tangled web of tradeoffs involving quality of life for the many and, for the fewer, the likely amount of life remaining to the elderly whom a given policy might expose to extreme risk. Save your criticism rather for those who, hoisting their Gadsden flags, compartmentalized their opposition to abortion as they adopted for the occasion the hard-libertarian rationale of the abortion-rights movement. (All due respect to the many pro-life libertarians who object to distortions of their political philosophy.) We would be naïve not to suspect that our protester in Austin saw some cheeky humor in her flashing the slogan "My body, my choice" as a statement against mandatory face masks. What she chose for the part of her body that was her face was to leave it uncovered, defying local law at the time. Her mask was her ostensible irony, behind which a stubborn contradiction waits to be resolved.

On Physical and Moral Plagues

George McKenna

Nicholas Frankovich has written a very thoughtful essay—provocative in the best sense—building a case for avoiding absolute positions on how to protect the nation against the coronavirus and on how to approach the abortion issue. It's a fine essay and deserves a respectful response. In my opinion he has made some errors (largely of omission) in treating the first of these issues, and one major error in dealing with the second.

He starts by inviting the reader to make sense of two conflicting images he saw in a photograph online: A metropolitan-looking young woman is holding an American flag and a sign showing an image of a powder-blue face mask with a red slash across it. Her physical appearance suggests that she leans left, but the slashed mask and the flag suggest a rightward tilt. Further complicating the picture are two verbal provocations: the pro-abortion motto, "My body, my choice" at the top of her sign and, at its base, "Trump 2020." So she's both pro-choice and pro-Trump. Is there anything coherent we pull out of this strange juxtaposition? He speculates that she's maybe a pro-Trumper after all, but he seems to leave room for other interpretations. Actually, the one that seems more congruent both with the illustration and with his argument throughout his essay is that she's both pro-choice and pro-Trump—and wrong on both counts. Frankovich aims to take on both a) anti-abortion absolutists who are indifferent about the need for face masks and lockdowns and b) the absolutists on the other side, the pro-abortion feminists who shout, "My body, my choice." Both sides are guilty of thinking only of their own causes, ignoring the lethal effects on other human beings when their doctrines are put into effect.

Let's consider the first of the two, the pro-life absolutists. Here his prime example is Donald Trump. But it is far from clear that Trump is an absolutist on abortion. To my knowledge Trump never said he believes that human life is sacred from the moment of conception until natural death, the position of pro-life absolutists. Yet it is true that Trump's rhetoric sometimes *sounded* absolutist. I almost fell out of my chair watching his debate with Hillary Clinton in 2016 and hearing him characterize abortion as "ripping the baby out of a mother's womb." I had never heard any Republican politician talk like that before. He was also the first Republican president not just to phone it in but to attend and speak in person at the annual March for Life in Washington. So, for the sake of argument, let's say that Trump is an absolutist on abortion.

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But when it comes to the coronavirus Trump was a compromiser while in office—too much of a compromiser for Frankovich's taste, especially when it comes to using masks and lockdowns to fight the virus. "We cannot let the cure be worse than the problem itself." That tweet of Trump in March of 2020 annoys Frankovich; it seems to him not only irresponsible but self-serving: "Efforts to reduce the spread of the virus would depress the economy and thereby harm Trump's reelection campaign. . . ." That's no doubt true, but was that the only conceivable motive Trump could have had? What about guarding the country against excessive and unnecessary regulations that damage the economy and make people's lives miserable? And even if reelection were uppermost in his mind, *why* did Trump think these regulations would hurt his chances for reelection? Maybe because people hate them! In a democracy, politicians are supposed to pay some attention to public opinion.

The rejoinder is that they should also pay attention to "the science." But for at least the first three months of the virus in this country, while it was spreading like wildfire, nobody seemed to know what was going on—not even the scientists, and certainly not the politicians and news outlets, the people who are supposed to keep us informed. On January 21, 2020, a week after the first patient arrived here from China, Dr. Anthony Fauci, Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), declared: "This is not a major threat. . . . This is not something that citizens of the United States should be worried about." On January 31, when the White House imposed a travel ban from China to stop any more infected arrivals, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi accused Trump of "racism" and "xenophobia," and introduced a bill in the House of Representatives to stop the ban. Former vice president Joe Biden accused Trump of "hysteria, xenophobia, and fear-mongering." A *Washington Post* headline the next day said, "Get a Grippe, America, the Flu Is a Much Bigger Threat." On February 2, the New York City Health Commissioner said, "The risk to New Yorkers from the Coronavirus is low. . . . There is no reason not to take the subway, not to take the bus, not to go out to your favorite restaurant, and certainly not to miss the [Chinese New Year] next Sunday. . . . I'm going to be there." Speaker Pelosi added her own endorsement more than three weeks later, on February 24: "We want to be careful about how we deal with it, but we do want to say to people, 'Come to Chinatown, here we are . . . come, join us.'" Five days later, Dr. Fauci again: "Right now . . . there is no need to change anything you're doing." As late as March 8, Fauci said, "there's no reason to be walking around with a mask." He covered himself, though: "That could change."

If there was confusion and uncertainty about masks in 2020 there was even more when it came to the lockdowns. Masks are a sufferable nuisance, but lockdowns cause real harm to restaurants, stores, schools, to the people who run

them, who use them, and work in them. And to the national economy: Because of the lockdowns, between January and April of 2020 employment rates fell by five percent, more than the drop during and after the Great Recession of 2008. In addition, 44 percent of the population experienced a decline in earning and 54 percent a decrease in savings. Long-established businesses closed, many of them never to reopen. Researchers have documented the human costs of the lockdowns: spikes in mental illness, alcoholism and drug abuse, domestic violence, and suicides. We do not know how many people put off doctor's appointments and surgery during this period, worsening their condition, but there are statistics suggesting that there were significantly more deaths—deaths not caused by the virus itself—than would have occurred during a similar period before the virus arrived.

Here is how Frankovich sums up the reactions to the Covid crisis in America: "Trump and his supporters minimized its seriousness, said their detractors, who, in turn, were accused of exaggerating it. Even if you thought that the call to vigilance and caution was misguided, it was understandable." Understandable perhaps, but heedless of the damage they caused. Again, it was more than economic damage; it was lethal damage, it cost lives. How could anyone think that this was not going to become "politicized," especially during a presidential election year? That is what politics is *for*, at least in a democracy: to locate a crisis, bring it into the open, into the public arena for debate, and see if a resolution can be found.

Frankovich is not opposed to public debate, or to compromise at the end of it. He quotes approvingly a *National Review* writer who says that "making tradeoffs between lives and other things we value is simply a fact of, well, life." Indeed, Frankovich might say, "that is my whole point. What I am saying is that activists on *both* sides of the debates over coronavirus and abortion need to climb down from their absolutist positions and recognize that virtually all benefits entail costs." He does not cite this example but I'll use it here because it fits his argument: In March 2020, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo issued a directive that barred nursing homes from refusing to take in Covid patients from nearby hospitals. As a result, between March 25 and May 8, approximately 6,326 Covid-positive patients were admitted to nursing homes throughout the state. We do not know exactly how many vulnerable old people were killed by those transfers, but we do know, thanks to a 2021 report by New York Attorney General Letitia James, that the Governor understated by more than half the number of fatalities resulting from the transfer. By the end of 2020, New York State had one of the highest death tolls in the nation, with more than 12,000 deaths in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities. Of course, we do not know how many of those deaths could be attributable to the arrival of the

infected patients, but it must have been several hundred at the least. Some of Cuomo's harshest critics have charged him with "killing old people," but I have seen no evidence that Cuomo intended to kill anybody or make any conscious assumption that old people's lives are less valuable than young people's. His intention, he said, was to mitigate what he thought was going to be a tsunami of Covid sufferers pouring into New York hospitals, overwhelming staff and facilities. It was a classic trade-off, in this case a tragically stupid one, but trade-offs do have to be made in crisis situations. As the *National Review* writer might have said, they are "simply a fact of, well, life."

But it is just here that we come to what I think is the underlying mistake running through the next part, the abortion part, of Frankovich's essay: a category mistake.

The term "category mistake" was coined by British philosopher Gilbert Ryle in 1949, in criticizing the philosophy of René Descartes, who had written a famous treatise on mind-body dualism. A category mistake means confusing two very different entities, thinking them to be in the same category. We often talk of people mixing up "apples and oranges," but at least apples and oranges are both in the same category, fruits. But a category mistake is more radical; it's like mixing up apples and monkey wrenches. The *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* gives other examples of this kind of mistake: "The number two is blue," "The theory of relativity is eating breakfast."

I think Frankovich has made a similar error, not as egregious as in those hypotheticals, but far more consequential: He has confused fatal errors with deliberate killing. He poses the question of whether "the coronavirus pandemic [is] like assisted suicide," and his answer is, "The two issues bear some obvious resemblance." What is obvious is that in both cases people get dead. But what makes them die is, on the one hand, incompetent planning, and on the other, deliberate intent.

In 2020 Governor Cuomo made what theologians call a prudential judgment, the same kind of judgment an airline pilot has to make when a bird gets sucked into one of the engines and he has to decide whether to return to the airport or try an emergency landing in the river. The wrong judgment will kill hundreds of passengers and himself, but that doesn't mean that the pilot is a killer; it means that he's not Sully Sullenberger. Had Sullenberger made the wrong decision and perished with the passengers, no one would have found any moral fault with him. It was in that same category of prudential judgment, then, that Andrew Cuomo made his decision, one that attempted to balance the risks on both sides. A purely prudential judgment may be correct or incorrect; in either case, though, it is not *per se* good or evil. But judgments about abortion—whether to get them, perform them, subsidize them, promote them—put us into a very different discussion category. They are not prudential judgments; they are moral

judgments. The two are as different as apples and monkey wrenches.

Some years ago, I attended a debate between the late Henry Hyde (the U.S. Representative who authored the Hyde Amendment, banning federal money to pay for abortions) versus someone on the "pro-choice" side. The pro-choicer, passionately and at length, described the physical, psychological, and economic hardships a woman can face in bringing to term an unwanted child. There needs to be some remedy, he said, some *procedure*, to free her from this burden. Hyde, who had been listening quietly, suddenly burst out: "But abortion is a *killing* procedure." The reason my memory of that moment is so vivid stems from that single word. The blast from it continues to blow away all the euphemisms built around it since *Roe* v. *Wade* in 1973.

We know now that the fetus is not a thing: not a boil, not a tumor, not "the fertilized entrails of a woman," as one imaginative abortion supporter put it, but a tiny human being in a journey of development that will continue into adulthood—if permitted. But each year permission is denied to more than 42 million of them worldwide. They are cut up and vacuumed out of their mothers in pieces or, in later pregnancies, removed intact and left to die in the operating room. Either way it is not a nice-looking process, and seeing it has caused some former participants in it to join the ranks of the prolifers. The decision about whether or not to approve the process is not a prudential judgment, like those a doctor must make to ensure the survival and health of a premature baby. It is a moral judgment, a judgment that it is OK to kill an innocent and utterly helpless human being.

What does Frankovich think about abortion?

Clearly, he doesn't like it. He rejects "My body, my choice," because he knows there's another body acted upon in the procedure. He sneers at the *New York Times* for defending a woman's right to abortion "while never using the words *fetus* or *unborn child*." But throughout his essay he keeps dropping hints that prolifers need to be more "pragmatic," to be more "sensitive to the plight of women with unwanted pregnancies." He never says what that would mean in practice. Abortion allowable only for the first trimester, or 20 weeks, or what? When does the fetus become a human being that you absolutely cannot kill? He does not directly answer that question himself, but he does quote a famous professor of bioethics at Princeton, in apparent agreement with the professor that "the intrinsic worth of human life" is nothing more than a "fine phrase," completely empty of meaning. The name of the bioethicist is Peter Singer.

"Whoa," I said to myself when I read this, "Is this the same Peter Singer who wrote *Practical Ethics* and *Should the Baby Live*?" It is. In *Practical Ethics,* Singer wrote, "human babies are not born self-aware, or capable of grasping that they exist over time. They are not persons." But animals are self-aware, and therefore, "the life of a newborn is of less value than the life of a pig, a dog,

or a chimpanzee." In *Should the Baby Live?* Singer and his co-author Helga Kuhse suggested that "a period of 28 days after birth might be allowed before an infant is accepted as having the same right to live as others." They made the case for killing newborns suffering from birth defects such as spina bifida and Down syndrome. (When Singer spoke to an assembly at a hospital near me, security guards were posted at the door, and the moderator ruled out any critical questioning from audience members.) Does Frankovich really want to be in that company?

He might reply that it is unfair to assume that he would ever carry his premise to such a conclusion. But the premise carries itself there. This is a Dostoevskian situation: Once we agree that "the intrinsic value of human life" is just "a fine phrase," why spare the life of someone with no human potential? Rodion Raskolnikov, the ragged college student in Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, overhears a conversation between two other students as one of them talks about a "horrid old woman" pawnbroker in the neighborhood who extorts punishing terms on the poor:

> [She is] not simply useless but doing actual mischief, who has not an idea what she is living for herself. . . . On the other side, fresh young lives thrown away for want of help by the thousands, on every side. A hundred thousand good deeds could be done and helped, on that old woman's money which will be buried in a monastery. Hundreds, thousands perhaps, might be set on the right path; dozens of families saved from destitution, from ruin, from vice. . . . Kill her, take her money and with the help of it devote yourself to the service of humanity and the good of all.

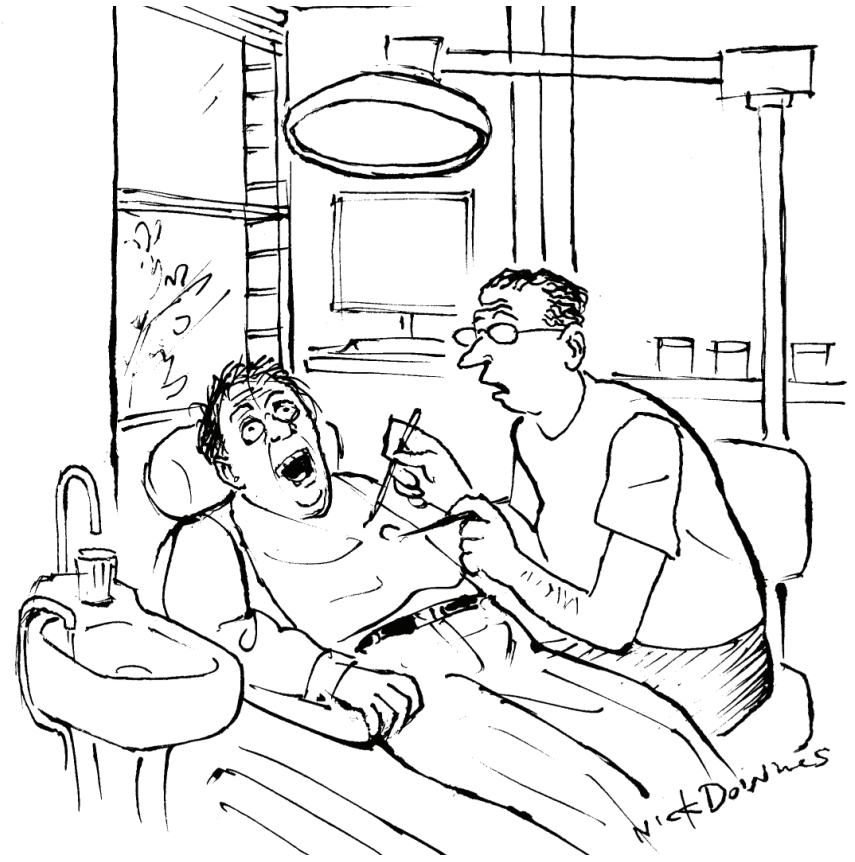
It was idle student talk, but Raskolnikov was "violently agitated" on hearing it because he realized that at that very moment "his own brain was just conceiving . . . *the very same ideas*."

Raskolnikov soon put those ideas into effect, taking an ax to the head of the pawnbroker (and to her mentally disabled younger sister when she came on the scene). For the next four hundred or so pages we are led through the young man's sad, half-hearted attempts to escape detection, his eventual arrest, trial, and punishment. Exiled for years in Siberia, he is converted to Christianity by his faithful lover, who has followed him into exile. It is Jesus in the New Testament who makes him understand the sacredness of human life.

In Western history it was the arrival of Christianity that brought the notion of the sacredness of each person into the world. It was unknown before then. In pre-Christian Rome, if for any reason a newborn baby was rejected by his or her father (this happened much more often with female babies), out the baby went to the forest for a quick end by wolves or a more prolonged death from starvation or whatever. The whole crazy notion that each human life has inherent value—that human lives matter—was what inspired early Christians to set

up orphanages, hospitals, and other institutions for the needy, the impaired, and the others who had always been treated with contempt by society. Whether that view can survive the decline of Christianity in the West is debatable. It has clearly lost the debate in Peter Singer's mind (if he ever debated it) because he has concluded that "It does not seem wise to add to the burden on limited resources by increasing the number of severely disabled children." By disposing of them, parents can always have "another pregnancy, which has a good chance of being normal."

In rejecting this kind of thinking, do I find myself trapped by the inconsistency suggested by Nicholas Frankovich at the start of his essay: of being an absolutist about the sacredness of every human life and a compromiser when it comes to masks and lockdowns? My answer is no, because they belong in two very different categories of thought.



"Do you know from which filling the government is controlling your mind?"

John Leo: Principle and Prescience

Maureen Mullarkey

When I learned that John Leo had retired as editor-in-chief of *Minding the Campus*, my thoughts leaped to T.S. Eliot's final prayer at the end of "Ash Wednesday": "Suffer me not to be separated." The news came as a wrench, a decisive twist to the bolt on a repository of shaping memories. His writing was at the center of much that had stamped my wits and my interests over decades.

The man entered my life through a Xeroxed copy of his December 1, 1965, column in the *National Catholic Reporter.* It had been handed to me by a Fordham student on the sidewalk outside the Catholic Peace Fellowship on Beekman Street. As much a *j'accuse* against the New York chancery as a brief in support of Daniel Berrigan, S.J., it was a rousing thing to read.

A Jesuit provincial had just ordered the charismatic activist/poet/priest out of the country for his role in the anti-war movement. In passionate defense of Fr. Berrigan, Leo opened with a description of him as "one of the most Christ-like men I have ever met," one who "disturbed the slumber of lesser men." He called Berrigan a "marked man" hounded by "a naked and arrogant exercise in authoritarianism."

The column was intoxicating to an idealistic Catholic-schooled girl high on Yeats: *The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere/the ceremony of innocence is drowned.* For so many of my generation at the time, Berrigan presided as the conscience of the innocent. And squinting through the prism of youthful conceit, we saw lesser men slumbering everywhere.

Cardinal Spellman was an outspoken hawk on the Vietnam War; Dan Berrigan spoke otherwise. His reassignment to Latin America for a mandatory cooling off was believed to have been the Cardinal's doing. Leo's "Thinking It Over: The Case of Fr. Berrigan" appeared together with a front-page story in the same issue of *NCR.* A *cause célèbre* was launched. Eleven days later, the *New York Times* followed with an open letter to the archdiocese and New York's Jesuit community. Signers were a stellar roster of Catholic intellectuals.

To this reader, in that day, Leo's column brought Catholicism alive as something

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more than a system of inherited beliefs. Suddenly, it became interesting.

Historian Rodger Van Allen has since denied Spellman's responsibility for Berrigan's exile. (He pronounced it an in-house Jesuit affair, one the Cardinal simply lacked the appetite to oppose.) Moreover, hindsight gave cause to regret the cult around Berrigan. Idolization of the "holy outlaw" has proven as flawed as the priest's own affiliation with Howard Zinn. Nonetheless, Leo's militant defense of his friend was principled and exemplary.

His anger at what was reasonably understood at the time as an abuse of episcopal authority was matched by a strong sense of loyalty. His comment to Berrigan after the expulsion directive arrived has stayed with me over the years: "We'll take care of your cause. We'll take care of getting the truth out."

Getting the truth out. That is key. Leo's allegiance was more than personal. It was ethical, a fidelity to the truth of things. In the end—as it ever was in the beginning—that is the mainspring of the essayist's vocation. And before anything else, the man is an essayist. His writing life has been a consistent attempt—an *essai*—to extract meaning from events that might otherwise be taken for granted. Along the way, he fired away at the imperious gall of Those Who Know Better.

