

Family & ProLife News Briefs

December 2024

Children and Family Life

God Came as a Child to a Family

Bishop Robert Baron said that the “central message of Christmas is that God became a baby, **an infant too weak even to raise his head**. God determined not to intimidate or order us from on high but rather to become a baby. At Christmas, the human race no longer looked up to see the face of God but down into the face of a little child. ... Where do we find the God we seek? Most clearly in the faces of the vulnerable, the poor, the helpless, the childlike. They draw us, as a baby does, out of self-preoccupation & into real love.” [WSJ, 12/24/22] “Of all the ways God could have entered our world, he chose the very way we enter it: by being born in a family.” [Our Sunday Visitor, 12/25/22]

“The Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity, the ‘Word’ through whom ‘all things were made’ entered history through the cooperation of a Jewish girl and her overshadowing by the Holy Spirit, and was born at a precise moment in time in a precise place. ... As the post-modern world loses its grip on the most fundamental truths (even those inscribed in our chromosomes), the earthiness of Christmas proclaims and celebrates an enfleshed, divine savior, once an infant, who ennobles and transforms all the givens of the human condition.” [Georg Weigel, *The Beacon*, 12/23/21]

“Mary’s welcoming of an unexpected Child as a gift (indeed, to the whole world) is not the sort of story abortion activists wish to tell. Abortion ideology is predicated on the idea that we must not sacrifice for others, but Christmas is the ultimate rebuke to that idea. **God became a zygote, an embryo, a fetus and a baby**. It is unfathomable to our puny minds to understand how the Creator of the universe could have entered the world as a tiny, helpless Child in the womb, but it is nonetheless true. Success, to an abortion activist, is an empty cradle and a full grave. The essence of the Christmas story is a full cradle and an empty grave. [Jonathon Van Maren, *LifeSiteNews*, 11/24]

Women’s Reactions to Abortion

Our findings confirmed that women who perceived **pressure to abort**, especially from their male partners, families, or others, are more likely to report more negative reactions to abortion; more disruption of daily life or relationships; more frequent feelings of loss, grief, or sadness about the abortion; more moral and maternal conflict over the abortion decision; a decline in overall mental health they attribute to their abortions; & more desire/need for help to cope with negative feelings about the abortion.

Also, women who reported feeling more pressure to abort reported **higher levels of stress** completing our survey, consistent with previous studies that showed questionnaire-based studies of abortion and mental health are likely to under-report negative reactions due to self-censure. Abortion providers should screen for perceived pressures to abort & counsel women accordingly. Therapists/counselors offering care to those struggling with post-abortion emotional adjustments or mental health issues should also assess perceived pressures to abort. [excerpt, David C. Reardon, Tessa Longbons, Effects of Pressure to Abort on Women’s Emotional Responses and Mental Health, *Cureus*, 1/31/23]

Trying to Find Family Time

It’s hard to believe, but the time has come once again for raking, cleaning gutters, winterizing pipes, installing storm windows, clearing the garden, and plugging gaps in our home. But our recent afternoons with Charlie (youngest of five kids) were a timely reminder that our prepare-for-winter to-do lists (so integral to a well-run Household Economy) don’t need to be drudgery. With a little **teamwork** and creativity, each of these tasks can become the occasion for quality time spent together.

But competing with these long to-do lists is a powerful juggernaut: our kids’ **sports practices and game schedules**, music lessons, social engagements, and other extracurriculars, on top of the demanding jobs so many parents have. We’re not sure about you, but on some recent Sunday evenings, we’ve had to admit that most of our week end was not spent improving our households, but instead, driving everyone to their activities.

Important teamwork and **leadership formation** is to be had on the sports fields, but perhaps we should ask: How are we doing **as parents** with this type of formation in our own backyards, kitchens, workshops, garages, and basements? What if ... • We prioritized and planned out this coming Saturday’s shared work as a family? • We front-loaded our errands at moments throughout the week, in order that they don’t end up hijacking the weekend? • We entered Saturday evening in a spirit of rest, family togetherness, and anticipation of encountering our Lord in the Eucharist on Sunday?

The reality is that so many families—including ours—are so overwhelmed that the “what if’s?” are not asked. We then pay the price with Saturdays of little, if any, shared work, and Sundays spent in a rush. But maybe there’s a better way? We all, with Jesus, have the opportunity to “look with love” upon these many tasks, strewn in our path like so many dazzling Fall leaves. [excerpt, Soren & Ever Johnson, *For Your Marriage* newsletter, USCCB, 11/24]

The University of Pennsylvania is offering a writing seminar, **“Abolish the Family.”** From the course description: “In this seminar, we will look at the history of family abolition and its threads through various other movements, examine variations in cultural models of the family, and imagine new models of collective care together.” Disintegrate the family, and life will **be more fluid, flexible, and fulfilling!** [First Things, Nov. ‘24]

Check Out News You May Have Missed

- HHS secretary refuses to explain placing migrant children with sex offenders [CatholicVote.org, 11/21/24]
- Philly Kids Hospital ‘Leading The Nation’ In Sex Changes [DailyWire, 11/19/24]
- Rape, Suicide, and the Rise of Religious Nones [Journal of Sociology and Christianity, Fall 2024]
- Worldometer, a global statistics website, reports 40.6 mill. abortions have been committed in 2024, exceeding deaths caused by cancer (7.4 mill.), AIDS (1.5 mill.), communicable diseases (11.7 mill.), smoking (4.5 mill.), & road collisions (1.2 mill.) combined. [The Washington Stand, 11/25/24]



A High School Senior Explains

☐ “What exactly is an abortion?” It is not the same as removing a tumor or a wisdom tooth or a gallbladder. The goal of an abortion is **to destroy a human organism**, with a unique DNA, distinct from its mother or father.

