

Family & ProLife News Briefs

October 2024

Positive Values Even in a Culture of Death

Church's Statement on Life

Pope Francis reminds us that “every child who, rather than being born, is condemned unjustly to being aborted, bears the face of the Lord, who even before he was born, and then just after birth, experienced the world's rejection.” Now, after *Dobbs*, our elected officials are empowered to reduce or end abortion. But **50 years of virtually unlimited abortion** have created a national mindset where many Americans have become comfortable with it. The U.S. bishops have affirmed that, while it is important to address all the ways in which human life is threatened, “abortion remains our **pre-eminent priority** as it directly attacks our most vulnerable brothers and sisters, destroying more than a million lives each year in our country alone.”

But why must abortion be at the top of the list, particularly in a country so rife with gun violence, opioid usage, political division, homelessness, and the like? Is it truly pro-life to fight against abortion first and foremost? To answer that objection, in 1995 Cardinal Ratzinger asked: “Exactly what sort of freedom is the right to annul another's freedom as soon as it begins?”

Tragically, abortion has become a pre-eminent priority as many **politicians celebrate the destruction of preborn children**, protecting abortion access even up until birth. Few leaders are standing up to limit the harm of chemical abortion (abortion pills) to mothers and children. In the November elections, ten states face gravely evil ballot initiatives that would enshrine abortion in their state constitutions. Pope St. John Paul II's words resonate today: “we are facing an enormous and dramatic clash between good & evil, death and life, the ‘culture of death’ and the ‘culture of life’ ...we are all involved and we all share in it, with the inescapable responsibility of being unconditionally pro-life.”

- We must vote for candidates who will defend the life and dignity of the human person.
- We must continue to **help mothers** through local pregnancy help centers and our nationwide, parish-based initiative, Walking with Moms in Need.
- We must show compassion to all who suffer from participation in abortion, through the Church's **healing** ministries like Project Rachel.
- Most importantly, we must rededicate ourselves to fervent prayer on behalf of life.

[Excerpt, Most Reverend Michael F. Burbidge, Bishop of Arlington; Chairman, USCCB Committee on Pro-Life Activities, Oct. 2024]

Our Joy Not Found in Daily Circumstances

In a culture that is indeed toxic to Christians – an increasingly digital wasteland that poisons us against Christ and one another, alienating even from ourselves – joy can feel perpetually out of reach. But our joy is rooted not in the circumstances of the world but in the resurrection of Christ. As Christians we have a prophetic call to denounce the injustices and evils of our time, **standing against the culture of death** with all its manifestations: from war & violence to the devaluation of life through abortion and euthanasia. But our mission also includes announcing the Good News – the gospel of life. Ours is a joy that says that even in the valley of the shadow of death, Christ's light can never be put out.

In the Information Age, it can be difficult to escape all of the bad news, like darkness closing in around us. But we can withdraw and sit attentively at the Lord's feet. It is prudent to make a habit of examining the voices one takes in, be they news reports, podcasts, even religious influencers, and to notice whether these sources are bringing peace or fomenting anger and division. Of course, we want to remain apprised of the goings on in the world. We want to be able to read the signs of our times and intercede appropriately for the current needs of our community – but not at the expense of our spiritual equilibrium and connection to Jesus.

We experience joy by cultivating a spirit of gratitude. **Even in the darkest times, there is always something to be thankful for.** Joy also comes to us as a byproduct of serving others, as Pope St. John Paul II declared. Joy is not a solitary pursuit. It is found in the gift of oneself to others. In serving those in need, in comforting the afflicted, and in sharing the burdens of our brothers and sisters, we find our own burdens lightened and our joy multiplied. Joy can also be found by pruning back distractions and even thinning out commitments or habits that aren't bad in themselves but have become impediments to the fruits we want to cultivate within us.” [Excerpt, Samantha Stephenson, *Our Sunday Visitor*, 9/15/24]

Respect Life Activities in October

Many churches have plans for conferences, guest speakers, collections for pregnancy help centers, & praying at abortuaries (like the 40DaysforLife campaign). The **Life Education Council** is providing sturdy lawn banners at no charge for any church or organization to display during the month of October. For yours, email President Charles LaRosa at clarosa1941@gmail.com



This monthly newsletter is used by dozens of churches as a bulletin insert and as a handout. Since 2013 it has had over 30,000 readers and is now posted on three diocesan websites. To receive each month's free issue in your inbox, email Frank Tinari, Ph.D. at tinarifr@shu.edu