My much-thumbed hard-cover edition of *Two Steps Ahead of the Thought Police*, a collection of previously published essays, has kept me company since it appeared in 1994. I love these pieces, most from *U.S. News and World Report*, for their prescience, candor, and—as any writer will concede—their underlineability.

Begin with prescience. "Whitney to Whitey: Drop Dead" was a response to the Whitney Museum's 1993 biennial, a self-satisfied romp into agit-prop. Admission buttons extended the tenor of it onto the lapels of the paying public. Some were printed with the legend "I CAN'T IMAGINE WANTING TO BE WHITE"; the other three bore fragments of that sentence. In sum, the exhibition showcased the Whitney's embrace of what, in the art world's bloodless argot, was hailed as *institutional critique*. Leo put it more bluntly: "the itch to harangue." And to debase:

> In two numbing hours at this organized shambles, I learned that the world is neatly divided into good and bad. Good: women, non-whites, homosexuals, transvestites, gang members, glory holes, people with AIDS, gays in the military. Bad: America, straight white males, family, religion, hierarchies, lipstick, liposuction, fatism, and penises not attached to gay men.

His discussion leap-frogged over the scripted pieties of docents. It ignored the exhibition catalogue's conceptual fustian and drove straight to the point of the project:

> It is about replacing the center (mainstream America and its values) with the margin (the

> race-and-gender ideologues and their allies) . . . . In other words, it's about a cultural war to destabilize and break the mainstream.

A prophecy clearly stated, the entire commentary was also a lesson in good writing. John Leo was not an ordained art critic. That means he was able to *see* what he was looking at. His vista unclouded by the higher obscurities of art talk, he was free to tell plainly what was in front of him. Whatever the topic, Leo's prose was tart, often playful, ruled by clarity and logic. He brought to his writing a moral outlook that took the measure of those hypocrisies, stupidities, and stealth objectives that litter the route of the Gramscian march.

By the time I became a card-carrying member of the International Association of Art Critics, I had learned from Leo how not to be an art critic. At least, not to sound like one. Leo's voice as a writer was both sober and witty, a reminder that for any argument to be effective, it must be accessible to general readers. At the same time, it has to keep its heft, not fudge its commitments. Despite an even hand when needed, Leo knew which side he was on.

How did Emerson put it? "Common sense is genius dressed in its working clothes." Just so. If only more of us had acted on what we heard.

In July the *Spectator USA* ran a polished reflection on the slide of the F-word from curse to commonplace. A latecomer, I thought. Surely someone had detected this slippage long before now. Sure enough, a quick check into *Two Steps Ahead* turned up "The F-Word Flows Like Ketchup." In the early Nineties, Leo declared it "all around us now, like air pollution." His perp-walk of F-addicts included even the *New Yorker,* once "a hotbed of decorum and taste" but now "a victim of fashion, a breathless dowager slipping into her first punk miniskirt."

The sentences are delicious; the verdict unyielding. Robert Gottlieb, former editor of the *New Yorker*, admitted the magazine "had no policy at all" on the F-word and he had "never given it a moment's thought." Unintimidated by being deemed *judgmental*—the last taboo—Leo countered:

> That's just the problem. When you get to be the editor of the *New Yorker*, you're supposed to spend a minute thinking about standards. Maybe even two.

Behind that simple word *supposed* lies trust in the existence of a proper order in pursuit of good ends. Call it truth, the stable beam from which a scale of values can be weighed. A subtle indictment, the passage implies that Gottlieb's detachment was as heavy a thumb on the cultural scale as outright intention.

Writing in the 1930s, Orwell had feared that objective truth, even the concept of it, was fading out of the culture. He feared that media-driven lies would pass into history: "in Spain, for the first time, I saw newspaper reports which did not bear any relation to the facts . . . I saw great battles reported where there had been no fighting, and complete silence where hundreds of men had been killed."

We live in just such a time, one in which "fake news" is a weapon against

reality and the language that honors it. *1984*'s *goodthink* anticipated what we call political correctness. Low-keyed and lucid, Leo's columns carried forward Orwell's warning against this stranglehold on the free play of the mind. And its consequent suffocation of veracity.

Chapter headings in *Two Steps Ahead* are a striking litany of *déjà-vu*-all-over-again. Is it that we refused to learn? Or that we were complacent? Just not angry enough? From racial arithmetic and vilification of white males to the politics of date rape, abortion, toxic feminism, multiculturalism, and more, today's concerns were all there, autopsied in trenchant columns a quarter century ago.

Today's vile exegesis of whiteness at the Smithsonian's National Museum of African History and Culture ought not surprise. In the *Orlando Sentinel* in 1994, Leo alerted us to "the politically correct makeover under way" at the various tentacles of the Smithsonian. Preparing an exhibition on American participation in the Pacific Theatre of World War II, the Air and Space Museum argued that "America was conducting a racist war of vengeance against Japan, while for most Japanese, it was a war to defend their unique culture against Western imperialism."

> [A] stilted view of the war and American motives, running through hundreds of pages of early draft versions of the show, was bound to attract attention from veterans and historians who knew better. But the same dark view of America as arrogant, oppressive, racist and destructive increasingly runs through the Smithsonian complex.
>
> Part of the new Smithsonian strategy is to keep stressing the negatives.

Out of the starting gate, Leo's writing took aim at bureaucratic tyranny, those totalitarian impulses that seep like corrosive salt into our institutions and our lives. It unnerves me to realize the degree to which his cautions are still needed.

Parental control over sex education—to pick just one arena—has plummeted since Leo's "Over the Head of Parents" forewarned a wide audience in candid detail. He asked: "When you send your child to a state school, do you yield all authority over the child's sexual education?" It was a rhetorical question leading up to an unambiguous answer: *Yes*! Today, Abigail Shrier's newly published *Irreversible Damage* quotes a fifth-grade teacher's attitude toward parents who object to indoctrination in transgender ideology. "That's nice, but their parental rights ended when those children were enrolled in public school."

John Leo saw our snowflakes coming. Contemporary college students are descendants of the self-esteem juggernaut. What he termed "the politics of feeling" has created a generation of Fabergé eggs who need incubation in safe spaces, shielded from insensitivity and micro aggression by trigger warnings and speech codes.

The use of feelings as a trump card is becoming pervasive. The codes and laws generated by the campus-based race and gender alliance are aimed at real

problems. But almost all are disastrously rooted in the demand that there must be no negative feelings. If there are, as is so often the case when the individual collides with the real world, then someone must be penalized for it.

He rejected the notion that it was the state's job to pat our chests and help us think nice things about ourselves. To the notion of self-esteem as a public policy issue, well . . . no thanks:

> To keep children feeling good about themselves, you must avoid all criticism and almost any challenge that could conceivably end in failure. . . . This means each child is treated like a fragile therapy consumer in constant need of an ego-boost. Difficult work is out of the question, and standards get lowered . . . Even tests become problematic because someone might fail them.

A quarter century later, the "blissed out mental surfers" of California are in the lead to abolish the ACT and SAT.

Our "news" has taken over what was once the job of churches: instilling guilt. It does its best to deliver material that feeds mainstream consumers a rationale to berate themselves for being mainstream. Leo objected when he saw it. "Demonizing White Males," for example, gave early warning of the crusade to put heterosexual white men—"the male and pale"—in the dock:

> Like the guerrillas moving down from the hills to attack the cities, the race-and-gender people are no longer just sniping from marginal positions on campus and in the art world. With the aid of an ever-credulous press corps, they are now pumping their doctrine into the general culture. . . . America will increasingly be divided by a truculent tribalism, with nonwhites and white women ganging up in a grand alliance to wrest power from white males.
>
> The race-and-gender folk will bear watching.

Now we know: we were not watchful enough.

I think of John Leo's working life as a summons to accountability. It has been a call issued to each of us, ordinary observers, to heed what we see. To take seriously what passes by. And to tell the truth about it.

Defeating Technocracy Is Crucial to Life

Wesley J. Smith

Pro-life advocacy and policies are implacably opposed by the elites of the West. The United Nations promotes abortion access as an international norm. Leaders of the European Union continually criticize and attempt to stifle pro-life laws in Poland and Hungary.[1] All of the world's most influential medical journals—the *New England Journal of Medicine*, the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, the *British Medical Journal*, etc.—take the propriety of abortion as a matter of basic patient rights, with some now moving on to endorse assisted suicide.[2] And, of course, virtually all mainstream media oppose sanctity-of-life advocacy as a matter of course.

Despite these wailing headwinds, the pro-life movement has exercised the freedoms available in the West internationally to contest anti-sanctity-of-life orthodoxies and policies in the public square and halls of government—battling not only abortion, but also legalization of euthanasia/assisted suicide, the moral propriety of embryonic stem cell research and other biotechnologies, threats to medical conscience, and the like. But come the "technocracy," a time may arise in which "no advocacy zones" hinder sanctity-of-life activists from presenting contrary ideas to the general community and enacting public policies through the usual democratic processes.

The Danger of Technocracy

What do I mean by "technocracy?" In essence, the word translates into "rule by experts." But in its currently gestating iteration, it means much more than that. The looming technocracy threatens to impose substantial control over most important aspects of life by "experts"—scientists, bioethicists, and societal "influencers"—but it also poses the threat of iron-clad enforcement of cultural orthodoxies and policies, not only in law, but also via the voluntary actions of powerful segments of the private sector.

Technocracy is a soft authoritarianism. It establishes no gulags to imprison dissenters and pronounces no tyrannous executions to punish the rebellious. Instead, a technocracy smothers democratic deliberation by removing most decision-making about essential policies from the people through their elected

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representatives to an expert class whose decisions are based on their education and experience and the data *they think* matter. In other words, rather than laws passed by representatives of the people, regulations are imposed by bureaucrats based on technocratic opinion and advice. As author John H. Evans wrote several years ago:

> The first characteristic of technocracy . . . is a "deep seated animosity toward politics itself" and toward the public ability to make decisions. But it is not just that with technocracy, experts will rule. The second and more important characteristic of technocracy is that expert rule is justified by making policy decisions seem to be only about facts, which are fixed; not values which vary from group to group. This is accomplished by removing debates about values in politics and making political decisions solely about selecting the most efficacious means for forwarding taken-for-granted values.[3]

How did we get to the point where experts threaten to take effective control of society? Blame the Covid crisis, which unleashed a boldness in the would-be technocratic class and at the same time, engendered timidity among people who want to be safe. Globalists have seized the unique moment to increase their power on an unprecedented international scale. As Klaus Schwab, founder and executive chairman of the World Economic Forum, explained, the pandemic's "silver lining" was to demonstrate "how quickly we can make radical changes to our lifestyles."[4]

To encourage even greater public subservience, the WEF launched the "Great Reset Initiative" with the goal of universally "revamping all aspects of our societies and economies, from education to social contracts and working conditions" with "every industry, from oil and gas to tech, transformed."

The Great Reset seeks to re-order economics on a worldwide scale by imposing new technocratic imperatives as a means of combatting climate change. More relevantly to the topic of this article, Dr. Anthony Fauci audaciously declared that combating future infectious disease requires the mindboggling task of "rebuilding the infrastructures of human existence" by empowering international organizations such as the United Nations and the World Health Organization to impose the "radical changes" he thinks are required.[5] That means, according to Fauci and his co-author David M. Morens, that virtually everything in society will have to be transformed, "from cities to homes to workplaces, to water and sewer systems, to recreational and gatherings venues."

The scope and breadth of their ambition is stunningly hubristic. "In such a transformation," they write, "we will need to prioritize changes in those human behaviors that constitute risks for the emergence of infectious diseases. Chief among them are reducing crowding at home, work, and in public places as well as minimizing environmental perturbations such as deforestation, intense urbanization, and intensive animal farming."

Think about what all of that would take! At the very least, the gargantuan

task would require unprecedented and intrusive government regulations and the transferring of policy control from the national to international level—nothing less than an international technocratic and authoritarian supra-governing system—with the power to direct how we interact with each other as family, friends, and in community. Anyone who thinks that such overarching power would long be limited to fighting climate change or building defenses against future pandemics doesn't understand human nature and the seductive nature of power.

Technocracy and the Life Issues

In a technocracy, when it comes to issues that prolifers care most about—i.e., policies such as abortion and assisted suicide that impact the sanctity of human life—bioethicists would likely be the most influential "experts" relied upon to influence public policy. This raises two questions: What is bioethics and who are bioethicists?[6]

Bioethics is a contraction of "biomedical ethics." It is a discipline made up mostly of an elite group of academic moral philosophers, doctors, lawyers, theologians, and other members of the medical intelligentsia who dedicate themselves to bending public and professional discourse about medical ethics and the broader issues of health care public policy to fit their ideological desires. Unless a bioethicist has a modifier such as "Catholic" or "conservative" before the term, bioethicists are generally hostile to the traditional sanctity-of-life moral values and ethical traditions that prolifers tend to embrace.

Whereas medical ethics focuses on the behavior of doctors in their professional lives vis-à-vis their patients, bioethics has a broader focus, concentrating on the relationship between medicine, health, and society. This last element allows bioethicists to presume a moral expertise of breathtaking ambition and hubris. Many view themselves, quite literally, as the forgers of "the framework for moral judgment and decision making"[7] who will create "the moral principles" that determine how "we are to live and act," drawing on a "wisdom" they perceive as "specially appropriate to the medical sciences and medical arts."[8] Indeed, some claim that "bioethics goes beyond the codes of ethics of the various professional practices concerned. It implies new thinking on changes in society, or even *global equilibria*"[9] (my emphasis). In other words, technocracy.

The Danger Technocracy Poses to Ethical Medicine

Bioethics technocrats don't believe in the Hippocratic Oath. As the late Dr. Sherwin Nuland sniffed in the *New England Journal of Medicine* writing in favor of legalizing euthanasia:

> Those who turn to the oath in an effort to shape or legitimize their ethical viewpoints must realize that the statement has been embraced over approximately the past 200 years

> far more as a symbol of professional cohesion than for its content. Its pithy sentences cannot be used as all-encompassing maxims to avoid the personal responsibility inherent in the practice of medicine. Ultimately, a physician's conduct at the bedside is a matter of individual conscience.[10]

What a frightening thought. When I tell audiences that only about 13 percent of physicians take the Hippocratic Oath—if that—invariably they respond with loud, shocked gasps of alarm. *Patients* believe that doctors have certain iron-clad professional obligations to patients that cannot be violated regardless of a physician's individual beliefs. Indeed, patients rightly view the Hippocratic Oath as one of their primary defenses against the overwhelming power over our vulnerable lives that we, of necessity, place in the hands of our doctors. This obligation is summarized by the Hippocratic principle that a doctor "do no harm" to a patient—even if the patient may wish otherwise.

But that is not how most bioethicists see it. Rather, the most influential among them adhere more toward a "quality of life" utilitarian approach in which some lives count for more or are perceived as having a greater claim to legal protection than others. Here is the problem: Quality-of-life considerations are fine when they are a factor in medical decision-making—that is, does the patient think the potential harmful effects of a proposed treatment are worth risking to attain the health benefit sought. But it becomes a form of bigotry when the judged quality of a patient's life becomes a determinate of his or her moral worth.

When applied in this manner, it is often called the "quality of life ethic." In this view, a person needs to earn his or her value by possessing identified capabilities and characteristics. The Princeton bioethicist Peter Singer explains in *Rethinking Life and Death*:

> We should treat human beings in accordance with their ethically relevant characteristics. Some of these are inherent in the nature of being. They include consciousness, the capacity for physical, social, and mental interaction with other beings, having conscious preferences for continued life, and having enjoyable experiences. Other relevant aspects depend on the relationship of the being to others, having relatives for example who will grieve over your death, or being so situated in a group that if you are killed, others will fear for their own lives. All of these things make a difference to the regard and respect we should have for such a being.[11]

The danger of Singer's approach should be obvious to every reader. The standards Singer uses to measure human worth are his standards based on what he considers important and "relevant." And therein lies the heart of the problem. Subjective notions of human worth, in the end, are about raw power and who gets to do the judging.

In our not-so-distant past, for example, decisions denigrating the moral worth of a subset of people, i.e., blacks, were made to justify their oppression and

exploitation based on the allegedly relevant characteristics of skin color and cultural stereotypes. The quality-of-life ethic is no different—only the "relevant characteristics" have changed, not the wrongness of the approach. Quality of life, as a moral measure, strips worth and dignity from people based on health or disability, just as surely as racism does based on skin pigment, hair texture, or eye shape.[12]

Okay, Wesley. I understand the theoretical peril. But how might that play out in the real world if bioethicists were empowered in a technocracy to set healthcare policy? I am glad you asked. Here are just a few potential examples:

- *Abortion through the Ninth Month*: Mainstream bioethicists don't only believe that abortion should be legal, they view it as a positive right to which every pregnant woman is morally entitled if that is her desire. That means erasing all limitations on abortion as to time and method.

  New York has already enacted such a law. As described by Richard Doerflinger in the *Catholic Standard*:

  > It expands legal abortions from 24 weeks of pregnancy up to birth, for reasons of "health" (which in the abortion context means emotional and social "well-being," a recipe for abortion on demand). It allows "health care practitioners" other than physicians to perform them.
  >
  > It also repeals 10 provisions of New York law. Among them: A provision specifying that abortion is legal only with the woman's consent; a law allowing a manslaughter charge against an abortionist who causes the woman's death during an abortion; a law discouraging self-induced (which Miller calls "self-managed") abortions; a law requiring care for a child born alive during an attempted late-term abortion; a law against providing someone else with a drug or other instrument for the purpose of "unlawfully procuring the miscarriage of a female."[13]

  In a technocracy, such pro-abortion policies could be expected to be imposed on an international scale.

- *Legal Assisted Suicide/Euthanasia*: Legalizing euthanasia and assisted suicide is the default setting in mainstream bioethics, with most prominent practitioners supporting what they euphemistically call "aid in dying." There are exceptions, of course. Ironically, despite his opposition to sanctity-of-life ethics, Ezekiel Emanuel—one of the country's most influential bioethicists and a leading adviser to President Joe Biden—opposes legalizing assisted suicide. (More on Emanuel's views below.)
- *Healthcare Rationing*: Most bioethicists also support healthcare rationing. Such a policy could take several forms. For example, "futile care" in which hospital bioethics committees are empowered to force patients off

wanted life-extending treatment based on quality-of-life judgmentalism.[14] Futile care is more or less ad hoc rationing. Many bioethicists would prefer formal rationing, such as the "quality adjusted life year" (QALY) system in which access to a given treatment is allowed or denied based on quality-of-life formulas established by healthcare bureaucrats.[15]

- *Destruction of Medical Conscience*: Increasingly, bioethicists advocate that access to abortion or assisted suicide become an enforceable right. This is a giant step beyond what I call "mere legalization," because it would require the government to guarantee access—which in practical terms, would mean legally coercing healthcare professionals to be complicit even if it violated their religious beliefs or moral consciences. That would mean enacting laws and ethical rules requiring doctors and other healthcare professionals to either do the deed upon request or procure another professional the original doctor knows will abort, euthanize, etc.—sometimes called an "effective referral."

  The attack on medical conscience has already commenced. Emanuel wrote in favor of such coercion in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.[16] The Australian state of Victoria requires such participation in abortion and has sanctioned at least one doctor for refusing to participate in a sex-selection abortion.[17] Coerced participation in all legal medical procedures—specifically including abortion and euthanasia—is required by medical ethical rules in Ontario, Canada, upheld by a Court of Appeals ruling.[18] (A desired side effect of such policies from the technocrats' perspective would be the forcing of pro-life doctors, nurses, and pharmacists out of their professions.)

The Danger to the Freedom of Association and Thought

Of late, I have become worried that a technocracy in the West will adopt many of the social control strategies deployed by the Chinese Communist Party to enforce conformity among the people of China. Don't get me wrong. I don't believe that a technocratic authoritarianism will put dissenters in camps or engage in violent suppression of heterodox ideas. But I do believe we could witness a form of private sector-enforced social excommunication of those who don't adhere to "acceptable" ideas or propose what will be defined as discriminatory—meaning pro-life—policies.

The rough model would be the "social credit" system being constructed in Communist China. Here's how that pernicious tyranny is planned to operate once it goes fully online. Deploying powerful cutting-edge computer technologies such as facial recognition, artificial intelligence, and GPS, the government monitors the individual behaviors and associations of the Chinese people—re-

warding those who are socially compliant and punishing those who engage in disfavored "anti-social" activities—in particular, Christians or other religious believers.[19] Computer algorithms analyze the compiled data and compute the "social scores" of each Chinese citizen.