☐ “Does science tell us when life begins?” Yes: the beginning of life is marked by fertilization, when the organism is genetically distinct from the sperm and egg. Fetal heartbeat and brain development begin in weeks six through eight. Around week 30, the baby begins to respond to external stimuli, including light and sound. Everyone develops at different rates. Albert Einstein, Charles Darwin, and Sir Isaac Newton were all born prematurely. Premature babies might not pass all the typical checkpoints of a child in the womb, yet they still have a claim to life regardless of the extent of their embryonic development.

☐ “Why not just say that life begins at birth?” We all know the opposite. Every time you congratulate an expectant mother, go to a gender reveal, attend a baby shower, or paint a nursery, you’re confirming what the science has made clear. The same impulse that leads an expectant mother to stop smoking, avoid alcohol, and enhance her nutrition during pregnancy confirms what we all already know: that **she is carrying a human child** who will be affected by the decisions made during the pregnancy.

☐ “What if a poor woman can’t afford to raise a child?” It is important that **pregnant women be supported**. There are organizations that help. One example is the Sisters of Life, a community of religious sisters committed to supporting single mothers financially and emotionally. Adoption is also an option. There are roughly 2 million couples waiting to adopt a child in America. There should be no stigma in putting a child up for **adoption**; it is a life-affirming and generous decision. [excerpt: Raymond Sullivan, Regis High School senior, *The Dove*, 10/24]

Early Suffragists’ Views of Abortion

Abortion was understood by the first women’s rights advocates to be a blight upon humankind, an act of feminine desperation and a **crime committed by man against woman**. Twenty-first-century abortion advocates, however, seek legal, normalized, and celebrated access to this procedure that brutally murders a preborn human by starvation, poisoning, or dismemberment. It is most often masqueraded under euphemisms such as “women’s choice,” “protection of bodily autonomy,” or “reproductive rights.” In their new book, *Pity for Evil*, Monica Klem and Madeleine McDowell lay out the history of suffrage, abortion, & women’s empowerment in America. Suffragists Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony actively admonished abortionists, starting efforts to support women, & calling men to a higher sexual standard. The consensus was that when a woman aborts her child, she, too, is a victim, whether of abuse, coercion, or unenlightenment. Abortion was appalling to early suffragists because it served as a tool for abusive **men who flee responsibility** -- a chilling reflection of our contemporary state of affairs. [Mary Elise Cosgray, *First Things*, 11/24]

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Male Competes in Women’s College Sport

In October Southern Utah University’s women’s volleyball team forfeited a match against San Jose State University (SJSU). Since then, four other teams also forfeited matches against SJSU out of concern over the safety of the players and fairness. The University of Nevada Reno women’s team said: “We demand that our right to **safety and fair competition** on the court be upheld. We refuse to participate in any match that advances injustice against female athletes.” Yet a U.S. District Judge denied a motion for an emergency delay in a lawsuit filed by a group of female volleyball players in the NCAA Mountain West Conference, which requested that SJSU male player Blaire Fleming, who identifies as a transgender woman, be barred from playing in the conference tournament.

Numerous instances of females being injured by male players have occurred in recent years, including high school volleyball player Payton McNabb, who suffered “a concussion, vision problems, and partial paralysis to the right side of her body” after she was struck in the head by a spiked ball from a male player.

Polls show that 75% of U.S. voters oppose men who identify as women competing in women’s sports. Mary Szoch, a former NCAA Division I athlete who serves as director of the Center for Human Dignity at Family Research Council, said: “**Men should not be able to play women’s sports**. This is not rocket science. It’s basic biology. Men are generally stronger than women, faster than women, and can jump higher than women. Men playing women’s sports, especially a sport like volleyball, makes no sense. It’s not only unfair, it’s unsafe. I look forward to the day when the Trump administration reverses every Biden rule that embraced a woke ideology over the health and safety of human beings.” [Dan Hart, *The Washington Stand*, 11/26/24]

In 2015, the ACLU and several gay activist groups published “Schools in Transition: A Guide for Supporting Transgender Students in K-12 Schools.” It gave ways to affirm children’s transgender expressions while **keeping parents out** of the loop. Around 20,000 U.S. districts have adopted some version of a secrecy or parent-exclusion policy. Parents Defending Education tracks these policies, along with other concerning intrusions in education, by school district. Parents can search by zip code at <https://defendinged.org> to keep abreast of **developments in their area**.

UN Report Against Males in Women’s Sports

A UN expert has ignited an **explosive debate** in her report to the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, calling on nations & sports agencies to stop letting “men who self-identify as women” compete against females. The U.S. diplomat accused her of abuse and gender disinformation by using “demeaning language” about “trans” athletes. Similar charges came from delegates from the UK, Canada, Mexico, Netherlands, France & others. The expert responded: “Human rights language and principles must continue to be consistent with **science and facts, including biological ones**.” The report said: due to “trans” policies, “over 600 female athletes in more than 400 competitions have lost more than 890 medals in 29 different sports.” [C-Fam, *Letter from the UN Front*, 11/24]