Alabama 14th State to Lose PornHub

The largest pornography website has banned access in many states because they passed laws that wouldn't let kids view the site. (Because if they can't groom kids with hardcore porn, then PornHub doesn't want to do business with them.) It blocked access to its website in response to an Alabama law that goes into effect this month requiring adult sites to **verify its users' ages** and requiring state warnings about the negative physical and mental health damage that is caused by a porn habit (to say nothing of the dark fetishes that are leading kids into the trans cult). Instead of complying, Pornhub is blocking access to its website in the state. That's great news. [Harris Rigby, www.NotTheBee.com, 9/27/24]

Mercy killings are murder in the eyes of the Church. Abortion is murder. Any direct, unprovoked taking of the life of another except in the case of just self-defense is murder. Argue as long as we may, we shall never be able to justify the intrinsic wrongness of deliberate killing even for "mercy." [Bishop John Francis Noll, founder, *Our Sunday Visitor*, a 1935 issue.]

Death with Dignity, Not Suicide

Near the end of life, we are not required to employ extraordinary or excessively burdensome treatments. For example, a breathing machine that is merely sustaining a person who will never recover is not therapeutic. But a **breathing machine** is therapeutic for a young person who has been injured and needs help to breath temporarily. Food & water, even if administered by a tube, are helpful and therapeutic (except in the rarest of situations) and must be offered even to patients well into the dying process. Particular circumstances are always going to be important in determining what is the moral and ethical thing to do. Assisting a suicide is not. [Msgr. Charles Pope, *Our Sunday Visitor*, 9/29/24]

The Conscience Project

Freedom of conscience & the right to practice one's faith free from government interference are an individual's last line of defense. The Conscience Project advances these fundamental human rights through public education that includes insightful commentary and legal analysis. Director Andrea Picciotti-Bayer is a Stanford-educated lawyer who has dedicated her legal career to civil rights and appellate advocacy. She is a legal analyst for EWTN News and a regular columnist for the *National Catholic Register*. Her writing has been featured in the *Wall Street Journal*, *National Review*, Fox News, *Newsweek*, CNN en Español and others. She has ten children and lives in the Washington, DC area.

In a recent *Nat. Cath. Register* column, she explained how some states are trying to prohibit Catholics and Christians from **adopting children**. Several adoptee parents have filed suit for violation of their exercise of religious and free speech. See the short video reports at www.conscience-project.org

A Woman is a Woman, A Man a Man

The mother of a Division 1 women's volleyball player sent an open letter to university presidents asking them to **support female players** who are boycotting a volleyball team with a male player who identifies as transgender. "Safe and fair play in the Mountain West Conference women's volleyball teams has failed," the mother's letter to university presidents says.

April Chainey is spearheading the effort to protect women's sports because player Blaire Fleming, a 6'1" male who identifies as female (born Brayden), led San Jose State University to an **undefeated** season. Fleming transferred from Coastal Carolina University. In May 2022, the Save Women's Sports Act took effect in South Carolina, prohibiting biological males from competing in girls and women's sports. California law allows athletes to compete on teams based on their gender identity.

"I am scared for every single player that has to play against them because there's that potential of a higher risk," Chainey said, whose daughter is scheduled to face Fleming later this season. "The ball is moving faster. It's stronger. Every male person is biologically made bigger, faster, and stronger." Chainey calls on teams to boycott San Jose State University volleyball, even though it would count as a loss for their teams, unless the NCAA decides to separate sports by biological sex. She said former and current volleyball players, coaches, and other parents are on her side, but many **are afraid to speak up**. She said she is working to get more members of the volleyball community to take a stand for women's sports. [Lathan Watts, <https://www.dailysignal.com/> 8/6/24]

One of the Fastest Growing Orders

The Sisters of Life accepted the solemn profession of vows in August by another ten women who profess the traditional vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and a fourth vow to protect and enhance the sacredness of human life. [www.sistersoflife.org]



Married Couples Becoming More Intimate

Natural **Family Planning** 2.0 addresses the common issues couples face when NFP meets the reality of living out the Sacrament of Marriage. Building on your deep love for one another and your experiences in marriage, four podcasts offer an opportunity to solve some of the most common obstacles couples encounter while offering important insights. [<https://insidethewalls.org/nfp-podcast>]

Book for Women Suzanne Venker says that when it comes to sex, relationships, work, marriage, and family, our culture is so toxic we are numb to it. She writes for young women, but parents and grandparents will find potent truth to share with anyone who'll listen. [*How to Build a Better Life: A New Roadmap for Women Who Want to Prioritize Love & Family*]