The social credit system could become the most effective means of social control ever devised by using one's "score" to reward compliance or punish resistance. Benefits of a high social credit can include lowered rent. But the consequences of low score are draconian—including job loss, the inability to rent housing, even blackballing from riding the downtown bus. But it gets worse. *The social "sins" of the parents are borne by the children*. A child may be kicked out of university and stripped of his or her own ability to work, which in turn, could destroy the child's future, for example, making him or her unable to find a spouse or participate in a community's social groups. It is one thing to accept the consequences of living out one's personal beliefs, but it could be quite another to see one's children's lives ruined as a consequence of one's own actions.

I do not expect governments in the West to act so despotically. The Constitution would forbid it here, to be sure. But I am worried that a less stringent form of technocratic-implemented private-sector-enforced social control could be wielded by "woke" major corporations to isolate and marginalize socially conservative individuals and groups who resist reigning political orthodoxies.

Hear me out. What if the private sector began enforcing technocrat-imposed utilitarian and quality-of-life orthodoxies promulgated by a bioethical technocracy? We don't have to wonder. It has started happening already with what is often called "cancel culture."[20]

When Indiana enacted a Religious Freedom Restoration Act to protect the free exercise of religion in the state, some of the world's most powerful corporations threatened boycotts against the state until lawmakers modified the law.[21] Ditto when North Carolina passed a "bathroom bill" that required people to use public restrooms consistent with their biological sex.[22]

More recently, we have seen the suppression of heterodox ideas on university campuses. Try accepting an invitation to speak on a secular university campus if you are a well-known pro-life advocate. Chances are that campus progressives will mount angry protests leading the administration to cancel the invitation.

Or post a YouTube video that cuts against the orthodox grain on issues of interest to prolifers. Not only will the video likely be taken down, but the tech companies will prevent a sponsoring organization from monetizing their perspectives.[23]

Things could get worse. We already see financial institutions pressured not to do business with disfavored industries, such as gun manufacturers or retailers.[24] What if banks were similarly pressured successfully not to do business with

"bigoted" groups that advocate restricting "reproductive freedoms" or that resist transgender advocacy agendas or other socially correct agendas? Not only could it happen, but it is already happening. Look what almost occurred to the Colorado baker who refused to create a cake to celebrate a same-sex wedding. It took a ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court to save him from ruin.[25]

Conclusion

This much is certain. As the international technocracy increases in power and influence—ranging from imposing mandatory Covid policies, to adopting utilitarian views on bioethical issues, to stifling communication of heterodox opinions and perspectives—prolifers could find it more challenging than ever to "make their case."

But that doesn't mean we should surrender democratic principles to rule by experts. Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn, the great Soviet dissident, wrote relevantly to our current moment, "Should one point out that from ancient times declining courage has been considered the beginning of the end?" Technocracy of the type described above can only succeed when imposed upon a cowardly people. If the pro-life movement has proved anything, it is that its activists are not cowards.

Of course, this does not mean acting recklessly or lashing out in ways that are antithetical to the norms of advocacy in a free society. But in this brewing crisis, let us not shrink from living fully as free men and women despite the potential costs—and that includes resisting the imposition of an international rule by experts. Because if ever such an authoritarianism establishes its grip, it will be almost impossible to reverse.

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Is Euthanasia Next for Ireland?

David Quinn

As readers of this journal only too painfully know, in May 2018 Ireland voted by a two-to-one margin to remove from its Constitution the amendment protecting the right to life of unborn children. It was a devastating blow not just to the pro-life movement in Ireland, but to the movement everywhere. Conversely, it was a huge shot in the arm for pro-choice campaigners everywhere.

In fact, Ireland helped to set down a new template for how a more liberal abortion regime should be greeted—that is, not as a regrettable "necessity" in an imperfect world, but as something to be wildly celebrated as an enormous boon for freedom without any downside whatsoever.

On the day of the result, crowds of ecstatic pro-abortion campaigners gathered in the courtyard of Dublin Castle, one of Ireland's main public buildings, to celebrate. They shouted and roared and literally wept with delight. If was as if Nazi Germany had just surrendered, or the Berlin Wall had fallen. In their minds, something incontestably good had happened. It was black and white, a simple matter of good triumphing over evil.

The Taoiseach (Prime Minister) and Health Minister gathered on the balcony above the courtyard to accept the acclamation of the crowd. No thought was spared for the almost three-quarters of a million Irish people who had voted to keep the pro-life amendment. They had been defeated and that was that. History had come along and swept them into its dustbin.

The contrast with what happened in 1983 was total. That year, the pro-life clause (the Eighth Amendment) had been inserted into the Constitution by a margin of two-to-one, the exact opposite of the 2018 result. But were there wild public celebrations on that occasion? Was the courtyard of Dublin Castle opened up to revellers? Did politicians arrive to accept the congratulations of the crowd? No.

And the reason is simple: the Irish media, led by the State broadcaster, RTE, hated the result. They greeted it with funereal tones. Victorious pro-life campaigners were invited onto programs to be questioned by hostile interviewers. The defeated side was invited to attack them for what they had done. We were told, in effect, to be ashamed of what we had done.

Now that liberal abortion laws are to be actively celebrated in public, others have followed suit. When Andrew Cuomo signed a more permissive abortion

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measure into law in New York in January 2019, only months after the Irish result, he did so with a broad smile on his face, and One World Trade Center was lit up in celebration.

And what was to be celebrated? Only the "small" matter of a law expanding the grounds under which an abortion can take place after 24 weeks, near the point of viability. Yes, we Irish had set a terrible precedent in more ways than one.

Now that abortion is in the bag, the time has come to move on to the next item on the agenda: assisted suicide. Pro-life campaigners warned this would happen. They were accused of scaremongering by their opponents. They were told the issues of abortion and assisted suicide were completely different from each other, without ever really being offered an explanation of why this was so.

But I think before moving on to what is happening on this front, I should spend a little longer outlining exactly what has occurred since Irish people decided to legalize abortion.

Our new abortion law came into effect in January 2019. It permits abortion for any reason up to 12 weeks, and after that when the life or health of the mother is in danger. It can also be performed after 12 weeks when the baby is diagnosed with an abnormality deemed by doctors to be lethal.

Already, we have seen the dire effects of this law. Soon after the law was passed, one couple were told by doctors that their baby had an abnormality which would kill it. They proceeded with the termination, but when the results of a second test came back, it turned out the baby was perfectly healthy. This story hasn't caused the fuss it ought to have. Apparently, hard cases are only ever to be used against prolifers, never against pro-choicers.

More recently, a piece of research based on interviews with 10 doctors who are performing abortions in Irish hospitals was published. Its core point is that some doctors are frightened they might face prosecution if it is uncertain whether a particular baby's genetic abnormality is fatal, and they proceed to terminate anyway. The doctors want this grey area removed from the law, as if grey areas can ever be removed completely from medicine.

But the report also provided a terrible, horrifying insight into the nature of abortion. The doctors interviewed admitted that when a baby is late term, they must sometimes "stab it in the heart" in order to kill it before delivery.

Some of them refer to themselves as "Doctor Death." They fear some colleagues look at them with contempt. They admit that killing the baby in the womb is "brutal" and "awful." They strongly indicated that some of the babies are born alive after abortion, resulting in their "begging people to help" them provide palliative care.

This ought to shock the conscience of the nation and all those who voted yes, but it didn't, because the research was barely reported. Nothing must be

allowed to disturb the consciences of those who bulldozed the Eighth Amendment from the Constitution. (For those who wish to look up the report, it is titled "Fetal medicine specialist experiences of providing a new service of termination of pregnancy for fatal fetal anomaly: a qualitative study.")

A few months ago, some more information about the awful new regime came to light, namely the first annual report on the number of abortions taking place in Ireland. The figure ought to stick in the mind: 6,666. How horribly symbolic. Again, the number was underreported by the media.

Of the 6,666 terminations, 6542 took place before 12 weeks, 21 were conducted because there was deemed to be a risk to the mother's life or health, three were carried out because there was an "emergency" risk to her life, and 100 were performed on the fatal abnormality ground.

We were told almost nothing else. In Britain, the U.S., and elsewhere, huge amounts of data are produced. This allows us, for example, to see if women from poor backgrounds, ethnic minorities, unmarried versus married, or younger versus older are more likely to have abortions.

But the Irish Government in its wisdom decided such information would be an invasion of privacy.

In any other field of healthcare (I use that term advisedly), fine-grade demographic information is produced to find out who is more at risk of a particular disease and what parts of the population to target with health information.

But since abortion is not a disease, and because no negative moral judgment whatsoever is to be passed on it, and because every abortion is apparently requested for the best possible reasons under the circumstances, why would we ask any questions? That would be intrusive.

What is to be gained by finding out that poorer women are more likely to have abortions than better-off women and then finding ways to reduce the abortion rate among the first group? Well, by this logic, it doesn't matter a whit if poverty drives twice or three times or 100 times more women to have abortions than their more affluent counterparts. It's a totally private choice with no public ramifications whatsoever. Which is obviously baloney, but it's baloney our Government is perfectly willing to accept for the purposes of the ideology.

Nonetheless, we now know with moral certainty that the Eighth Amendment saved lives. At the absolute outside, if you add together the number of Irish women who went to England for terminations the year before abortion became legal in Ireland, plus a high estimate of the number who used the abortion pill illegally at home, about 5,000 Irish women had abortions in 2018.

Take the 6,666 figure and add in the 375 who still went to England for a termination last year and you get a total of 7,041, an increase of more than 2,000 over that estimate of 5,000, which is almost certainly on the high side. That 2,000 is

the number of unborn lives saved in a single year alone.

We can see that in the 35 years of its existence, the Eighth Amendment saved tens of thousands of lives. This should not be underestimated. It was a huge achievement.

It is also encouraging that half of Ireland's maternity units still won't perform abortions because a lot of doctors remain pro-life and will have nothing to do with it. The vast majority of doctors in general practice won't prescribe the abortion pill. At the last count, only about 10 percent are willing to do so.

Now, on to the issue of assisted suicide. In order to convince people to vote for abortion in 2018, pro-choice campaigners and their media allies highlighted the hard cases and the right to choose to do whatever you want with your own body.

Well, now that the Irish people are sold on those arguments, it becomes a relatively simple thing to sell them assisted suicide.

The arguments are the same. It is a "compassionate" response to the hard cases of those suffering from terminal illnesses and unbearable pain. In addition, people should be given the choice of dying through assisted suicide if that is their wish. Who are we to deny them their autonomy?

During the abortion referendum campaign, when people like Kevin Doran, the bishop of Elphin in the west of Ireland, warned that euthanasia was next, he was attacked for "scaremongering."

Now, suddenly, even quicker than many of the worst pessimists predicted, assisted suicide is nearly upon us. It could be law by this time next year.

Gino Kenny, a far-left member of our parliament (which we call the Dail), published a Private Member's Bill in September called the "Dying with Dignity Bill."

Usually Private Members' Bills get nowhere because they lack Government support. But this one is different. A vote on it took place in October in the Dail, and it was advanced to second stage, that is, committee stage, where it will be scrutinized by members of the Justice Committee.

TDs (as we call our MPs) in the Government parties were allowed a free vote. Some very significant Government members voted in favor of the Bill, including Deputy Prime Minister Leo Varadkar, Health Minister Stephen Donnelly, and Justice Minister Helen McEntee.

The vote took place as the country was (and is) convulsed and distracted by Covid-19. It is highly likely that most members of the public are barely aware that euthanasia is now on the legislative tracks and moving fast along them. There have been a handful of debates in the media, some of which I have taken part in, but if you blinked, you'd have missed them. The topic has not made it to the top of the news bulletins or the front pages of the newspaper in the way

it deserves, despite its enormous moral gravity. Instead, it is almost as though the media have ordained that the less attention they give it, the less likely there is to be much opposition.

Also, and vitally, this time there doesn't have to be a referendum. The reason the pro-life amendment was inserted into the Constitution back in 1983 was precisely to prevent the possibility of a hard case being used to bounce the Dail into passing abortion legislation. Only the people could decide that.

But nothing in our Constitution prevents the Dail from voting in favor of assisted suicide. In fact, a few years ago the Irish Supreme Court explicitly told politicians that they could do so. A case had come before the court involving a woman who had advanced MS. She wanted to be allowed to avail herself of assisted suicide, or "medical assistance in dying" as they like to call it in Canada. She claimed her right to privacy was being violated. The court ruled against her but expressed full sympathy and basically told politicians it was up to them now to decide what to do.

This was before the abortion referendum, which the Government wanted to get out of the way first. Therefore, assisted suicide was put on the backburner, but, given the scale of the pro-abortion victory in May 2018, those who also back assisted suicide were emboldened.

The only concern the leaders of the two main governing parties—Fianna Fail and Fine Gael—have is that by passing some version of Kenny's Bill they might alienate a few more of their pro-life voters when neither party is in great electoral shape at present, especially the more traditionally conservative of the two, Fianna Fail. This is why they would prefer to see the Bill sneak through like a thief in the night with as little fuss or debate as possible.

It is true that the current Taoiseach (Prime Minister) and leader of Fianna Fail Micheal Martin voted against the Bill when it was being moved to second stage in October, but it is quite likely that his view will "evolve," as it did in the case of abortion, when he moved from opposing abortion to being in favor. Lots of our politicians "evolved" in the same way, just like Joe Biden in America.

Plenty of "evolving" is also taking part with regard to assisted suicide.

The Bill in question, by the way, is only 12 pages long, which is pitiful given its importance. An equivalent piece of legislation legalizing assisted suicide in the Australian state of Victoria (in June 2019) runs to 137 pages.

I debated Gino Kenny on radio when his Bill was first being proposed. It was quickly apparent he did not understand his own piece of legislation. He said it mentions "unbearable pain." It doesn't. He said a person would need to be nearing the end of his or her life before choosing assisted suicide. It doesn't require that either. It only says the person needs to be diagnosed with a terminal illness, but doesn't stipulate how close to the end of life he or she needs to be.

Therefore, a person could be diagnosed with a terminal illness tomorrow,

have potentially years of life remaining, and begin the approval process for assisted suicide on the spot. Two weeks later, that person could receive a lethal injection if two doctors were found willing to authorize it. Note also that the Bill says only that the person is "likely" to die from the illness. Does this mean they are 51 percent likely to die from it? "Terminal illness" is so broadly defined it could cover dementia.

Despite this, supporters of the Bill, including Kenny, say assisted suicide would be fenced around with all sorts of safeguards, which even a cursory examination of the short Bill confirms is manifest nonsense. Nonetheless, journalists were happy to parrot the Kenny line about safeguards despite all evidence to the contrary. It was as though they hadn't read the Bill themselves.

And it also looked like many of the politicians who voted to move it to committee stage hadn't read the document either. Certainly, there was little or no evidence of it when the Bill was "debated" in the Dail. In that "debate," only one pro-life voice was given the floor. Everyone else given speaking time was for the Bill. The standard of contributions for the most part was embarrassingly low.

This is not how a serious democracy operates, or indeed any serious society. Something of such moral magnitude ought to be debated in a serious way. Instead you got the impression that most TDs who took part in the debate merely wanted to signal their liberal virtue to their supporters rather than do the hard work of reading the Bill, researching what has happened in other countries, hearing other voices honestly and respectfully, and then allowing the public a proper say in the debate.

But how can you have a proper public debate when all people hear about are the hard cases, when they are not informed of how quickly the grounds for assisted suicide have expanded in countries like Belgium and the Netherlands, and when they are told that it is "compassionate" to support such a measure and hard-hearted or dogmatic to oppose it?

Needless to say, the voices of the Churches will not be heeded in any debate we do have. In any case, the Catholic bishops have been very quiet for the most part about the matter, and the outgoing archbishop of Dublin Diarmuid Martin has been absolutely silent. Therefore, many ordinary, Mass-going Catholics are blissfully unaware of what is coming their way, or how utterly relevant the development is to them given how many are past retirement age.

Probably the only group capable of stopping the Bill in its tracks is the palliative care doctors. No one deals more with patients nearing the end of their lives than they do, and no one can accuse them of lacking compassion. If euthanasia and assisted suicide are "pro-compassion," then surely they, out of all groups, should be most in favor?

But it is precisely because they deal with people at their most vulnerable that

they are opposed to assisted suicide. They know the terrible signal that legalizing it would send to patients with terminal illnesses: namely, that their lives are not really worth living anymore and that suicide is now considered a perfectly acceptable, totally understandable option to place before them. It invites them to feel like a burden to themselves and others, to consider their lives to be "unbearable." Patients diagnosed with MS, Parkinson's Disease, even dementia will feel less valued. And they will feel even less so when they hear other people with such conditions explain why they want to die by lethal substance.

In fact, in the assisted suicide debate, we throw out all the usual rules about how we discuss suicide in general. One of those rules is that we should take great care not to present suicide as an understandable way out in difficult circumstances because of the well-known copy-cat effect. If a particular case of suicide is presented too sympathetically, then some people hearing or reading about why a given person killed themselves might think, "That person is like me, maybe I should consider suicide also."

But in discussions about assisted suicide, the public are explicitly invited to sympathize with the person in "unbearable suffering" who wants to die. So when a person with, say, MS, talks in this way with a sympathetic interviewer, everyone listening who has MS is invited to think in the same way. This is a terrible thing to do, and it is why palliative care doctors oppose assisted suicide.

If their voices are given a proper hearing in the Irish debate (such as it is) about assisted suicide, and in particular if politicians listen to them properly, then there is some chance of this Bill being rejected. But if not, it will certainly be passed in some form, and Ireland will then have taken another giant step into the Culture of Death that sees killing the "burdensome" as acceptable and "merciful."

Reclaiming Feminism's Christian Roots

Mary Kenny

I suppose I first became a feminist as a rebellious young woman at an Irish Catholic convent school—this would be back in the 1950s, just edging into the early 1960s. This was a period in Irish life which was traditional and conservative. Since the foundation of the Irish state (political independence started in 1922-23), the country was stewarded by a careful, prudent, and sometimes culturally isolated governance, and in many respects ordinary life hadn't changed very much over the decades.

But change was already in the air with the election of Pope John XXIII to the papacy in 1958, and then the announcement of the Second Vatican Council. One thing led to another, and within a couple of years I was in Paris aligning myself with revolting students protesting about war and peace.

That's all a long time ago, but access to the retrospective glance is one of the blessings of the senior years: You can see how things develop from the vantage of history. As adolescents we thought those nuns were very old-fashioned, and to be sure, their order did need a little updating (religious magazines in Ireland in that era would publish glowing reports about how much more modern and outgoing American nuns were). And yet, in their own way, it could be said that these sisters practiced a form of feminism by example.

Nuns had chosen their "vocation"—that is, their "calling"—after deliberate reflection. They hadn't been railroaded into a pattern of living expected by society. Some had chosen the convent for reasons of spirituality, but quite a few also brought an element of artistic or intellectual endeavour. Women religious were free to study and to research in a way that wasn't often available to lay women. The recently deceased Irish historian Margaret MacCurtain remained, all her life, a Dominican nun. Back in the 1950s, when many of her female contemporaries were living conventional lives, Margaret was researching 16th- and 17th-century manuscripts in Louvain, Belgium, and Salamanca, Spain.

And nuns were often confident women accustomed to authority: A convent is an institution entirely organized by women. In fact, their reputation for organization was sometimes considered daunting.

I have read many memoirs of women of my generation who felt that "society

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offered no other role to women except marriage and children." But I never recall the Loreto nuns exalting marriage as a future career. Occasionally they would say, "Girls, you are the mothers of tomorrow." But they were much keener for their teenage pupils to focus on examination success and obtaining a good job than to entertain thoughts of marriage. They were also very critical of women "stuffing their heads with silliness," in line with the more inane aspects of popular culture.

I had my differences with nuns at the time, yet they were following in a tradition of what we would now call women's empowerment.

The fight for education is always seen as the first staging post in women's emancipation. And women's education was pioneered by women who founded teaching orders of nuns. Angela de Merici, who died in Italy in 1540, founded the Ursulines, the first order of sisters to be specifically committed to teaching girls. She was a remarkable person who had a great educational vision. Other foundresses followed: Mary Ward, who died in 1645, founded the Loreto order. St. Jane Frances de Chantal, who died in 1767, was a widow when she started the Order of the Visitation: In her lifetime, her order expanded to 80 convents, and she was said to display administrative genius in her handling of them. (She was also the grandmother of the French writer Madame de Sévigné.) Then there was Nano Nagle, who died in 1784, and is regarded as the founder of education in Ireland. She launched the Presentation Sisters, with a particular view to giving poor children the same opportunities as richer ones. And through her so many more energetic women religious thus spread to the new world in the Americas and Australia.

