

Family & ProLife News Briefs

December 2023

Family Life and Respect for Life

One Woman at a Time

“What struck me was their obvious vitality & love.” So wrote Charles Lewis, a Catholic convert regarding the **Sisters of Life** operating in Toronto. They created a community of “helpers” who donate funds, collect food items, drive the women to medical appointments, pray, and offer friendship to those who are often poor and alone. The Sisters are trying to change the world one woman and one baby at a time.

The order was founded in 1991 under the guidance of their spiritual father in New York, Cardinal John O’Connor. Their mission is to **help women** who want to have their babies but who are facing financial and emotional hurdles. They also counsel women who have come to regret their abortions. “It’s easy to forget, amid all the talk of what’s wrong with the Church, there is an eternal goodness that will outlast all the so-called controversies.” [Charles Lewis, *Natl. Catholic Register*, 10/22/23]

Likewise, recognizing the dignity and sanctity of all human life, U.S. Bishops have been promoting **Walking with Moms in Need**, a grass-roots initiative through which Catholic communities walk alongside local pregnant and parenting women in need. Many parishes and dioceses have joined the effort. One such example is in the Diocese of Paterson, NJ, with its 3-step strategy for parishes. Level 1 involves getting parishioners educated about the program and its goals. Level 2 includes gathering & providing essentials for moms such as diapers, clothing and food. Level 3 involves volunteering to accompany moms to appointments & more. Information about the nationwide effort is found at <http://www.walkingwithmoms.com>.

Young Americans are Dying

Auto accidents, homicide, suicide & drug overdoses, in that order, are the leading causes of deaths of Americans aged 1 to 19. Boys have mortality rates roughly twice those of girls. Distractions from cell phones have made **driving** more deadly in recent years. Black teens accounted for nearly two-thirds of **homicide** victims ages 10 to 19, mostly via guns.

School closures, canceled sports and limits on in-person socializing worsened an already growing **mental-health epidemic** among young people. **Social media** helps fuel it by replacing successful relationships with a craving for online social attention that leaves young people unfulfilled, and exposes them to sites that

continued on page 2



Federal 15-Week Abortion Ban?

The idea is being floated as a way to create political consensus over a divisive issue. While grateful for all restrictions on the killing of innocent children, a 15-week ban poses critical problems:

1. Pro-life states have enacted abortion restrictions much more stringent and effective. A federal ban will put pressure on those states to water down their existing life-saving measures.

2. Over 95% of abortions are performed before 15 weeks. Thus, the overwhelming majority of abortions in this country would still be completely legal.

3. By 15 weeks, a baby’s arms & legs are formed and moving, organs are in place; the heart has been beating for over 2 months. Human life should be protected from conception, but even in states where we can only achieve incremental abortion restrictions, 15 weeks is too far.

Now is NOT the time for face-saving compromise. [extracts from Life Legal Defense Foundation, *In Brief*, Oct/Nov 2023]

Which Religion Promotes Abortion?

- Most **Islamic** nations severely restrict abortion, citing the Koran: “Do not kill your children for fear of poverty. For it is we who shall provide sustenance for you as well as for them.”
- The Buddhist Vinaya monastic code specifically forbids monks & nuns to perform abortions; traditional **Buddhist** ethics condemn it as a form of homicide.
- The reverence for life and hatred of violence in the **Hindu** concept of *ahimsa* strongly discourages abortion. Early Hindu Vedas hold that abortion is worse than killing one’s parents.
- The **Talmud** condemns bloodshed against the child in the womb.
- The earliest **Christian** catechism, the Didache, in a teaching reaffirmed across two millennia, commands Christians not to procure an abortion, placing it among murder, infanticide, child rape. [*National Review*, 7/31/23]
- What religion do proponents of abortion follow today?

Artificial Contraception & Society

Since the use of contraceptives became widespread, promiscuity has increased dramatically, as have sexually transmitted **diseases**, abortions, single motherhood and fewer marriages. If sexual intimacy is disconnected from having babies, many no longer see why it should remain in marriage. Homosexual acts became seen by many as having the same value as heterosexual acts. We have not “redefined” marriage as undefined it. Widespread confusion and misunderstanding have resulted from disconnecting sex and procreation. We have separated what God has joined: this is never good. [Msgr. Charles Pope, *Our Sunday Visitor*, 11/19/23]