Many, if not most, Irishwomen of my generation who became feminists were educated by nuns: Our ex-President Mary Robinson actually wanted to become a nun. (She was turned down by the convent where she applied, so she became a law professor, senator, and head of state instead!) Significantly, several of her clever and ambitious aunts were nuns.

We know that many of the early modern feminists were Christians—we think of the legacy of Susan B. Anthony and Lucy Cady Stanton, and their involvement in the abolitionist movement, which was driven by Christian activists. In Britain, women like Josephine Butler—a devout Christian—campaigned against the slave trade and against the sexual exploitation and abuse of girls. She had a considerable influence on Millicent Fawcett, whose statue in London is emblematic of women's emancipation.

That element of serious Christian commitment and feminism remained a motif throughout the early to middle years of the 20th century. Not all feminists were Christian, or women of faith. (Some were secular or unassociated with faith issues.) But many were motivated by faith.

So what changed between then and now? I believe a key intellectual shift

came about, first, with Simone de Beauvoir's publication of *The Second Sex*. This was originally published in French in 1949, but it didn't gain a universal reach until paperback British and American editions emerged in the 1960s. De Beauvoir was a considerable intellectual, and her classic text has many facets, but certain themes stand out: One was that women aren't born into the stereotype of womanhood, but are "conditioned" by society into becoming what we identify as womanly. (This is the basis of so much confusion today about "gender": The radical American feminist Judith Butler is the chief purveyor of the notion that all gender is "socially constructed.")

The second theme in de Beauvoir's work was hostility to motherhood. She had contempt for mothers, for marriage, and for women who defined themselves as homemakers. This attitude derived from her own background: Her mother was a compliant woman, religious, and a homemaker. Her father was clever, feckless, and lived freely. Simone wanted her father's life, not her mother's.

Crucially, she anathemized pregnancy. It turned a woman into "the plaything of nature" and removed "autonomy." Repeatedly, she speaks of "the bondage of reproduction," the "servitude" of fertility, woman's "enslavement to the species," and the "parasite" within a pregnant woman. Women could never be as free as men until this "slavery" to Nature was overcome, she ordained.

And so, feminism in the 1960s, though initially drawing on the traditions of education, suffrage, and emancipation, moved towards a focus on the body. The contraceptive Pill, launched at the beginning of the 1960s, had a huge impact—reproduction became medicalized. The birth control movement—which had started at the beginning of the 20th century with sexual radicals like Havelock Ellis and eugenicists like Marie Stopes and Margaret Sanger—now became part of feminism. The Women's Liberation movement of the mid-1960s also drew on several other influences—student radicals, the civil rights movement, hippies, flower children, peaceniks, and the music revolution. But by the 1970s, de Beauvoir's disdain for pregnancy and motherhood fed into abortion politics, steering feminism in the directions that we have come to recognize in modern times.

Yet there were feminist traditions, and traditions of women's emancipation, that were quite genuinely diverse. The Prohibition movements, both in Scandinavia and in the United States, were driven by women who were strong (sometimes extreme) anti-liquor crusaders; they united as the Women's Christian Temperance Union. One of its leading figures, Carrie A. Nation, was rather a virago, whose practice was to take an axe to the taverns where the men were boozing. But the purpose of their campaigns was to put a halt to what we would now call domestic abuse: Excessive drinking was implicated (still is) in three-quarters of cases of "wife-beating," as it was then called, and in child cruelty.

Feminism, like other "isms," is always in the process of changing, but what

is in the deposit of history will always remain, and its seeds will periodically regerminate. The tradition of Christian (perhaps that should be Judeo-Christian) feminism reaches back, not just to Angela de Merici, but to earlier holy women, such as Hildegard of Bingen, or Hilda of Whitby, the abbess of a double monastery commanding men and women. Christian women missionaries, by the way, were trying to halt Female Genital Mutilation in the 1920s and 30s—and were condemned by Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya as "colonialists" for their efforts.

It's been heartening to see the surge of pro-life women elected to the U.S. House and Senate in the November 2020 election, and more than heartening to witness the visibility of Amy Coney Barrett in the Supreme Court. Here's a woman who has had a brilliant education, is a highly accomplished lawyer, is married, and is a mother to seven children—two adopted, one with special needs. Back in the 1960s, feminists talked about the need for "role-models": Well, here is a superb examplar, as well as a living disproof of the de Beauvoir notion that motherhood is incompatible with the development of reason.

There have been many strands of feminism, some with roots in surprisingly traditional Christian and Catholic soil, and we should reclaim the good traditions of such humane and pro-life feminism where we find them.

"I hardly recognize the old neighborhood."

On-screen Characters/Off-screen Life

Ellen Wilson Fielding

I once belonged to a book club that tackled Sigrid Undset's mammoth historical novel *Kristin Lavransdatter*. This long work (a trilogy, actually) traces the title character's life in medieval Norway, depicting the harm she (and later her well-meaning but impulsive and undisciplined husband) inflicts on herself and others through her willfulness and lack of self-governance. Outwardly, in some ways her life was conventionally lived: She married, bore and raised children, and managed a large household. But her inability or unwillingness to submit her wayward emotions to the regulation of reason drove her to many poor choices that, once made, had to be lived with, including her marriage to someone equally unregulated. Despite achieving a good and perhaps even holy death from the Black Plague, Kristin can at times make this wonderful novel a frustrating read for those rooting for her to (as the Mom in *Freaky Friday* daily admonishes her teenage daughter) "Make good choices!" One of my book club members found herself actually praying for Kristin at critical points in her story, so real had the fictional character become to her and so deeply did she empathize with her.

But good fictional characters are like that: They make the reader hope for a way these beloved figures can (like the also-fictional Pinocchio) become "real" someday—perhaps so real that they could even be smuggled some way into the colorful company of heaven.

Even much more pedestrian fictional characters living the prosaic sins of our own era can make us wish that. I was pondering the destinies of sets of sitcom characters being streamed into my household by members of my family during this Covid-19 year of limited entertainment options. None of us were seeking edgy or esoteric series during this anxious period. Instead, we were variously craving the equivalent of comfort food, which among other offerings meant for some of us many hours of *Friends* and *The Office*, interspersed with the slightly later and snarkier *Big Bang Theory.*

When you ingest long series this way, not spread out thin over distracted years but in big thick batches, you notice even minor changes in the characters—development, of a sort. In the ordinary sitcom, people fall in love with the wrong people and then eventually with the "right" one, and they may flounder a bit professionally until at last latching onto a career or lifestyle that better conforms to their needs and aptitudes. They frequently release some childhood

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resentments, maybe resolve a fractious family relationship. They grow up—to a point. But not so far that the chemistry of the series and the largely predictable actions and reactions of the protagonists are altered out of recognition. The series is a brand, and as some of us remember from the 1980s "New Coke" debacle, we don't usually like our comfortably familiar brands messed with.

But like my friend praying for poor deluded Kristin, I found myself wishing these sitcom characters could not only progress much faster in the journey to maturity, but much farther as well. Thinking again of Pinocchio, I silently told the screen characters, "You will never become a 'real boy' [or 'real girl'] unless you dig deeper than that, sacrifice more, think more clearly, love more devotedly."

For instance, watching *Friends* characters Rachel and Monica flounder through a series of shallow and unsatisfactory relationships and even one-night stands, I wondered what would happen if one of them had a true epiphany, rather than one of those mini-epiphanies so plentifully spread about this and other sitcoms, like "He really is too young for me," or "It makes no sense to keep dating him, we want different things." No, I mean a life-changing, series-changing illumination like, "Why am I sleeping with everyone I date? What is the purpose of sex, anyway? Isn't sexual intercourse implicitly enacting a total gift of self that is therefore a lie if, at best, neither of the parties even knows where this is going or is prepared to promise forever?"

Or take the episode in which Ross and Monica's grandmother dies. Along with many genuinely comic bits in the hospital and in clearing out her home after her death, this episode cruised closer than usual to some deeper things, leading the younger *Friends* generation to imagine their grandmother and her friends as young twenty-somethings who once also hung out with their friends—but that is as far as the episode went. No one dug even in a gingerly way into the meaning of this repeated generational handoff of life, or delved into what the family's Jewish ancestral religion might be able to contribute towards a theory of an afterlife, or its characteristics, or its requirements.

Or take Rachel's unplanned pregnancy with ex-boyfriend Ross. Yes, she decides to have the baby (who, after the first few newborn months, pops in for briefer and briefer scenes snatched from Rachel's more interesting burgeoning social and professional life). But the scene in the Ladies' Room where Rachel waits for the result of the home pregnancy test suggests that the determining factor in her not seeking other options is that she wants the baby. What if she didn't want the baby, but still worked her way through to some deeper realization of the objective reality of the unborn as a fellow human being? What if that led her to rethink her lifestyle and choices, resolving to better respect her God-given power to create such a human person and the huge responsibility that entails?

Or what if, to turn to another character, the repeated jokes about Chandler's

pornography use led him (and others, such as Joey) to examine just how pornography affects his relationships with women—including, ultimately, his relationship with his wife Monica? Or what if one of those apparently fairly frequent hangover mornings prompted one of the characters to reluctantly admit an alcohol abuse problem? It wasn't a problem that wouldn't have occurred to the cast, since one of them struggled off-screen for years with addictions.

The standard response to these "what ifs" is that a sitcom is light comedy that attempts to appeal to its contemporary audience, perhaps in part by steering clear of deeper matters, particularly those that might divide and alienate viewers. And in this *Friends* resembles most of its genre. Oh, some sitcom writers and producers fondly believe they are edgily probing important societal problems or challenging less evolved viewers by, for example, running characters in gay marriages, but instead of "courageously" producing edgy comedy, they are chiefly collaborating in an echo chamber of accepted opinion. True edginess would be depicting a gay person struggling, not without defeats and temptations to despair, to live a chaste life. Or it would be an episode displaying the emotional, psychological, and biological havoc of transgender transitioning in teenagers. Or it would be confronting the viewer with the sheer Emperor's-new-clothes insanity of believing gender is fluid or changeable.

Or how about something really radical: a straight religious character who believes neither an active homosexual lifestyle nor transgender transitions are morally healthy—or healthy in any other way—but is not portrayed as a Taliban member, a bigot, or an ignorant and hate-filled fanatic? In other words, why not convey a little of the reality of conflicting opinions and the experiences that form them? Or are "it's not fair" and "people should do what will make them happy" and "you're a hater" deemed to fully plumb the depths of progressive thought?

Or maybe, while in the throes of romantic heartache, job termination, or a parent's divorce, one of the friends might contemplate suicide, prompting all of them to consider what makes life worth living, and under what circumstances they might consider ending it—or might consider not intervening when a friend chooses to end it. Or maybe the marital regrets of Rachel's mother and her ensuing divorce could nudge Rachel to reflect on what a marriage vow is, the sorts of escape clauses it may or may not offer, and whether, perhaps, Thomas More in *A Man for All Seasons* correctly captured the nature of a vow or oath: "When a man takes an oath . . . he's holding his own self in his own hands. Like water [he cups his hands] and if he opens his fingers then, he needn't hope to find himself again."

But this kind of edginess seems largely absent not just from popular comedy but also from many contemporary dramatic presentations. Like the Socialist Realism of Stalin's Soviet Union, our own era's dramatic questions have their

smugly self-satisfied answers, the opposition members are cartoon characters, and the conversation never gives more than a socially shallow consideration of "What are we doing here?"

I don't mean to sound dismissive of the *Friends* cast of characters or all the other casts of sitcom characters who are now being binge-watched during Covid-19 shutdowns. In fact, an abundance of gratitude for whiling away many a tedious hour drives me to want more from them and for them than a superficial coasting along the surface of life. Surely their energy and emotions should not be exhausted by bobbing from one emotional attachment to another, where jobs and boyfriends and a really killer pair of boots end up all seeming roughly commensurate, because they all derive importance from the intensity of the pull of attraction or push of repulsion. It makes me sympathize with Geppetto's ambitious desire for more for his marionette creation. Or maybe my feelings more closely resemble those of a good teacher who urges her students to uncover a yet deeper layer of meaning, rather than the stereotypical therapist of comedy who confines his efforts to asking his client, "So how did that make you feel?"

In fact, I wish that "more" not only for the *Friends* cast and the cast of *The Office* and *The Big Bang Theory* but even, reaching back over the decades, for the cast of Jackie Gleason's *The Honeymooners*. I sometimes wonder what happens to Alice and Ralph Kramden in the years following the filming of their series. Do they ever have children? And do they raise them in that cramped apartment, or manage to move to a house in the suburbs? What happens to those children, who would have grown up in the 1960s and come of age in the 1970s? Are they disastrously caught by the culture's toxic undertow? Do they veer into radical politics or sexual permissiveness, shack up with someone, get dumped, and exercise their freshly granted abortion right? And how would Alice and Ralph react to all this? What exactly were Alice and Ralph's deeper beliefs about life and death?

If characters are drawn well enough for viewers to muse about their post-screen lives, then they are real enough for scriptwriters to give them apprehensions of higher meaning or the emotional, intellectual, and spiritual resources to meet possible tragedy, address hard questions, respond to assaults on their values. A sitcom can't grapple with any of these more than tangentially or episodically, but it could suggest to us elliptically and allusively, in a thousand casual details and throwaway lines, the nature and degree of ballast they have to withstand the storms of life. Like us, these characters may perhaps shrink from facing hard truths or risking rejection by loved ones; they may be confused and carried along by the shallow tributary that our own times have steered us into, and risk running aground. They may turn out not to be like the people we thought them, resembling childhood playmates with whom we share no common ground years

later. But if these characters are given nothing significant to confront, they are merely marionettes rather than "real" people.

The pleasantly pacifying sitcom format with its winsome characters and snappy comebacks has its place among us, like mac and cheese for the frayed psyche at the end of a tiring day. And in this limited supportive role, perhaps it is acceptable that the characters moving across the screen do not stray too far from their largely self-absorbed but rarely mean-spirited selves. It suits our craving for a particular, easily digestible experience, rather than the more demanding complexities of life and death, the problem of pain, the pursuit of the good, the high cost of love.

"Humankind cannot bear very much reality," said T. S. Eliot in *Four Quartets*. This has been so since the serpent spun his fantasy in Eden of a world where human creatures could "be like gods"; certainly it is true in our own era, where human beings cling to their own version of the same fantasy. "Like gods," the tech wizards and their hopeful followers expect to end death. "Like gods," human geneticists and biologists tinker with alternate versions of our DNA, with dreams of recreating humanity. "Like gods," some people choose to inhabit "female" or "male" bodies they were not born into (or at least the best mock-up that hormones and cosmetic surgery can achieve). Such ambitions to dethrone the Creator are extreme rejections of reality, but we all participate in more modest ones, employing ingenuity to eclipse from our view the sublime simplicity of God and to replace our civilization's earlier attempts to address the great philosophical questions about ourselves and our place in the world. Instead, our greatest minds—our scientists and technical wizards—mostly engage in puzzle-solving, often, though by no means always, with good results.

And side-stepping these great philosophical questions or accepting superficial and self-serving answers has cost us. For example, it has dropped us below the level of even the most primitive peoples in our ignorance of human nature and society.

For much of the series, *Friends* offers jokes at Chandler's expense about his insecure sense of masculinity and what that might imply about his sexual orientation. His bizarre family background, with a publicly promiscuous mother and an equally public transvestite father, are the implicit roots of his insecurities. Instead of acknowledging the psychological harm of his unconventional childhood, his friends enjoy his mother's celebrity status. Monica pushes him to invite his father to their wedding in a scene that takes place in the club where his father performs in drag. Never does Chandler discuss the rightness or even the wisdom of his parents' choices, although he shares ways in which their conduct embarrassed him. Nor does he discuss with them or others the narcissistic self-indulgence of their lifestyles.

More ordinary forms of moral blindness also surface throughout the series. For example, Chandler and Rachel both suffer from their parents' divorces;

however, such suffering is depicted as real but necessary collateral damage for the sake of the parents' happiness. Monica's relationship with a much older man whose children are now grown founders on her desire to have children. The disagreement is presented as emotionally wrenching, but the characters discuss it solely within the limited realm of conflicting emotions and preferences. Her desire to marry and have children, which would be understood in almost all other times and places as not only natural but contributing to the survival of the community and aligned with the creative will of God, is diminished in *Friends* to a personal ambition that she hopes eventually to achieve with someone else who also wants children.

Even in her parents' generation, this understanding of marriage had begun fraying. By the *Friends* generation, re-engineering past arrangements and re-thinking former conventions is the main order of business. The series opens, after all, with Rachel jettisoning her own conventional future by jilting her betrothed on their wedding day. In this same episode Ross discovers his wife has left him for a woman (and shortly thereafter he will learn she is pregnant with their son, whom the two women intend to raise).

So the show's premise is not that we learn the fundamentals of how to live happy and fulfilling adult lives from our parents, who form part of a millennia-long chain successfully handing on the template of human life to us, so that we in turn can pass it on to our children. Instead, *Friends* displays a more developed version of something we have been familiar with since at least the 1960s (and incipiently for much longer): the replacement of the hierarchical family with our peers as primary supports and guides in carving out a generation's path through the jungle of undifferentiated choices.

The marital ambitions of the women in *Friends* are not outlandish or wrong: They would be considered legitimate as far as they go in many, perhaps most, times and places. Emotional stability, love and companionship, and children are primary personal motivations for marriage even among the most traditional-minded persons. But when volatile emotions and idiosyncratic preferences are identified as the only legitimate bases for our decisions, or at least the ones carrying the most weight, there is very little moral ground to challenge the less noble and self-sacrificing and even faulty moral choices of others. On what grounds can we criticize them? Because they hurt other people? The divorces of Chandler's parents, of Rachel's parents, hurt others too, but the screenwriters do not depict them as questionable on that account.

As mentioned earlier, even Rachel's decision to keep her baby is decided on emotion, and therefore can't serve as a moral yardstick or even experienced advice for others in unexpected pregnancies. There is no suggestion that anyone among the *Friends* group would have been appalled (on grounds of principle)

at her decision to abort, however squeamish they might have felt, and whatever Ross's paternal instincts might have been. In other words, just because the protagonists do not defend or discuss abortion or gender choices or anything else on the ethical table today does not mean, given how they habitually arrive at their decisions, they would not find any or all of these acceptable if the person making the decision "felt" it was the right one.

But of course the *Friends* cast has plenty of company on the other side of the viewing screen. In fact, by the mid-1990s when the series began airing, as far as deciding major life decisions on purely emotional grounds goes, the camel's nose had long since gone under the tent, although portions of its anatomy since on display were not yet revealed to the tent-dwellers.

In the current extremely divisive conditions of our country, a divisiveness that has been building for decades but has found fertile conditions for growth in the past year, *Friends* may seem light years removed from our situation. But the "if it makes you happy" tolerance on display in *Friends*—and the boatload of other series whose characters largely share the same emotional decision flowchart—is directly related to our bitter cancel culture and its rejection of past role models. Both spurn reason, history, and tradition as guides to thought and behavior and refuse to acknowledge that we "stand upon the shoulders of giants." Both also reject or ignore religion or else refashion (mostly non-Western) religion in their own image. The sitcom world, so pleasant and comparatively serene (at least for the viewer) even in its recent snarkier incarnations, presents the domestic or professional lives of characters ripe (little though they know it) for getting "woke."

Without anchoring their lives in any tradition more substantial than Secret Santa, with almost no knowledge of history or adherence to a religious faith deeper, more dogmatic, or more morally challenging than pop-Buddhism or Pachamama-style paganism, without grounding Western concepts of natural law and the God-given value of the individual, without an engrained understanding of the value of sacrificing for others, without the virtue of temperance to arm them against their materialist culture, these characters seem poised to be swept away by levelling political passions and our era's tribal bonding, though that strong tide demands repudiation of a religion and civilization that (after all) they never learned to know, love, or appreciate.

"Come on, Rachel! Come on, Monica! It doesn't have to be this way!" I tell them as I watch them steer for the unprotected edge of the flat, two-dimensional world they inhabit. But judging by the limited internal resources they and their like have been given by the scriptwriters, things don't look too good for our side of the screen either.

BOOKNOTES

BROKEN BONDS: SURROGATE MOTHERS SPEAK OUT

Jennifer Lahl, Melinda Tankard Reist, and Renate Klein, eds.
(Mission Beach, Queensland: Spinifex Press, 2019. Paperback, pp. 140. Also available on Kindle.)

Reviewed by John Grondelski

Surrogacy is a form of human trafficking polite society countenances. The $25 billion per year global fertility business—what Jennifer Lahl calls "Big Fertility"—wants you to picture its product as happy faces and bouncing babies. Unhappy stories rarely get out. Perhaps the last time we really paid attention to the exploitation of a gestational mother was when Mary Beth Whitehead made the news back in the late 1980s. (See her book *A Mother's Story* for a first-hand account of surrogacy gone wrong.)

Big Fertility doesn't want us to listen to stories like Whitehead's because they undermine the mythology it peddles about "happy families [and huge profits] through surrogacy." Kudos, then, to Jennifer Lahl and her co-editors Melinda Tankard Reist and Renate Klein for letting women hired to be "gestational mothers" tell their stories in their own voices. Lahl, a pediatric critical-care nurse, is President of the Center for Bioethics and Culture in California, which has worked to publicize ethical issues connected with "making life" (gamete donation and surrogacy). Renate Klein is a biologist, feminist author, and retired faculty member of Deakin University in Australia. She founded Spinifex Press (the book's publisher). Melinda Tankard Reist, the author of several books, is a well-known Australian blogger and broadcast commentator.

Broken Bonds provides the accounts of sixteen women from nine countries who experienced surrogate motherhood. None of them sound like happy, altruistic "angels" (a common term for mothers used in pro-surrogacy propaganda), smiling as they selflessly turn over the baby they've carried for nine months to the people who employed their services. Most of them are heartbroken. A few simply seem indifferent. I'm not sure which is worse. Their stories show the multifaceted invidious face of gestational surrogacy. Sifting through them, one is hard pressed about where to start in elucidating this sordid world.

One place might be motive. Women often recall noble, even altruistic motives for choosing surrogacy. Britni (USA) says, "At the start, I wanted to do something great" (p. 42). Maggie (USA), a 32-year-old woman subjected to drug-induced hyper-ovulation multiple times—and who is now post-hysterectomy and diagnosed with terminal cancer—discusses how a Big Fertility nurse began enticing her into egg donation 11 years earlier, telling her she was "beautiful,

intelligent, capable, and had a lot going for [her]" (p. 28). Maggie's verb to describe the nurse's MO is typically applied to sex predators and other traffickers: She "groomed" her. Kelly (USA) tells us, "I love being pregnant. I love excitement. I love people fussing over baby bellies and I love happy endings, you know" (p. 75). Alas, she didn't enjoy one.

As Kelly admits later on, "Money plays a big role in surrogacy. If there were no money in surrogacy, I would never have done it" (p. 78). Denise (USA) seamlessly blends the altruistic and pecuniary: "We thought this was a great way for us to help our family and help another family at the same time . . ." (p. 65). When Maggie seemed insufficiently motivated by the idea of contributing her beauty, intelligence, etc., to another family, her groomer threw in the added benefit of ova-donation as a way of paying down student loans. "That did appeal to me" (p. 28).

The accounts of Eastern European women are even blunter. Natalia (Russia) admits "I will get a million rubles after the birth [about $14,500] and already now 20,000 rubles a month. We want to buy a house. It's our only chance to make so much money so fast" (p. 72). Surrogacy proceeds have already gotten Natascha (Russia) a car—"A small one, a Russian brand" (p. 45). Elena (Romania) is the most matter-of-fact: "My price is €8,000 for the pregnancy and birth. . . . Surrogacy is a good way to earn good money, to have bread on the table. Of course, we do it for the money. That's reasonable, isn't it?" (p. 108).

Money goes further overseas, which is why making babies, like making tee-shirts, is often offshored. Elena points out the attractiveness of surrogacy in neighboring Moldova: Moldovan women "are poor but healthy, they only eat good food which they produce themselves. They don't smoke, they keep chickens and grow vegetables. It's a good place to find surrogate mothers. There are lots of young women. They are very beautiful." (p. 108). They also offer pregnancy and birth starting at €5,000. Want even deeper discounts? Read the tragic stories of Ujwala, Dimpy, and Sarala in an Indian surrogacy "bio-market" (pp. 91-100).

The Western women who engage in surrogacy often talk about being stiffed with medical and legal costs, especially if they experience complications to their health during or after pregnancy. Rob (Australia) details how she had to dicker over four $55 transport fees to/from medical appointments (p. 86). Odette (Australia) says she has almost $15,000 in unpaid medical/legal bills (p. 63). Kelly reveals that the Spanish couple who took the twins she carried home with them only paid up when she told them she was Madrid-bound with book editor Jennifer Lahl (p. 80).

One is tempted to ask why the law countenances what amounts to baby selling. The answer is easy. Some countries pretend only to allow "altruistic" (non-compensated) surrogacy, i.e., arrangements in which only "expenses" are reimbursed. (Who is going to audit any padded claims?) Offshoring surrogacy reduces costs in places where the law may not have kept up or law enforcement

turns a blind eye (especially when bought off). When countries like Cambodia ban surrogacy or Thailand prohibits commercial surrogacy (e.g., after Westerners abandoned a handicapped child—Baby Gammy—they didn't want), Big Fertility just relocates to more congenial venues. It's also not simply about money: Surrogacy in Western countries with birthrate citizenship offers a two-fer: a baby *and* a passport. In the United States, surrogacy is governed by state law. Some states have enacted surrogacy-friendly policies; others, exhausted by the abortion controversy, have legal codes, which, designed for parentage and natality questions that did not envision the splicing and dicing of genetic, gestational, and social parenthood, are inadequate to deal with surrogacy.

The women who describe their experiences in this book have been exploited. In a society boasting of "social justice" commitments, the radical power inequality between gestational surrogates and those hiring them (Big Fertility, wealthy people, lawyers indifferent to the conflicts of interest they engage in) is glaring.

Two remaining questions struck me in reading this book. The first is why surrogacy is pretty much ungoverned. In order to adopt a child, comprehensive home studies and fitness reviews are required, but no such protection of the child exists in surrogacy, even in the absence of any genetic/gestational link to the intended "parents."

The really provocative question, however, is how these women could believe that they would remain so emotionally detached from a child who grew and developed within their bodies for nine months that they could then "deliver" that baby with the indifference of a UPS courier bringing a package to your door. Perhaps some succumbed to Big Fertility's propaganda about "happy families through surrogacy." Others, particularly when "helping" a relative was concerned, seemed to think that they would be able to stay involved in that family's life. (Ever heard of Hagar?) Almost all of these women report experiencing a curious inversion during pregnancy: While they believed they would remain indifferent to a pregnancy the commissioning "parents" would be totally agog about, just the opposite happened. The women became increasingly involved with the pregnancy and child, while their employers tended impassively to await "delivery." Even for those women who declared upfront that gestational surrogacy was their route up the economic ladder, their own self-desensitizing stands out: Russian Natalia says "I am an incubator, the vessel for this child" (p. 73). Indian incubator Ujwala is, then, a strange vessel, one that says "My heart is hurting" (p. 93).

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WHAT IT MEANS TO BE HUMAN: THE CASE FOR THE BODY IN PUBLIC BIOETHICS

O. Carter Snead
(Harvard University Press, 2020. Hardcover, pp. 336. Also available on Kindle.)

Reviewed by Maria McFadden Maffucci

O. Carter Snead's *What It Means to Be Human: The Case for the Body in Public Bioethics* is a vital and enlightening book; an engaging dive into the history and philosophical undergirding of the public bioethics on which our jurisprudence concerning human life currently relies. While the field of bioethics was developed in response to "the reported use, abuse and exploitation" of human subjects in research (like the infamous Tuskegee study on African-American males in the 1930s), Snead shows that America's contemporary bioethics overwhelmingly disregards our human reality—embodiment—thus consistently putting vulnerable human lives in peril.

Snead, who is William P. and Hazel B. White Director of the de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture, Professor of Law, and Concurrent Professor of Political Science at the University of Notre Dame, writes: "At its foundation, American public bioethics has a reductive and incomplete vision of human flourishing and identity," one that "defines the human being fundamentally as an atomized and solitary will," relegating "the natural world and even the human body itself as merely inchoate matter to be harnessed and remade in service of such projects of the will." Bioethics has a fatal flaw: overlooking that we are embodied beings.

"As living bodies in time, we are vulnerable, dependent, and subject to natural limits, including injury, illness, senescence and death. Thus, both for our basic survival and to realize our potential, we need to care for one another."

The key principle of our contemporary bioethics, Snead argues, is "expressive individualism," a term coined by sociologist Robert Bellah in his 1985 book *Habits of the Heart*, the result of his interviews with Americans on how they see themselves. "Bellah found that human flourishing consists in the expression of one's innermost identity through freely choosing and configuring life in accordance with his or her own distinctive core institutions, feelings and preferences." This preference for individuals' choices over acknowledging their dependence on others has steadily permeated law and policies in each of three main areas of jurisprudence Snead covers: abortion, assisted reproduction, and assisted suicide/euthanasia. In abortion, the law "frames the public question as a zero-sum conflict between isolated strangers," forgetting that it actually involves the most intimate relationship of mother and child; in the "largely unregulated landscape of assisted reproductive technology," prospective parents and those they turn to insist that the right to have children trumps the consequences

on the vulnerable persons affected or discarded in these procedures; and at the end of life, the law "stubbornly clings to a vision of the patient as an atomized autonomous will as its animating premise, when the embodied reality of such patients is the opposite." (Consider a cancer patient "choosing" death while in the grips of a yet untreated clinical depression.)

The great contemporary moral philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre looms large among the scholars in this book as a brilliant and influential critic of modern society and its lack of virtuous care of the vulnerable. Snead looks to MacIntyre's "virtues of acknowledged dependence"; McIntyre insists that to be an embodied human is to be essentially dependent on others, from our earliest days to our final ones, and that human beings exist on a "scale of disabilities." He sees the paradigm for human caring for one another at all stages as parenthood, and, writes Snead, "pointed to parents of disabled children as the pristine model of this form of care."

Professor Snead here not only explores the anthropological dimension of our public bioethics, he also offers ways to work for better solutions, suggestions perhaps not immediately palatable to either political side in our terribly divided political culture, but which point to an alternate vision of human solidarity. "Issues and laws," he writes, "must be reframed according to the categories of connectivity of the networks of giving and receiving that embodied beings need to survive and flourish." Concerning abortion, for example, "a legal regime for abortion rooted in the anthropology of embodiment would protect unborn children from conception" and at the same time "offer maximal support for their mothers, providing for their health care and other needs, both during and after the pregnancy." Where networks of care are absent, "the law must intervene to protect the vulnerable from exploitation and harm, and from the temptation to harm others or even themselves in the pursuit of their own desires and interests."

Law and policies for the vulnerable are of particular interest to me. I found Alasdair MacIntyre's depiction of special-needs parenting as the model of care momentarily disorienting—as the parent of a disabled adult, I often have to fight *feeling* like a failure. I wonder: Is this because the culture's insistence on achievement and inspiring accomplishments damages our acceptance of the limits caused by physical and mental conditions? We often see stories on the evening news about a disabled individual beating the odds to attain some achievement, and we tear up and cheer—but in celebrating them do we ignore the virtue of accepting our children just as they are, which takes its own grit and perseverance?

More concerning, *What It Means to Be Human* reinforced in my mind the dangers of expressive individualism for the disabled. My husband and I recently attended a seminar at our son's agency regarding guardianship. The message was very upbeat and "client"-centered. We were told several stories of

parent-guardians of disabled individuals who had obstructed their adult child's wishes—to marry, for example, or move out (or, in a young woman's case, *not* be sterilized). We were told that the "trend" was away from the guardianship process, in favor of the rights of the disabled to make their own choices. The agency's website (thearc.org) explains:

> Like their peers without disabilities, individuals with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities must be presumed competent; they must also be assisted to develop as decision-makers through education, supports, and life experience. . . . Less restrictive means of decision-making supports (e.g., health-care proxies, advance directives, supported decision-making, powers of attorney, notarized statements, representation agreements, etc.) should be tried and found to be ineffective in ensuring the individual's decision-making capacity before use of guardianship as an option is considered.

I left that session emotionally rooting for the rights and dreams of the disabled—what mother wouldn't?—and considering a health proxy document the most important immediate need for my son. But I've since realized it is not enough. If he is conscious and deemed able to advocate for himself, and a doctor tells him that some treatment or lack thereof is best for him, he will agree, because he likes to be agreeable, and because he doesn't have the capacity to understand the threats to him inherent in quality-of-life biases.

A recent story from NPR's *All Things Considered* ("As Hospitals Fear Being Overwhelmed by Covid-19, Do the Disabled Get the Same Access?" December 14) is a chilling example that, even with the proper documents, bias against the disabled renders this kind of "rights talk" useless. Sarah McSweeney was a young woman with multiple disabilities, living in a group home run by Arc Oregon, who was transported to the hospital with suspected pneumonia. She travelled with a legal document called a POLST—Portable Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment—a form for the seriously ill to take with them to inform physicians of *their* wishes, which she had filled out with assistance from her caregivers. Arc employee Heidi Barnett said: "We had her at full code. So all treatment. Because she was young and vibrant and had a great life. . . . And that was her wishes, that's what we gathered from her. She wanted to be alive."

However, the several doctors who treated Sarah over the course of three weeks, as well as the hospital's social workers, repeatedly questioned this directive, and eventually countered it by refusing her lifesaving care. Nurse manager of the group home Kimberly Conger recounted that, when aspirational pneumonia was discovered severely affecting one lung, she and the doctor "discussed the possibility of [Sarah] being intubated and letting that lung rest, giving her time to heal and letting the antibiotics do their magic." But then the doctor himself pushed to rewrite McSweeney's care document to a DNR—Do Not Resuscitate, saying that intubating her was a matter of risk versus quality of life. Conger said: "I was like, 'But she has quality of life.' And he looked at me and

goes, 'Oh, she can walk? And talk?'"

The hospital decided that aggressive treatment would cause "more harm than benefit." Sarah McSweeney died of severe sepsis at age 45—a case that speaks to a warning Snead voices in his chapter on end-of-life decisions: "The temptation to alleviate suffering or disability by eliminating the patient must be resisted."

Sarah's story is reported in the context of Covid-19 and the strain on our healthcare system (though I am not at all sure she would have been saved pre-Covid), but I do think that our current situation makes Snead's message in *What It Means to Be Human* even more urgent. Indeed, we can see expressive individualism vs. embodiment at play in the debate over masks to prevent the virus's spread, and in the anxiety about the new vaccines. On the one hand, people express the understandable desire to exercise their individual will and follow their own conscience about what they put *on* their bodies and what they put *in* their bodies; on the other hand, the realities of physical embodiment and vulnerability to disease could make this freedom to choose at odds with one's duty to care for and protect oneself and others.

In his important book, O. Carter Snead asks us to advocate with renewed conviction: As embodied humans, we have crucial human rights as well as inescapable vulnerabilities—and a duty to care for others. Our law and policies must prioritize the right to life and the duty of care for all humans, no matter their age, location, or abilities.

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

FROM THE HLR WEBSITE

Epiphany 2021

Maria McFadden Maffucci

January 6, 2021, would have been my brother Robert's 61st birthday. He died of cancer on December 28, 1994, the Feast of the Holy Innocents, at age 34.

Always at this time of year, Robert is present in the minds and hearts of his family and friends—we share memories, eat his favorite beef-and-potato meals, or raise a pint of Guinness in his honor. He was an extraordinarily loving and affectionate man, a huge (6'4" and, ahem, well-fed) teddy bear of a guy. He was also a deep thinker and articulate writer. At the time of his death, he was heading up our anti-abortion lobbying office, the Ad Hoc Committee in Defense of Life, which back then had an office in Washington DC.

Before he died, Robert was working on an article about the pro-life movement and violence. There had been several shootings at abortion clinics, including the 1994 killings of an abortion doctor and a clinic escort in Pensacola, Florida, by anti-abortion protestor Paul Hill. After Robert's death, I wrote "Why My Brother Won" for the *Human Life Review* (Spring 1995), in which I included some of Robert's unpublished work.

As I recall in the article:

> Robert and I used to commiserate with each other about this: how the violence allowed the media to paint us all as extremists, how frustrating it was to see the harm that the Pensacola killings did to the movement. I remember one day last August, a few weeks after the Hill shootings. I was sitting at home waiting for my then-overdue baby, and Robert was at home recovering from his latest round of chemotherapy. Both of us had seen, on separate talk-shows, a priest arguing for the "justifiable homicide" of abortion doctors. As Roman Catholics, we were appalled to see a man in a Roman collar espousing such views.

(The day before Robert's funeral, December 30, 1994, there was more violence: A man named John Salvi opened fire at two abortion clinics in suburban Brookline outside of Boston, killing two employees, Shannon Lowney and Leanne Nichols.)

In the weeks since the 2020 election, many Christian and Catholic friends or colleagues have written me about how they were fasting and praying "for the election"—that the results could not be accepted, we simply had to pray harder. God would turn things around if only we pray hard enough! But I wondered: How do we know? How can we be sure of God's will? And my brother's words came to mind:

> *It is never correct to say that God is on our side. It is in fact quite presumptuous. He is not here to do our bidding, after all. All we can actually hope for is that through our own choices we will put ourselves on God's side of things. Of course, where we mess up is that we desire it to be the other way around, and then in our minds make it so. We bow to the*

temptation to have God on our team, with ourselves as coach.

Of course, there were thousands of prayerful and peaceful citizens who came to Washington, DC on January 6, 2021, hoping that God was on their side. But there is no way of getting around what happened. And there are consequences.

This is what Robert wrote, back in 1994:

> *Public perception is a crucial element in any struggle in the public square. It is so much harder to prove your position if the populace is not sympathetic to your side. Currently, to the dismay of many, prolifers are being perceived as angry, violent radicals who will hurt you if you don't agree with them. This perception is unfair when applied to the anti-abortion movement in toto but it accurately defines an increasing minority. . . . The answer to all this is a Chestertonian paradox. In order to win this struggle, we must avoid trying to win it. We must do what we do against abortion not because this or that action will secure us a victory but because it is right to perform that action. We can fight endlessly for good, moral legislation to save unborn children, but with the willingness to lose a fight rather than sacrificing principles to win. We can try to remember Christian charity and compassion for those among us who are risking their chances of eternal happiness by fighting against God. Instead of hating these people, and trying to hurt or terrify them, we should be praying for them, and treating them with the basic civility Christians used to be known for . . . We must continue to educate, to provide the calm voice of reason and logic to counter the often hysterical rantings of the other side.*

For over 45 years, thousands of marchers have gathered annually in DC to protest an unjust law—peacefully. Though the media doesn't admit this, the numbers for the March for Life are enormous. And yet, it is always remarkably calm, and marchers are overwhelmingly considerate of the police, as I have witnessed time and time again. Because to respect human life is to, well, respect human life and abhor violence.

What will the March for Life be like on January 29, 2021? Will our movement be scapegoated? Will we be silenced? Will there be violence?

As night fell on January 6th, I thought of Robert, and the meaning of Epiphany—God revealing Himself to us. I wondered what sort of epiphany had been revealed this awful day. I don't presume to know, but I trust, always, that God can bring good out of evil.

Here is how I concluded my article about Robert:

> If I were coaching God, Robert would have won his fight with cancer, and be here to write this

himself. I and many others certainly lobbied hard for that. But the worldly failure, for us believers, is really Robert's gain, because he is with God.

And, whether you are a religious person or not, Robert's thoughts may help to make sense of setbacks in a struggle for the good. When our attempts to educate the world about abortion seem to fail, we have to remember that lives are saved one at a time, and that, successful or not, we may not abandon the moral path. Hatred and violence only hurt our cause and harden people's hearts. Robert's way of hope and faithful perseverance is the only way to truly win.

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

After January 5th

W. Ross Blackburn

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you. And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising (Isaiah 60:1-3).

Thankfully, this year January 6 followed the first Tuesday of the month. Yesterday we elected a man to the Senate who as a pastor claims to speak for God, yet promotes the practice of killing children in the womb. Today we celebrate Epiphany, marking the revelation of Christ to the nations.