Young Americans are Dying (continued)

glamorize unhealthy behaviors. **Fentanyl**, more potent and riskier than heroin, has spread broadly to every corner of the illegal drug market, including numerous fake fentanyl-laced pills. U.S. authorities are trying to slow the spread of xylazine, an animal tranquilizer that can cause severe wounds and is increasingly mixed into the fentanyl supply. Cartels are replacing heroin with less-expensive, easier to make fentanyl. [extracted from *Wall St. Journal*, 5/18/23]

Addressing Declining Births

Modernity's "birth dearth" seems to be worldwide. South Korea reduced birth rates with national propaganda. The Chinese did it through tyranny. The U.S. has done the same by contraception and praising individual independence. Centuries ago, David Hume traced the decline in the populousness of nations to a **lack of hope and faith in the future**. Some say it is caused by materialism, that humans are just another species, one that has overreached and must be curtailed. Others say that it is our belief that we can overcome nature, be free from unchosen bonds and slavish bodies, that encourages people to skip parenthood; it is today's temptation that we shall be like gods. [letters to editor, *First Things*, Aug/Sept 2023]

Some nations Like Australia and Hungary have instituted pronatal policies such as paying **bonuses to families that have more children**. Hungary provides such fiscal relief and has policies to promote stronger families. Hungarian President Katalin Novak said: "We protect parental freedom. The **right to raise children** does not belong to the state, nor to NGOs, nor to the knowledge industry and the media, but to parents. Anyone who has a child is ready to fight at any time to ensure that their child can live in peace and freedom. Families pass on their values from generation to generation in the face of every difficulty, every challenge." [C-Fam, *Letter from the UN Front*, Oct. 2023]

But advocating for pronatalist policies alone will not stem the tide of our declining birth rates. We have to welcome families in our culture. We have to encourage a workplace culture that values **work-life balance** and prioritizes family time. We should encourage employers to adopt family-friendly policies that can create an environment where employees feel supported in their roles as parents. Moreover, we should work to shift **cultural attitudes** toward larger families, challenging stereotypes that may discourage people from having more children." [editorial, *Our Sunday Visitor*, 9/27/23]

Super Bowl Champ Speaks Out

Plenty of smart and talented people are successful but remain unhappy. In the end, Harrison Butker said, no matter how much money you attain, none of it will matter if you are alone and devoid of purpose. By insisting that our human gifts are God-given, his speech at a secular school and his alma mater, Georgia Tech, was open to the transcendent truths of faith.

Brandishing his **wedding ring**, Butker smiled, saying: "This is the most important ring I have right here." He said kicking in Super Bowl LVII, the most watched football game of all time, gave him happiness, but only temporary happiness. "None of these accomplishments mean anything compared to the happiness I have found in my **marriage** and in starting a family. Sadly, we are encouraged to live our lives for ourselves, to have loyalty to nothing but ourselves and make sacrifices only when it suits our own interests." He concluded: "Focus on meaningful relationships and know that with or without the spotlight, your life has value and you are meant for more." [Fr. Pat Briscoe, *Our Sunday Visitor*, 5/21/23]



Short Films [Salvo magazine, Fall 2023]

- **Groomed** (at DailyCaller.com) tells the story of a California mother who fought to rescue her adolescent daughter after her daughter's mind was virtually abducted by a combo of sex-ed school instructors and **transgender activists** online. Five years later, her daughter is recovering, but with no thanks to professional medicine or counseling. Worth watching solely for seeing what trans activists are perpetrating on children.
- **XXX** is a free YouTube documentary by sex-addiction therapist Roane Hunter on internet porn's effect on the brain. The "Coolidge Effect" is when the brain's reward system seeks ever-increasing novelty to get an ever-diminishing **dopamine rush**. The film (language warning) drives home the urgency of the risks porn poses to us all.

ProLife Ballot Defeats

Ohio voters' passage of an amendment to the state Constitution guaranteeing the right to one's own reproductive decisions including **abortion**, election of a pro-abort to Pennsylvania's Supreme Court, and other losses, serve as a reality check about where we are as a nation when it comes to protecting the lives of the unborn.

Reasons given include **deceptive ballot language**, media bias, and twice the campaign spending by pro-abortionists over pro-lifers. But the fact is that legalized abortion enjoys wide support around the country, a result of having 50 years of *Roe* that produced an abortion mentality in our laws, schools, workplaces, news and entertainment industries. So we must work increasingly to convert hearts and minds to a culture of life, respecting the inherent dignity of every human being. [extract from editorial, *National Catholic Register*, 11/19/23]

This monthly newsletter is used by dozens of churches as a bulletin insert. 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