Over the last year I have been reading *Fire Within* by Thomas Dubay, S.M., a long reflection on the teachings about prayer of Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross. This morning I read the following:

While the saints are citizens of their times—what else could they be?—they have a knack for transcending the myopias and smallnesses of the concrete circumstances in which all of us live. They are always up-to-date because their vision and love are rooted in eternity.

I had to look up myopia. It can mean lack of vision, imagination, or foresight. It can also mean narrow-mindedness. It was a good January 6 corrective to the happenings of January 5.

Our problems are not small. That we would elect a pastor who promotes killing children to one of the highest offices in the land is evidence enough. Worse, doing so has become normal. After all, most members of the Senate think the same way. A darkness increasingly covers our land.

But the world is no darker now than it was in Jesus' time. In fact, the cardinal text of Epiphany—the visit of the Magi to the infant Jesus—records how these kings had to deceive Herod, who in his effort to kill Jesus and protect his

own throne, would mandate the killing of all infant boys. This is the world into which Jesus was born. This is the world he came to save.

The image of Epiphany is light in darkness. Which means Epiphany is a matter of vision, for that is what light gives us. The church walks by faith, not by sight. We trust not in earthly rulers—not presidents, not senators, not judges. We refuse to get discouraged because the arm of man appears strong. We insist that our vision embrace what we cannot see; even at the horizon of death we look further to the horizon of eternity. And we remember that in Christ alone is our hope. For in the end, the problem at the root of all our problems, abortion included, is sin. And politicians cannot touch that. Only God in Christ can.

Jesus, who said "I am the light of the world," also said to the church, "You are the light of the world." We are people who hope in Christ, and who by that very hope shine in darkness. We should be thankful for those who fight politically for vulnerable children and their mothers. And we should not forget the real work, which is prayer, practical generosity, and faith in the God who sent us Jesus—who is, now and always, light in a dark world.

In the end, like all the saints who have gone before us, we are citizens of our time. What else can we be? The call of the church is to transcend the "myopias and smallnesses" of our present circumstances. Christ reigns, and one day he will restore all things to the way they should be. Our task, as we carry out our concrete daily callings, is to remember that.

—Rev. Dr. W. Ross Blackburn, who writes A Pastor's Reflections for the Human Life Review*'s website, has been Rector of Christ the King, an Anglican Church in Boone, North Carolina, since 2004.*

The Odd Couple and Abortion Culture

Joe Bissonnette

I was seven years old when Neil Simon's Broadway play *The Odd Couple* became a TV series. Forty-five years later, I still remember Oscar and Felix as perfect embodiments of the liberated and the oppressed—which, I suppose, might reveal something about my own organizational limitations. This semester, for the first time in quite a while, I'm sharing my classroom with another teacher. She is bright-eyed, high-energy, orderly, and intense. I think I had powdered sugar from a donut on my sweatshirt when we met.

I approve of orderliness in principle; after all, the major motif in the opening line of Genesis 1 is God bringing order from chaos. But in defense of chaos, God didn't start with order. He could have if He had wanted to, but He didn't.

God must have seen some value in amorphous ambiguity to bother beginning with chaos.

Then, by chapter 4, the champion of order, the farmer Cain, slays his brother, the wandering herdsman Abel, because God preferred the unreserved gratitude and generosity of Abel's offering over that of the prudent manager Cain, who held back his best.

Now, that parallel is a bit unfair, because there's nothing terribly wrong with this nice young teacher wanting the classroom to be neat and tidy, adorned with colorful posters and anodyne inspirational sayings. If asked, many people would probably agree with the idea that school is supposed to cultivate orderliness, responsibility, and conformity. That a school of students should be like a school of fish, mindlessly swimming together, moving as one.

But they would be wrong. The word school comes from schola, which means leisure. The highest thing that takes place in school is not discipline or orderliness, or even the acquisition of essential literacy and numeracy skills, but rather the possibility for reflection and contemplation that opens up on the far side of the acquisition of those skills.

Contemplation can be serene, like the transport we experience in our initial apprehension of a delicate flower. But for the blessed few, serenity can lead to something richer, which is the sublime, the beautiful comingled with the tragic. Think of the essential beauty of the flower. But what if the flower is revealed to be artificial? It is a betrayal, perhaps in part because it does not have the organic complexity of a living thing breaking forth from the earth for no purpose other than beauty. Mostly, however, the artificial flower is a betrayal because it neither lives nor dies. There is no comingling of the tragic.

All life is mortal. It is both terrible and beautiful. It can be puzzling, perplexing, even enigmatic. But apprehending this fruitful ambiguity requires an openness to the possibility of Truth and the courage to follow no matter where it leads. Not just the small "t" truths of social utility, but the capital "T" truths that subsist in themselves and need no justification. While this habit of mind—implicitly, and sometimes explicitly, subversive and non-conformist—has never been widely popular, it is seen far less these days in young students, whose minds, I would argue, are awash in the existential uncertainty unleashed by abortion culture.

The beautiful idea underlying school is that the young should have a good long time in which they don't have to worry about providing for themselves or surviving on their own. They are given the leisure to learn and to think. But imagine their pathway winding through the unmarked graves of brothers and sisters never to be born, should-have-been friends never to be met, and could-have-been spouses never to be wed. The young know that we abort unborn babies, and that they too would have been aborted had their mothers so chosen.

They live in a lingering shadow, a sad darkness. They do not have the spiritual light necessary to see the sublime. They exist on a diet of anodyne inspirational sayings, lacking the courage—because it has not been instilled in them—to be flesh-and-blood bodies animated by immortal souls.

Fortunately, there are ways back. Mercifully, there are always ways back. But they are never where you expect them to be. Oscar, which means "spear of God," was a slob, but he had an eye for wonder, a talent for friendship, and an openness to adventure. Felix, which means "happiness," could never achieve the joy and peace he yearned for because it cannot be achieved as a willed end; it can only be discovered incidentally. The beauty of *The Odd Couple* was the ongoing revelation of hidden and surprising things, provoked by the clash of Oscar's chaotic messiness and Felix's rage for order. As a priest friend often says, "it's our sins which save us."

The souls of the young are small safe spaces, barricaded behind angry leftist orthodoxies. Many of them are not liberals, promoting liberty, and they certainly are not conservatives, conserving wisdom and tradition accrued over time. They are that most dangerous of political animal, utopians, who believe in the absolute perfection of their understanding of things. If the polls are right, they will have their president in November and the age of the joyless Felix will be upon us. But the original Neil Simon screenplay plumbed depths too dark for television. The story began with Felix attempting suicide, and failing because of his fussy, delicate nature. Utopian dreams inevitably implode. Let's just hope the existential wisdom of an Oscar will find the young dreamers before there is too much damage. Such strange twists and turns.

—Joe Bissonnette is a religion teacher. He grew up reading his dad's copies of the Human Life Review.

Life Is Expensive

Diane Moriarty

"Life is cheap" is an expression usually reserved for primitive peoples or violent times, be it warring tribes and clans slaughtering each other like chickens or the showdown-at-noon culture of the American Wild West. At least drawing six-shooters was between two men standing at either end of a street. Now someone mows down all his co-workers because he's angry with the boss, or concertgoers because he's angry with the company that owns the arena, or kids because he's angry with their school. But these are recognizable bad guys. "Life is cheap" is also about landlords in cities dense with renters seeing only units,

not lives, or business schools teaching students that pleasing shareholders is a moral imperative. Or the governor of New York State signing an executive order that sent elderly people still infectious from Covid-19 back into nursing homes where the virus spread like wildfire.

Issued on March 25, Cuomo's order was intended to ease the burden on hospitals dealing with the "most critical" Covid-19 patients. In other words, he wanted the beds. He wanted the beds old people were using for someone else. (Like younger people whose lives were more worthy of living?) Desperate times call for desperate measures! Crisis mode! Even though help was already on the way. FEMA had been brought in on March 20 to design a medical facility in the Javits Center, by March 27 the hospital ship Comfort was en route and Samaritan's Purse field hospital in Central Park was up and running by April 1. But, hey, the old coots were probably gonna die soon anyway. Maybe Cuomo was on to something. Several thousand nursing home residents died—and his poll numbers went up.

Last May, while walking through my building lobby I saw a neighbor on her way out. The usual greetings were exchanged; hello, hello, how are you, fine, and you? She told me her mother had just died. I gave condolences. The neighbor is no spring chicken, so I knew her mom must have been very old, and I empathized by saying that losing your mom is a real tough one, no matter her age. She nodded, then said: "She died of Covid. She caught it in the nursing home. We weren't even allowed to visit." So, you couldn't say goodbye? "No." And she died alone? How awful. Was she conscious and aware? She shook her head, waved her hand, and said with a soft, rueful laugh: "Oh, no! Not for a long time now. Years." Awkward shrug. Since then there's been a noticeable change in her body language. She's lighter. Freer. A weight has been lifted.

I'm in no position to judge. My mother collapsed from a cerebral hemorrhage and died five days later, my father had a massive heart attack and was dead before he hit the garage floor. No drawn-out illnesses, no long-term care, and no nursing home expenses. Albany politicians may be pushing for commissions to investigate the role Cuomo's executive order had in the death of what is now over 6,400 nursing home residents, but I suspect many voters will forgive him.

Cuomo isn't the only one to engage in selective triage. During Mayor Giuliani's term there was a policy not to inform people that they were HIV positive when it turned up in any blood test that wasn't specifically requested for AIDS. Such as routine pre-natal blood work. If doctors found HIV in the blood of a pregnant woman, they were not allowed to inform her, even though by that time it was known that administering the drug AZT to pregnant women could at least save the babies. But no dice. This policy was in place, overtly anyway, due to pressure from organized and well-funded gay advocacy groups such as GMHC (Gay Men's Health Crisis) because they feared reporting policies, no

matter how humanitarian, would be bad for their group. It wasn't until 1998, after public outrage fueled by newspaper stories exposing this callous disregard for innocent babies, that regulations were drafted for New York's HIV Reporting and Partner Notification Law—which was promptly denounced. Lambda Executive Director Kevin M. Cathcart warned, "Government lists are threatening to the poor, the young, women and gay men of all races, undocumented immigrants and many people of color. It is bad public health policy to chase people away from the health care system—and worse to divert millions of dollars from prevention and treatment."

Why didn't Giuliani act sooner? Babies were being born with HIV and dying within two years. True, in his second term, after he left his wife, he bunked in with a gay couple, but would loyalty to a gay friendship override simple decency? And was the gay lobby truly so powerful as to be calling the shots when it came to pregnant women? Or was heeding the strident voices of a self-interested clutch actually just a useful misdirect? Did the powers that be, acting in crisis mode, survey the situation and conclude that saving the lives of who knows how many mostly black children—whose fathers were already dead from AIDS and whose mothers soon would be—wasn't a priority. Maybe their lives were too expensive? (I am speculating here to be sure, but lest anyone think this an impossible scenario, I would remind all of the scandal several years ago in France when health officials permitted hemophilia patients to be given HIV-tainted blood rather than publicly reveal that the blood supply had been dangerously compromised.)

A good number of Americans are enamored of Marxism these days, and they may look at the nursing home/elderly parents burden conundrum and exclaim: Aha! This is why we need government-run health care! I'm not so sure. Not that long ago the newspapers were filled with stories about mistreatment of old people in state-run facilities, and horror stories of conditions in veteran's hospitals abound. Taxpayer-funded nursing homes need to keep costs down and private ones need to make a profit, and this often results in too many bargain-basement employees. Caring for the sick, disabled, confused, and incontinent takes the patience of a saint. It requires a true vocation. But all too often it's just an unattractive, low-paying job that's a breeding ground for resentment against vulnerable people who are in need of help. Perhaps the answer lies in religious orders from all denominations (or non-religious, for that matter) dedicated to this mission, staffed by people with a calling, and funded by tax-deductible donations. There is money out there. Campaign contributions to the Democrats total $990 million this year so far and the Republicans have brought in $1.33 billion. Even during a Covid related fragile economy!

The evangelical Christian relief organization Samaritan's Purse, headed by the late Reverend Billy Graham's son Franklin, which set up a field hospital in

Central Park's East Meadow for Covid patients, is a perfect example of how it can be done. And in spite of the childish yet tyrannical whining about its politically incorrect stance on gay issues, no one was turned away because of it. Ironically, the purveyors of identity politics vilified the evangelicals because of their "identity." In any case, I don't think the answers lie in Marxist dogma and clamorous demands that wealthy people foot the bill for everything. It's not that all socialistic methods are abhorrent. Social Security is socialism. So are Medicare and unemployment benefits. And rent stabilization, which by stabilizing rents stabilizes neighborhoods, local economies, and the work force. All are good, just, and needed. But giving tacit approval for commandants to get rid of the weak and vulnerable in the name of making "tough decisions" because, truth be told, it brings relief and release, is a siren song to be resisted. And I absolutely include myself even though I had the dubiously good fortune to have both parents make their exit in a mercifully brief fashion. (That I can see it as in any way fortunate says something about me, doesn't it?)

I had a friend who almost died. She fell down a long flight of steel steps. Her first night in the hospital was one of those "if she makes it through the night" situations. I asked her what it was like. She said: "A night nurse sat by me the whole time. It was so easy just to stop breathing. So easy just not to inhale. To breathe out, but not to breathe in. I was so, so tired. But every time I was about to give up, to not breathe in again, the night nurse would gently touch my arm and say my name. That's all she did. I'd feel her hand on my arm and hear her say: 'Nancy' in a soft voice, calling me back. All night she did that." Such a thin veil there was separating her life and her death; a simple human touch and a quiet human voice kept my friend on this side of it.

Such a thin veil separates us from the commandants. It's so easy to give in, so easy to go along.

—Diane Moriarty is a freelance writer living in Manhattan.

JOHN PATRICK MACKEY

June 29, 1942 - January 1, 2021

An FBI Special Agent and attorney (Fordham Law), John Mackey served as Special Counsel and Washington Bureau Chief for the Ad Hoc Committee in Defense of Life, a pro-life lobbying organization set up by James P. McFadden in 1974, the year before he founded the *Human Life Review*. Mr. Mackey went on to be Deputy Assistant Attorney General under George H. Bush, and, in his last 15 years of employment, Investigative Counsel for the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

"In the initial years of this movement—when *Roe*'s act of raw judicial power made its formation, its ability to strategize, to plot political and cultural counterattacks, anything but inevitable—an immediate objective was to buy time. To keep the issue of abortion—as an assault on life, as a thing that deeply troubled the American soul—viable and roiling on the Capitol Hill radar screen, while a fuller cause could gel and broaden and fight. This could have been a very lost cause. But it wasn't. And the reason that it wasn't is due in no small part to John Patrick Mackey, who, armed with smarts and a temperament that was as winning as his smile, conspired and lobbied and cajoled and pressured and annoyed lawmakers and bureaucrats and reporters and presidents, with great success. In the mid 1980s, he went on to find other ways to serve the Republic, but it is unquestionable that there are many people who live today—who escaped the terrible fate that has befallen too many unborn children—because of what John Mackey did in the hallways of Congress and the lobby of the National Press Club in the early years following the travesty of *Roe.*"

Jack Fowler, Vice President at *National Review,*
former director, Ad Hoc Committee

JOSEPH SCHEIDLER

SEPTEMBER 7, 1927 - JANUARY 18, 2021

The Godfather of Pro-Life Activism

"With the death of Joe Scheidler, the pro-life movement has lost a warrior champion, and we have lost a dear friend. Joe believed in defending the innocent lives of babies in the womb, and this was a lifelong calling that he lived so faithfully to his last breath. We rejoice in the truth that Joe so fully deserved to hear these words, 'Well done, good and faithful servant.'"

Tom Brejcha, President, Chief Counsel, and
Founder of the Thomas More Society

APPENDIX A

[*Stephen Vincent writes from Connecticut. This article was first published in the Spring 2003 issue of the* Human Life Review.]

Scheidler's Supreme Victory

Stephen Vincent

> *"Pro-life action news: Mark Wednesday, Feb. 26, in red letters because it is one big red letter day for the pro-life movement. We were having a slice of cherry pie for breakfast when we got word that the U.S. Supreme Court had ruled 8 to 1 that we are not racketeers."*

With these words, Joseph M. Scheidler announced victory over the National Organization for Women and other pro-abortion forces in a case that had lasted 17 years and come to symbolize the struggle between the culture of life and the culture of death. Hanging in the balance was nothing less than the good name of the pro-life movement. Scheidler and his Pro-Life Action League are now using the victory to infuse new energy into the movement against abortion.

The decision, written by Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist, not only vindicates the peaceful protests of prolifers who pray, counsel, or picket outside clinics. It also protects social protestors and civil-rights activists of all stripes from crippling lawsuits brought under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) act. Recognizing the threat the case posed to practitioners of all sorts of civil disobedience, a number of organizations that are far from being pro-life filed amicus briefs on Scheidler's side. The day after the decision, a *Chicago Tribune* editorial described it as a victory for free speech.

Conscious of its image as a champion of free speech and civil rights, NOW long ago posted a Q & A about the case on its website to appease liberal supporters. The lead (leading) question says it all: "Are Scheidler's protests like those of the Civil Rights movement . . . or the Ku Klux Klan?"

With such rhetoric hurled at him, Scheidler was proud to state after the Court's decision: "It's nice to know the First Amendment is still in force, even for prolifers in this country."

A Man for Many Seasons: Joe Scheidler

Colorful, quotable, and irrepressible, Joe is known among his supporters as the grandfather of the pro-life movement. Yet to NOW and other pro-abortion forces he is not a grandfather but a godfather mobster in the mold of fellow Chicagoan Al Capone. NOW brought civil charges of extortion under RICO—and used images of Scheidler sporting his signature black hat and bullhorn to back up the portrayal of him as an anti-choice gangster. NOW also presented spurious testimony to associate Scheidler with every act of violence ever committed against an abortion clinic or an abortionist. (This journal has covered the case extensively, with a forum on the use of RICO in Summer 1998 and a study of the questionable testimony in Fall 2000.)

Scheidler never let his opponents stop him, although every aspect of his personal and

professional life was placed under a microscope and he was threatened with bankruptcy. His suburban Chicago house was placed in escrow to enable him to post a $440,000 bond while appealing a lower-court judgment. Throughout the legal ordeal that began in 1986 he was active at the clinics, counseling, praying, and persuading women to turn away from abortion. He even played with the mobster image, continuing to wear his black hat and introducing himself at rallies as a "racketeer for life." In November 2002—with oral arguments before the Supreme Court scheduled for December, a time when most appellants would shy away from controversial actions—Scheidler was making waves in the media and abortion capital of New York, helping to launch a campaign in which prolifers hold up posters of aborted babies in high-traffic areas. It was more than simply (and literally) an in-your-face tactic. Scheidler wanted to dramatize his belief that the charges against him amounted to a phantom case that could not be taken seriously.

"The case didn't slow us down," he reflected a few days after his Supreme victory. "I would say that it pepped us up. We didn't know how much time we had before we would be shut down by the courts. We always knew, though, whether it's by us or someone else, the battle goes on because it's right."

"The biggest problem," he continued, "was hiring people for our [Pro-Life Action League] operations because we couldn't guarantee that we'd still be in business the following year. They tried to make me out as the man running all these pro-life operations nationwide. It was very flattering, but it just wasn't true."

In a victory letter to friends and supporters addressed to "Dear Fellow Former-Racketeers," he stated, "As much as I have enjoyed being known as a 'racketeer,' I am now happy to have been vindicated."

One of his regular action news updates (phone hot-line messages that he's been composing since 1974) put the Court's decision in perspective: "Abortion will end one day just as surely as the day came when slavery was outlawed . . . Pro-life attorneys think this Supreme Court victory will open new action against other unconstitutional restrictions on pro-life activities.

The court must recognize that it is unconstitutional to have special laws against people who disagree with abortion." He cited as examples the federal Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act passed during the Clinton years, and the "bubble zones" imposed by local governments that keep even people who are only praying away from clinic doors.

The Hand of God

A former Benedictine, who left religious life before final vows because "I wasn't cut out for obedience," Scheidler attributes victory ultimately to God. "I saw and experienced directly the power of concerted and persistent prayer," he said. "I knew without a doubt that God has His hand in this victory."

Thomas Brejcha, lead counsel for Scheidler's side, also assessed the outcome in very unlawyerlike terms. "We got not a single vote in the [Chicago] Court of Appeals, and we get an 8-1 decision from the Supreme Court," he marveled. "It's a remarkable, a miraculous turnaround."

The case was full of ironic twists. Anyone familiar with the pro-life movement knows that far from having centralized control and powerful bosses, pro-life groups are often hampered by their inability to unite. Yet NOW, in a sense, produced what it condemned. It raised Scheidler to the status of head man in legal proceedings and persuaded other prolifers to rally around him. As Joe goes, so goes the movement, many began to think.

Not all, to be sure. In 1999 federal appeals judge David Coar slapped Scheidler and the other defendants, Andrew Scholberg and Timothy Murphy, with a nationwide injunction. With the loose wording of this injunction, anyone working with Scheidler or adopting the methods outlined in his book *Closed: 99 Ways to Stop Abortion* could have been touched by it. Many prolifers shied away for fear of later being collared as cooperators in Scheidler's "network."

But enough others came to Scheidler's side, including brave donors who helped him pay his mounting legal fees. Pro-life leaders who had stood by him from the start were quick to applaud his victory. "This litigation was clearly an attempt by NOW to eliminate pro-life voices from the public square," said Dennis M. Burke, staff counsel for Americans United for Life, also based in Chicago. Judie Brown of American Life League called Scheidler a good friend "who has fought valiantly for years."

"This decision is a tremendous victory for those who engage in social protests," said Jay Sekulow, chief counsel of the American Center for Law and Justice, which filed a brief for Operation Rescue. (A related case, *Operation Rescue* v. *NOW*, was included in the decision although Operation Rescue has effectively been out of business for years.) "The ruling clearly shuts the door on using RICO against the pro-life movement."

"Abortion is not just a legal procedure. To groups like NOW it is a sacred ritual," said Father Frank Pavone of Priests for Life. "Their efforts have hit the brick wall of our nation's sacred right of protest. Long live that right!"

Francis Cardinal George of Chicago, who led a prayer vigil with Scheidler's group outside a Planned Parenthood facility shortly after the decision, stated, "If the courts had been used to stop organized sit-ins at lunch counters in the Sixties, there would have been no civil rights movement."

Columnist John Leo pointed out that the American Civil Liberties Union had opposed the passage of RICO from the start, but "they didn't fight it when it was used against prolifers."

Editorials in conservative and liberal papers alike applauded the decision. The *Wall Street Journal* said it upholds 'the right of all Americans, left or right, to protest under the First Amendment.' The *Chicago Tribune* stated: "No matter where they stand individually on the divisive issue of abortion, all Americans should applaud."

There were 74 amicus briefs filed by groups ranging from labor organizations to "tree-hugging" environmentalists to nuclear weapons protestors to the Seamless Garment Network. Also joining were high-profile Catholics more commonly associated with other issues: Maryknoll Father Roy Bourgeois, founder of the School of the Americas Watch; death penalty activist Sister Helen Prejean; Jesuit Father Daniel Berrigan; and Martin Sheen, known to millions as the President on *The West Wing*.

Craig M. Bradley, who wrote the brief for PETA, summed the issue up nicely: Scheidler & Company "wanted to shut the abortion clinics down. They didn't want to

take them over. Just like PETA protestors might want to shut down an animal-rendering plant, not take it over."

The High Court agreed.

"Obtaining" a Decision

In the end, the 17-year case that made two trips to the Supreme Court was shockingly simple. To violate RICO one must commit a series of specified acts or conspire to commit these acts. Scheidler and his colleagues admitted that they had broken the law—though only laws against trespassing and related minor offenses, which don't qualify under RICO—and that they did so in concert with others with the express intent of shutting down abortion clinics. NOW claimed that by depriving or attempting to deprive clinics of their right to do business, Scheidler et al. were engaged in extortion, one of the criminal acts specified by RICO.

The Court stated, "But even when their acts of interference and disruption achieved their ultimate goal of 'shutting down' a clinic that performed abortions, such acts did not constitute extortion because petitioners did not 'obtain' respondents' property. [They] may have deprived or sought to deprive respondents of their alleged property right of exclusive control of their business assets, but they did not acquire any such property. Petitioners neither pursued nor received 'something of value from' respondents that they could exercise, transfer or sell."

The Court concluded that Scheidler's tactics more nearly constituted coercion, a lesser crime not covered by RICO. "If the distinction between extortion and coercion, which we find controls these cases, is to be abandoned, such a significant expansion of the law's coverage must come from Congress, and not from the courts."

The implications of the case, of course, go beyond semantic distinctions. Although Scheidler was barred from raising a First Amendment defense and NOW tried to narrow the case to anti-abortion activism alone, Scheidler's legal team succeeded in portraying pro-life protestors as being in the mainstream of civil disobedience. During oral arguments, some justices raised the First Amendment themselves, wondering aloud whether the right to free expression would not be violated by a wide application of RICO. "When we heard these statements in defense of our position, we were thinking that maybe we could win this thing," Scheidler recalls.

Justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Steven Breyer joined the majority with their own concurring opinion. They noted the chilling effect that NOW's application of RICO could have on all social protest, while at the same time keeping their pro-abortion credentials in order. "In the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act of 1994 . . . Congress crafted a statutory response that homes in on the problem of criminal activity at health care facilities. . . . Thus the principal effect of a decision against petitioners here would have been on other cases pursued under RICO." In other words, since we can get prolifers on FACE, why risk weakening PETA?

NOW attacked this position in its rants after the decision. "We will work to ensure that the [FACE act] is enforced. But that is not enough," read a press release. "FACE is too limited and doesn't reach the organizers of the violence . . . We are looking at every avenue available to us to protect women, doctors and clinic staff from these ideological terrorists."

Mood Swing

In 1994 the Supreme Court allowed the proceedings against Scheidler to continue by ruling 9-0 that he did not need to have an economic motive to be accused under RICO. Why did the Court now rule 8-1 in his favor? The technical explanation is that a slightly different legal point was under consideration; the larger implication is that the mood of the Court and the nation has shifted slightly toward life. "America, I believe, is on the brink of a new appreciation for the value of human life, especially unborn human life," Scheidler said. "We are on the cutting edge of a subtle but very clear shift in our attitudes."

Characteristically, Scheidler's victory celebration in June was not only for pro-life advocates but for all Americans. Joe is a patriot who loves his country and the freedoms proclaimed and protected by the Constitution. There were U.S. flags as well as prayers at his rally to "Bring America Back to Life."

Alongside Scheidler's populism, NOW and its sister organizations come off as angry and anti-American. The National Abortion and Reproductive Rights League showed a certain Brave New World arrogance in changing its name to NARAL Pro-Choice America. With polls showing increasing numbers of citizens opposing abortion on demand, and more young people coming out against killing unborn babies at any stage, NARAL thinks that by proclaiming America to be "pro-choice" it can make it so.

Yet the liberal tower of "choice" constructed in the Seventies is beginning to totter, as the support base ages and thins. Try as they may to refashion themselves according to the findings of Madison Avenue focus groups, the fact is that the pro-abortion forces are increasingly outsiders whose language and tactics do not resonate with most Americans. A NOW leader's argument against bringing double murder charges to include Laci Peterson's unborn baby is a perfect example of how NOW-style rhetoric has confounded common sense and left pro-abortion forces talking mostly among themselves.

It is far too soon to sound the death knell of the abortion mindset. Yet it may be time to define a new category of American malcontent that has yet to be recognized by the mainstream media. To go with the angry white male, we now have the angry white female. The poster girl, hands down, would be Fay Clayton, NOW's lead lawyer. She demonstrated her graciousness on "The O'Reilly Factor" after the decision. She attacked Scheidler and repeatedly cut off Bill O'Reilly, saying in a dozen different ways that the decision was really not a defeat, that NOW is really not finished, and that FACE gives abortion forces all the power they need to keep anti-choicers at bay. Huff and puff as she may, the Supreme Court decision speaks for itself. The name of the case itself symbolically marks a change in momentum. Though usually called by its original name, *NOW* v. *Scheidler*, the case heard by the Supreme Court was in fact the appellate version, *Scheidler* v. *NOW*. The tables have been turned on the pro-abortion movement. They've gone from bringing suit to defending.

Generating Life

The future looks bright. Against *Roe* and its progeny come Scheidler and his: seven children and (so far) 10 grandchildren. Two of his children, Eric, 36, and Annie, 26, work full-time for the Pro-Life Action League. And they are NOW's worst nightmare:

educated, energetic, erudite and fully as determined as their dad. Eric, whose wife recently delivered their sixth child, handles communications and the web. Annie heads Generations for Life, which educates and mobilizes young people on abortion and a range of other issues, including chastity.

"Such a complete victory in answer to so many prayers is a tremendous encouragement to our peaceful pro-life activism," Eric Scheidler writes. "NOW's long effort to thwart our pro-life work has never stopped us from saving babies and helping women, but now we are prepared to redouble those efforts."

APPENDIX B

[*Stacy Trasancos, who holds a PhD in chemistry, is the Executive Director of the St. Philip Institute of Catechesis and Evangelization in Tyler, Texas. The following article was originally published by the* National Catholic Register. *Stacy Trasancos: © 2020 EWTN News, Inc. Reprinted with permission from the* National Catholic Register—*www.ncregister.com.*]

How Aborted Children Are Used in Medical Research in 2020

Stacy Trasancos

You don't need to go undercover and follow around employees from Planned Parenthood like David Daleiden at the Center for Medical Progress to find out how the remains of aborted children are used in research. All it takes is a look at scientific reports. The methods are detailed in the words of the scientists themselves, who depend on abortion to design experiments.

With the focus lately on the use of aborted fetal cell lines in vaccines, I thought it would be helpful to walk through what is really going on, to show why some pro-life Catholics are so concerned about the passive acceptance of aborted children in research. We are not denying that vaccines serve a common good. We are, however, encouraging Catholics to unite a protest against the evil of abortion, to demand that university, government and industrial scientists stop using the remains of electively-aborted children in the research of *anything*, vaccines or otherwise. Actually, vaccines are only the beginning.

In the last few decades, scientific literature has reported new technologies such as single-cell transcriptomics, humanized mice and organoids, to name a few. What follows is a summary of three new research reports published in just the last half of 2020. There are many more.

Fetal Scalps and Back Flesh Grafted Onto Rats and Mice

In September, researchers at University of Pittsburgh published their work on the development of humanized mice and rats with "full-thickness human skin." Human skin protects an individual from infection, but there is no way to study the effects of pathogens on individuals without subjecting them to disease. Full-thickness human skin from fetuses was grafted onto rodents while simultaneously co-engrafting the same fetus's lymphoid tissues and hematopoietic stem cells from the liver, so that the rodent models were humanized with organs and skin from the same child. These "human Skin and Immune System (hSIS)-humanized" mouse and rat models are meant to aid the study of the immune system when the skin is infected.

To make the hSIS-humanized rodent models, full-thickness fetal skin was taken from humans aborted at the gestational age of 18 to 20 weeks of pregnancy at the Magee-Women's Hospital and the University of Pittsburgh Health Sciences Tissue Bank. The mothers provided written consent for the fetuses to be used in research.

From the aborted fetuses, thymus, liver, spleen and full-thickness skin were transplanted and grafted onto the rodents and allowed to grow. Then the rodent models were

given a staph infection on the skin to study how the internal organs responded.

The human skin was taken from the scalp and the back of the fetuses so that grafts with and without hair could be compared in the rodent model. Excess fat tissues attached to the subcutaneous layer of the skin was cut away, and then the fetal skin was grafted over the rib cage of the rodent, where its own skin had been removed. The grafts lasted up to 10 weeks post-transplantation. Multiple layers of human keratinocytes and fibroblasts were observed in the grafts, and the human skin grew blood vessels and immune cells.

Human hair was evident by 12 weeks but only in the grafts taken from the fetal scalps. In the scalp grafts, fine human hair can be seen growing long and dark surrounded by the short white hairs of the mouse. The images literally show a patch of baby hair growing on a mouse's back.

The work was funded by the National Institute of Health (NIH) and supported by the National Institutes of Health (NIH)-National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), the same branch that Moderna collaborates with for the Covid-19 vaccine.

Fetuses Used to Study Racial Differences in PBDE Exposure

In July, also in the journal *Scientific Reports*, a team in the United States published their findings on racial differences in fetal exposure to flame retardants. Polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs) are flame retardants, and they are a public health concern because they interfere with hormone activity, immune function and fetal brain development during pregnancy.

In North America, high flammability standards correlate to high PBDE exposure—especially in California, where safety regulations are highest. The fetus becomes exposed to PBDEs as the chemicals transfer through the placenta from the mother, but since their liver cannot metabolize the chemicals as readily, PBDEs collect in the developing child and continue to build in infancy and childhood, all critical times for the development of the endocrine, immune and neural systems.

To assess exposure in unborn children, researchers at the University of California and the California Environmental Protection Agency conducted a study from 2008 to 2016. In four study waves, they recruited a total of 249 women scheduled for a second-trimester abortion.

The women gave written or verbal consent for their blood, the placenta and the child's liver to be dissected from the dead body so scientists could make mother-child comparisons of PBDE levels. The authors note, that until this study, sample collection had been "largely constrained to labor and delivery rather than earlier in gestation" when the chemicals transfer and begin to build up during "critical prenatal windows of vulnerability."

The work was funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the National Institute of Environmental Health Services. All study protocols were approved by the University of California-San Francisco (UCSF) institutional review board prior to recruitment of women scheduled for abortions. The aborted children were collected by the clinical staff at the San Francisco General Hospital Women's Option Center.

This is the largest study of its kind to date.

As expected, fetal levels of PBDE were higher than that of the mothers. The evidence also suggested that Black women may be disproportionately exposed to the chemicals in flame retardants. The paper emphasized the need for further study of fetuses in this gestational range. These second-trimester fetuses essentially lived their short lives in utero as analytical machines and then were used to provide information to keep children living in society safe.

Fetal B-Lymphocytes Used to Study Autoimmunity

In July, a team at Yale University's Department of Immunology reported in the journal *Science* on the development of immunities in newborns. When bacteria and viruses attack the body, it fights back by producing three types of white blood cells—macrophages, B-lymphocytes and T-lymphocytes. It has been assumed, due to competing biochemical mechanisms among lymphocytes, that antibody production is limited in early fetal development, leaving newborns vulnerable to infection. However, newborn blood samples show abundant auto-antibodies.

To investigate this unexpected immunity, the team at Yale dissected the bodies of aborted children to remove their liver, bone marrow and spleen. Then they collected B-lymphocyte cells and produced hundreds of antibodies. The 15 fetuses, all of whom were aborted in the second trimester of pregnancy, were obtained from the Birth Defects Research Laboratory at the University of Washington. Blood, bone marrow and stool samples from healthy adults were compared to assess antibody production and gut microbiota.

The study found that incomplete B-lymphocyte tolerance mechanisms in fetuses favor the accumulation of similar cells that also have the properties to bind bacteria and promote colonization in the gut, thereby encouraging an alternative development path for antibodies in newborns. This work was funded, again, by the NIH, a fellowship at Yale and Pew Charitable Trusts.

Biomedical Research Ought to Preserve Human Dignity

In his encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*, Pope St. John Paul II declared that "the use of human embryos or fetuses as an object of experimentation constitutes a crime against their dignity as human beings who have a right to the same respect owed to a child once born, just as to every person" (63).

At a fundamental level, life-saving research ought to preserve human dignity. The fetal specimens described in these scientific papers—the children who were killed and dissected like the best kind of lab rats—all deserved to be named and counted in the human family.

They were more than a statistic in a table of chemical exposure levels, or a chart of PBDE levels across maternal-placental-fetal biological matrices, or a chunk of scalp grafted grotesquely onto a rodent. They were unwanted children who were killed by an industry that exploited them to make the lives of the wanted humans better. Catholics have a duty to demand better from scientists.

APPENDIX C

[*David Mills is a senior editor of* The Stream *(https://stream.org/), where the following column was published on January 14, 2021. Reprinted with permission.*]

How Abortion Disappears Children: A Lesson From Argentina

David Mills

It depends on who gets disappeared. The "grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo" had worn white headscarves when they risked their lives to protest the Argentinian dictatorship's disappearing of their grandchildren, writes Ella Whelan in Spiked!. Argentina's pro-choice movement chose as its symbol green scarves, which she called "a moving nod" to those brave women.

The country's legislation just approved abortion until the fetus is fourteen weeks old and in special conditions after that. Public hospitals will provide abortions for free. The world's pro-choice movement cheered. A large, nominally Catholic Latin American country had essentially chosen a liberal, secular view of things over Christianity's. The *New York Times* declared it "a milestone in a conservative region."

A Milestone

The generals who overthrew the government in 1976 (with America's support) tried to suppress any opposition. They didn't just harass or imprison dissenters. They took them away and murdered them. It was called the "Dirty War." Dropping them into the sea from airplanes was a method they enjoyed.

Their families never knew what happened to them, or even knew if they were alive or dead. The dictators acted brutally even for dictators. The mothers and grandmothers in their white scarves risked their own lives to demand news of their children. They kept it up for decades, because even after the dictatorship fell, the government hid the story.

The nation's pro-abortion movement chose green scarves to symbolize their demand that the legislature legalize abortion. So a symbol that had represented courageous, life-risking resistance to taking unwanted people away became … a symbol of a movement that advocates taking unwanted people away.

The major news sources left out the fact that the majority of Argentinians opposed the law. It was less an expression of the popular will and more the effect of very organized, focused movement.

A Libertarian Site

Spiked! is a libertarian site. It was created by a once hard left academic named Frank Furedi. He'd founded the Revolutionary Communist Party in the 1970s, which was as batty as it sounds. He drifted right over the last couple decades.

Furedi's actually a very interesting sociologist. The patriarch of conservative thinkers, the late Roger Scruton, has written admiringly of his writing. Stream readers would appreciate and often agree with most of the site's articles. It speaks up for liberty and denounces almost anything a government does to restrict it.

But Furedi has a darker side. Or rather, a darker better half. His wife Ann runs BPAS, the euphemistically named British Pregnancy Advisory Service. It's the British equivalent of Planned Parenthood and the major abortionist in Great Britain. In her writing for Spiked!, she treats legal abortion as a necessity and a good. It's "an obvious, easy-to-access solution for a crisis pregnancy," she writes.

Her 2016 book *The Moral Case for Abortion* argues as sophisticated a case for "terminating a pregnancy" as you'll find. She sees the problem. "Denuded of a focus on values based on individual freedom," she writes, pro-choice movements risk "social engineering."

Furedi engages the objections, though I don't think she sees their force the way she should. She does treat the main objections as "based on faith and doctrine," which pro-choicers use as a way of pushing the objections out of the debate. Faith and doctrine mean "sectarian." It doesn't matter how many times pro-life people note that we object to killing because it's killing.

Furedi and Whelan's Case

Furedi's case depends, as such cases must, on giving the pregnant woman a greater right to do what she wants than giving the unborn child a right to live. "Women do not have abortions to demonstrate their philosophy or to make a statement," she writes in a recent article on Spiked!.

These women "avail themselves of a clinical procedure to end their pregnancy because they do not feel it is right to have a child. To deny a woman access to a safe, legal means of abortion is to cause her real harm." Women need the right to abortion to have "autonomy and self-determination," she writes in her book.

And that claim depends, as it must, on treating the unborn child as less fully human than his mother. After telling how she explained to her four-year-old son that sheep don't know they're going to be turned into a meal, she writes: "Not all lives are the same and not all minds are the same. … It is human knowing, about situations and ourselves, that shapes our thoughts and feelings and fears—and makes us the persons we are."

In her article, Whelan argues that the new Argentinian law doesn't go far enough. It still restricts abortion. She has the same view as Furedi. "Legalising abortion only under certain conditions is always going to be a block on women's freedom," she writes.

"Decriminalising abortion, on the other hand, is the only way to grant women full autonomy over their bodies." She wants the government to treat abortion "like any other medical procedure." That "would grant women the ability to make full and free decisions about when and if they want to become mothers."

Disappearing Children

And that is how you disappear children. You just don't talk about them. At least for long. You depersonalize them, un-personize them, as Furedi does.

Then, as both Furedi and Whelan do, you shift the conversation to the mother, as if the unborn child was just something she had to deal with. It's a medical problem that should be treated with a medical procedure. In no substantial way different than a cyst

or a tumor.

Finally, as both writers do, you do this to serve an abstract goal, treated as an obvious necessity. They don't need to ask who is being aborted. Only the goal matters. Freedom requires bodily autonomy which requires abortion. That, for them, is that.

This is how, despite its name, Human Rights Watch can call the Argentine vote "a gigantic victory that protects fundamental rights and will inspire change in Latin America." Because the children who will lose their lives have been disappeared.

APPENDIX D

[*Madeleine Kearns is a staff writer for* National Review. *The following article appears in the January 25, 2021, print edition of the magazine. Copyright 2021 by* National Review. *Reprinted by permission.*]

Where the Disabled Have a Right to Be Born

Madeleine Kearns

Since Poland's constitutional court outlawed eugenic abortion in October, churches have been vandalized and tens of thousands have flouted social-distancing rules to attend protests. Liberal journalists in Europe and North America have been quick to complain about the "shock and cruelty" inflicted on Polish women by the Law and Justice Party, which, as one *Guardian* editorial alleged, had acted at the behest of the "most influential Catholic church in Europe." As in the United States, the stuff of memes and feminist fiction—that old, white, male Jesus freaks are condemning women to reproductive slavery—has inexhaustible virality, the kind capable of preventing serious debate from ever occurring.

Though the Catholic Church in Poland is no stranger to opposition, this brazen ferocity is new in one sense. "Even the Communists didn't disrupt our Masses," explains one Pole who grew up in the 1950s under Soviet rule. He is referring to the young women who storm into parishes at prayer and demand "unlimited abortions." Draped in *Handmaid's Tale*–inspired hoods, they brandish posters that depict a red lightning bolt against a black silhouette of a woman. Older Polish Catholics find the activists' signage particularly unnerving because it resembles the double lightning bolt used by the Nazis, and its colors recall those of Soviet symbols. The young possess no such memories, while the history they inherit is too often selective.

Take, for instance, the *New York Times*' report that the banning of eugenic abortion signaled the "hijacking [of] Poland's judiciary" and a "chipping away at the hard-won freedoms of the post-communist era." This is odd, to say the least. Even the quickest glance at world history would reveal that permissive abortion laws are a legacy not of post-Communist free societies but of communism. Lenin introduced abortion on demand in 1920. (It was only after abortions in the Soviet Union began to outnumber live births that Stalin reversed this policy, from the mid 1930s to the 1950s.) Cuba decriminalized abortion under Castro. Vietnam has had abortion on demand since the 1960s. The Chinese Communist Party coerced abortions through its one-child policy, which spurred a mass gendercide of unborn girls. Now the CCP's primary targets are Uyghur women. In June the Associated Press alerted the world to the grave human-rights abuses against Muslim minorities in China, including forced abortions, sterilizations, and family detention camps where pregnant women have reportedly been beaten and kicked in the stomach.

In Poland, abortion for "social reasons" (i.e., any reason) was not introduced until 1956, but the eugenic element began earlier, under the Nazis, who made it a serious offense to abort the offspring of "Aryan" women and encouraged abortions of the deformed, the

disabled, Jews, Gypsies, and Poles. These flagrantly discriminatory policies applied to individuals outside as well as inside the womb. As early as 1939, Hitler implemented the "T4 program" in Germany, which mandated the "involuntary euthanasia" of those deemed to have "a life unworthy of life." The disabled were rounded up and carted away from their families, to be starved, gassed, or injected with poison in "mercy killings." Some brave doctors, along with the Catholic Church, openly protested. The bishop of Münster, Clemens August Graf von Galen, made it clear that it was the duty of all Christians to oppose the taking of innocent human life, even if that meant making the ultimate sacrifice themselves.

When Pope Francis compared eugenic abortion in the 21st century to Nazi atrocities, the atheist biologist Richard Dawkins protested, "Abortion to avoid birth defects is not about eugenics. It's about the avoidance of individual human suffering." The moral philosopher Peter Singer has extended the same logic to justify selective infanticide for the disabled, since their condition can pose a "threat to the happiness of the parents, and any other children they may have." The Nazis saw the disabled as a threat to economic productivity and racial purity, whereas Dawkins and Singer see them as a potential threat to personal and familial happiness. Yet they arrive at the same disturbing conclusion: The disabled, owing to the difficulties they and others allegedly endure because of their existence, are inferior, hence disposable.

The most powerful voices against abortion for "defects" are not clergymen but the disabled and those who care for them. On October 19, the High Court of England and Wales agreed to hear a challenge to the United Kingdom's abortion law, which permits abortion at any time up to birth if there is "a substantial risk" of any disability. The challenge is being led by Heidi Crowter, a 25-year-old with Down syndrome. Appearing on a news show with her mother, Crowter told the interviewer that she found the disparity in treatment "deeply offensive." When asked what she thought about the argument that it is the right of women to make the choice, Heidi's mom replied, "That really isn't the issue that we're here for today. It is about the discrimination."

In Britain, a baby can be killed right up to the point of delivery, even for conditions as manageable as Down syndrome, club foot, or cleft lip. In 2013 a parliamentary inquiry found that most people representing the interests of the disabled thought that the policy contravened the spirit of anti-discrimination law. Sally Phillips, an English actress, comedian, mother to a son with Down syndrome, and campaigner with the disability-rights charity Don't Screen Us Out, has said, "Given advances in medical care and quality of life for people with Down's syndrome, the different right to life is beginning to look not just dated but barbaric."

Polling consistently suggests that most people remain opposed to late-term abortions. Ultrasound technology has made the humanity of the unborn more difficult to deny the further one gets into the pregnancy. Since most disability testing cannot be confirmed until, at the earliest, the second trimester, this raises a question: not "Should the state permit abortion?" but, more immediately, "Should the state permit the abortion of a baby because it is disabled?" The answer has consequences that go well beyond any individual. If those with disabilities are targeted and killed before birth, the relationship to society of the disabled who have already been born is also undermined. With a diminished right

to life, the very existence of the disabled becomes suspect. The medical profession's ethical standards are infected with eugenicist tendencies (whereby abortion for disability becomes a "best practice"), and mothers and families are pressured to devalue the worth of their child upon discovering that he or she has a disability.

Even proponents of legal abortion will admit that it is damaging for a mother to be encouraged to choose the death of her disabled unborn child. The cover story of the November 2020 issue of *The Atlantic*, written by Sarah Zhang, brought this point home, albeit indirectly. In her heavily reported piece, Zhang explored how prenatal testing for defects means that "'choice' can feel like a burden." She also noted that "each choice"—whether to test for disability, whether to abort or to keep the child—"puts you behind one demarcating line or another." The result is that "having a baby with the disease is no longer a simple misfortune because nothing could have been done." Instead, "it can be seen . . . as a failure of personal responsibility." When given a diagnosis of disability, parents—who in the face of this news typically feel overwhelmed, disappointed, scared, confused, and ambivalent—look to doctors for guidance. But what happens when that guidance becomes skewed heavily in favor of abortion? The numbers speak for themselves. Last year, 98 percent of legal abortions in Poland (1,074 of 1,110) were carried out for disability. Across Europe, prenatal testing means that people with Down syndrome are heading for extinction.

Moreover, there is a subtle but significant difference between the moral reasoning required to justify abortion for an unwanted baby and that used to justify abortion for a disabled baby. With an unwanted pregnancy, the personhood of the unborn individual is denied not because of but in spite of him. But in choosing abortion after being acquainted with a defining aspect of your child's biology, the motivation is not "I don't want a baby" but rather "I don't want *this* baby." Similarly, where communism debases human life equally, fascism establishes a tyrannical hierarchy of worth. It's understandable that many Poles, having suffered the effects of both within living memory, want neither.

Since the 1990s, Poland's struggle to protect democratic principles has been made all the more difficult by the lingering, shape-shifting influence of leftist ideology. In 1993, a compromise was struck in which the permissive abortion laws of the Soviets were scrapped but exceptions were retained for fetal defects, risks to the woman's health, and incest or rape. Finally, after a decades-long political struggle, the Constitutional Tribunal intervened last October, ruling that abortion for disability does indeed violate the Polish constitution, which guarantees equal dignity under the law. The court also required greater state assistance for disabled people and their families.

In 2000, Pope John Paul II, "the Polish pope," spoke on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the publication of the United Nations' "Declaration of the Rights of the Disabled." Addressing an audience of disabled people and their families in St. Peter's Square, he said that their presence reaffirmed "that disability is not only a need, but also and above all a stimulus and a plea," "a challenge to individual and collective selfishness," "an invitation to ever new forms of brotherhood," and a questioning of "those conceptions of life that are solely concerned with satisfaction, appearances, speed, and efficiency."

As Karol Wojtyla, Pope John Paul II had grown up under both Nazi and Soviet control and played a critical role in the Solidarity movement, with which the Polish Catholic Church worked tirelessly to secure basic democratic freedoms for all. He understood that the case against aborting the unwanted and the disabled was not about imposing Christian morality on others, but rather about offering a humane vision of universal rights and protections. He understood that the public defense of the right to life of the vulnerable would, to be effective, have to come from a nonpartisan laity acting in solidarity with all people of good will.

Leftist memes and sound bites about choice and "compassion" look shriveled and embarrassing when met with the kind and courageous advocacy of Heidi Crowter and her family. As for the eugenicists, their chilling arrogance can't help but slip in with the breeze. "If no one with Down syndrome had ever existed or ever would exist—is that a terrible thing? I don't know," Laura Hercher, a genetic counselor, said to *The Atlantic*. Why not ask this instead: If no one had ever become a eugenicist or ever would, would that be a terrible thing?

APPENDIX E

[*Matthew Hennessey is associate editorial-page features editor at the* Wall Street Journal. *The following article was published in the January 2021 issue of* First Things *(firstthings.com) and is reprinted with the magazine's permission.*]

Magdalena

Matthew Hennessey

Magdalena loves potatoes. Doesn't matter what kind. Red, yellow, Idaho, Irish, boiled, baked, or mashed. French-fried is best, but she'll eat potatoes any way you make them and any way you dress them up. Magdalena loves potatoes so much she'll even eat them with the skins on. Not every kid can handle that. Potatoes make Magdalena smile. She loves them.

It's good that Magdalena loves potatoes because it's good to love something in this life, and the list of things she doesn't love at the moment is long. She doesn't love loud noises or broken promises. She doesn't love waiting. Most people suffer from mild to moderate impatience, but most people don't break down in tears and screaming when the shower takes a minute or two to warm up.

Magdalena doesn't love rice. If she sees rice on her dinner plate, she'll flip the dish across the room.

But the main thing Magdalena doesn't love is laughter. For Magdalena, laughter is the worst sound in the world. She panics and shrieks. It's worse than nails on a chalkboard. It's like a bad dream. Laughter is the sound of Magdalena's nightmares. This is a problem, because her older sister is sixteen—which, in case you didn't know, is the Age of Constant Giggling. Magdalena is fourteen. Her three younger siblings are also known to laugh from time to time. It comes up and out of them suddenly, the way laughter is supposed to, during invigorating play or in involuntary response to an epic dad joke. In our house, when things are building toward laughter and Magdalena is around, someone must intervene. We do our best to co-opt or redirect laughter before it starts, because for her it is frightening. It makes her crazy. It makes her cry.

It's not that Magdalena has no sense of humor. She can be quite funny herself when she wants to be. She does a pitch-perfect Kermit the Frog voice, for instance, but I'm always careful not to laugh when I hear it. I just smile.

"I like that, Mags," I say. "It makes me want to laugh." She squints her eyes in warning, as if to say, "You better not."

This aversion to laughter is not normal—a word I use with care, because "normal" is considered unspeakable in our world. Among those who love people with disabilities and special needs, the guardians of propriety banned the word long ago, insisting instead on defining all differences of learning and behavior in relation to the "typical" world. What is normal, after all?

But the invocation of normality in this case is justified, and I must claim the privilege to use it as Magdalena's father, that is to say, as the father of someone with Down syndrome. It's correct to say that her reaction to laughter is not normal. Nor is it normal for

parents to train teenagers not to laugh, nor for people to suppress their natural urges because someone else in the house might pitch a hysterical fit. It goes against every impulse. In our neighbors' houses, nobody does this. When our friends visit, the way we tiptoe around laughter is viewed with uncharitable suspicion. They are right. It is abnormal.

So much of our life with Magdalena is not normal. I'm sensitive to the pain caused by the careless use of words that have aged out of acceptability. I understand why inclusive language is the order of the day. But "normal" is the right word here. I need access to it. Laughter is the sound that makes all the hard work and low pay of being a parent bearable. Laughter is the undiluted happiness of children made manifest. For parents, laughter is a brief relief from the constant motion, the many disturbances of the peace, the frequent late nights and early mornings, the ever-present feeling that you are nothing but a grumpy, lumpy old scold who doesn't want anyone around here to have any fun.

We have to laugh. It's our only hope.

For fourteen years, we've had counselors and therapists visiting us and trying to help Magdalena. We've done behavior charts and reward plans. We've tried ignoring the problem. We've tried talking it out and we've tried walking it out. In a laboratory, perhaps, we could scientifically isolate the cause of Magdalena's issues, identify a therapeutic plan of attack, and neutralize them. Then, maybe, things could go back to the way they're supposed to be. We could be a loose and laughing household. We could experience what typical people typically call normality.

Alas, we don't live in a laboratory. We live in a family of seven people, each with appetites, each with moods. It's often unruly, occasionally chaotic. We can't always have potatoes. Sometimes we are going to have rice. People are going to laugh.

We're not always sure that Down syndrome is the source of Magdalena's considerable challenges, some of which you'd call personality quirks in a person who doesn't have what she has. Magdalena has obsessions. Some of the people who come into her life become objects almost of worship. Even long after they stop visiting, she talks to them while she's talking to herself, as she does while decompressing almost every day. These one-sided conversations, if you heard them, would strike you as repetitive. They play in loops. This is common behavior among people with Down syndrome. It's typical.

One person who comes up regularly is a bus aide from the time before we pulled Magdalena out of school. She'd drop everything to hang out with this person, whom we haven't seen since the bus people called the cops on Magdalena. It was the second time. Both times, Mags had been on a crying and screaming jag that wouldn't let up. So, the bus driver and this person about whom Magdalena obsesses called the cops. They came and took Magdalena to the hospital, where the doctors determined that she wasn't sick or injured or in need of any medical assistance. She had only been crying and couldn't stop.

I wasn't there so I don't know for sure, but if I had to guess I'd say someone on the bus was laughing.

If it sounds like an unnecessary cruelty to call the police on a little girl with Down syndrome because she has auditory sensory issues that are triggered by laughter, or to suspend her from school three times because three suspensions is the only way to instigate

a bureaucratic process to get her transferred to the district's most special school, bear in mind that the people who did those things were just doing their jobs. They were following protocols. They were sorry, Mr. Hennessey, there was nothing else they could do. It wasn't personal; it was procedural. If you wanted to be a wise guy, you might even call it normal.

The second bus episode was the end of the road for us and the public schools, so often portrayed as the normal option in a society that really can't figure out how to handle a kid like Magdalena. We hold big grudges against everyone involved. Magdalena doesn't. She'd love to see them all again.

Magdalena eats her meals separately from her siblings. It doesn't seem fair to ask them not to laugh or joke with each other at the table. We want them to love their sister, or learn to love her, and it's hard to feel affection for someone who tosses a plate full of food at you every time you laugh. The first time you could forgive. The fortieth time you might decide that Magdalena is not a nice person. It would be a reasonable conclusion.

Though Magdalena can be hard to like, she is easy enough to love. I am her father. We are her parents. Our love is not contingent. We'll never know how much of what we observe about Magdalena should be chalked up to Down syndrome and how much is attributable to the song of her soul written by an all-knowing, all-seeing God. It can be hard to disaggregate this stuff. Like her siblings, Magdalena inherited habits and traits from her parents. Some are weird. Some are totally normal.

I love potatoes, too.

APPENDIX F

[*Timothy Cardinal Dolan is the Archbishop of New York. This column appeared on January 13 on the website of* Catholic New York *(www.cny.org) and is reprinted with the Cardinal's permission.*]

Why We Catholics Are So "Hung Up" on Abortion

Timothy Cardinal Dolan

"Why are you Catholics so hung up about abortion?" this rather well-known political leader asked me.

"Well, let me tell you," I happily replied.

"For one, thanks for acknowledging how urgent this matter is for us. I don't mind at all agreeing with you: we Catholics are 'hung up' on abortion."

I went on. "Actually, we're obsessed with the dignity of the human person and the sacredness of all human life! Yes, the innocent, helpless life of the baby in the womb, but also the life of the death row prisoner, the immigrant, the fragile elderly, the poor and the sick."

I wasn't done. "And it's not just 'you Catholics' who are very upset about the unfettered abortion-on-demand culture in which we live. Most Americans, of any religion, or none at all, report they are as well. As a matter of fact, this is not a uniquely 'Catholic' issue at all, but one of human rights. We didn't learn that abortion was horrible in religion class, but in biology, and in our courses on the 'inalienable rights' tradition in American history."

By now he probably regretted he had asked! But on I went.

"How can we sustain a culture that recoils at violence, exclusion, suicide, racism, injustice, and callousness toward those in need, if we applaud, allow, pay for, and promote the destruction of the most helpless, the baby in the womb?"

Did I change his mind? I doubt it. Did I answer his questions as to why we are "hung up" on the civil rights of the baby in the sanctuary of her mother's womb? I hope so.

All this comes to mind as we prepare to observe the somber anniversary of the tragic decision by the Supreme Court on Jan. 22, 1973, to allow abortion-on-demand.

Don't worry, the pro-abortionists reassured us forty-eight years ago. You'll learn to accept this. We dread taking the life of the little infant in the womb, too. Abortion will be kept safe, legal, and rare! It would be limited to the earliest weeks of pregnancy, and only resorted to in extreme cases like the endangerment of the mother's life. And we'd never force people whose conscience disagrees with us to perform or pay for one.

So much for the reassurances! We have hardly gotten used to it. Abortion remains the hottest issue in our politics, with polls showing that most Americans want restrictions on its unquestioned use, and do not want their taxes to pay for it.

Now, the pro-abortionists no longer call abortion regrettable, but celebrate it and brag about it! No longer do they argue that the question about the viability of the "fetus" is one impossible to answer. Readily do they admit it's a baby. It's just that, for them, the desire of another trumps the baby's right to life.

Rare? Forget about it! Now it's an unfettered right, at any time during the pregnancy, up to and including the very birth, with demands that sincere health care professionals whose consciences rebel at the grizzly procedure be forced to perform them, that tax money pay for them, that our foreign policy insists other countries promote them, and that the freedom of employers who abhor them still offer insurance to cover them.

We're even more "hung up" now, as our new president, whom we wish well, and who speaks with admirable sensitivity about protecting the rights of the weakest and most threatened, ran on a platform avidly supporting this gruesome capital punishment for innocent pre-born babies.

As Pope Francis observes, "We defend and promote all legitimate human rights. But, what use are they if the right of the baby to be born is violated!"

We're all still cringing from the disturbing violence last week in Washington. This upheaval was made the more nauseating as it was seemingly encouraged by the one sworn to uphold the Constitution and the rule of law, and because it trashed the very edifice designed to be a sanctuary of safety, reason, civility, and decorum, the arena of our freedoms, the U.S. Capitol.

President-elect Biden was eloquent last week in reminding us that the rampage we saw was not America, whose citizens are renowned for their decency, observance of the law, and the respect we show each other.

In the renewal and rededication that usually accompanies the inauguration of a new president, can we hope that violence will subside, that civil discourse will again become the norm for all sides, that a respect for the sacredness of all life and the dignity of the human person will be revived, and that the sanctuary of the womb will be off-limits to violent invasion?

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President Ronald Reagan once encouraged us not to tire on what he called the "Long March for Life." From the first March for Life to this one, every one of us has understood what Rev. King meant by the arc of history. We understand that it bends when people like you and me bend it. Bend it toward justice. Toward compassion. Toward Life. And what is more, each of us, way back from the beginning of the pro-life movement, has known we are on a lifetime's journey. The direction of that journey does not bend. It does not waver, though sometimes, it may slow down. But in the end, our pro-life journey has a destination. And that, my friends, is victory.

Remarks, Virtual Rose Dinner Gala January 29, 2021
Carl A. Anderson

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"How did we get to the point where experts threaten to take effective control of society? Blame the Covid crisis, which unleashed a boldness in the would-be technocratic class and at the same time, engendered timidity among people who want to be safe. Globalists have seized the unique moment to increase their power on an unprecedented international scale. As Klaus Schwab, founder and executive chairman of the World Economic Forum, explained, the pandemic's 'silver lining' was to demonstrate 'how quickly we can make radical changes to our lifestyles.'"

—Wesley J. Smith, "Defeating Technocracy Is Crucial to Life"