



Respect Life

D I O C E S E O F P H O E N I X

June / July 2010

Volume 1, Number 1

FROM THE EDITOR

Greetings, fellow-pro-lifers! There's so much to tell you about in this issue of the Respect Life Newsletter: a flurry of pro-life legislation signed by Governor Brewer; how Arizona's new immigration law could impact pro-life pregnancy centers; a new pro-life organization; the tragic abortion performed at St. Joseph's Hospital; and a series of events you'll want to be sure and attend in the coming months.

Please be sure to contact me if you have upcoming respect life events or information that could be included in future editions. Together let's help build a culture of life--all for the Kingdom of God!

Joyce Coronel
Editor, *Respect Life Newsletter*

Legislature passes, Gov. Brewer signs pro-life legislation

The federal-health-care legislation passed by Congress last March had pro-lifers concerned on many fronts, particularly with respect to abortion.

A major pro-life victory was scored when Arizona became the first state in the country to opt out of providing abortion coverage in the insurance exchanges mandated by the federal-health-care legislation. This victory came about due to the hard work of the Arizona Catholic Conference through an amendment crafted in conjunction with the Bioethics Defense Fund and the Center for Arizona Policy.

Pro-life legislation had worked its way through the state capitol in previous years, but was uniformly vetoed by former governor Janet Napolitano.

Governor Jan Brewer signed a number of other pro-life bills last month as well, including SB 1307, which bans embryonic-stem-cell research, and SB 1306, which requires informed consent for women "donating" human eggs. She also signed SB 1304, requiring abortion providers to report data about abortion, and SB 1305, ensuring tax dollars will not be used to provide abortion coverage for government employees.

Controversial immigration law worries pro-life advocates

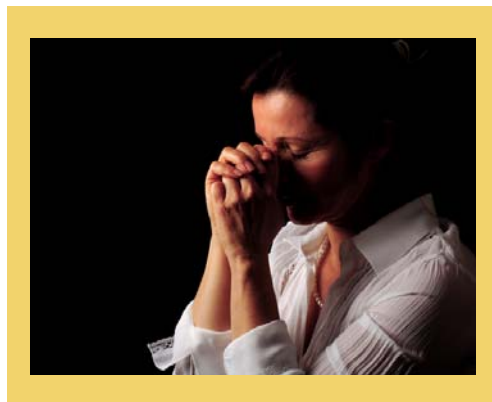
Arizona's new immigration law, better known as SB 1070, has grabbed headlines worldwide. People on both sides of the issue are passionate about their beliefs, but an aspect that's often overlooked is the impact on the cause of life.

Ryan Hanning, director of parish leadership support for the Diocese of Phoenix and president of the board for the Aid to Women Center, a pro-life pregnancy clinic in Tempe, said the new law will affect the work of the clinics that serve abortion-minded women.

"All three centers, [AWC, 1st Way Pregnancy Center and Life Choices] will be affected by the passing of the law. Most typically we serve an already marginalized community," Hanning said. "So a lot of our patients are immigrants or children of immigrants and anything that makes their life more uncertain or more difficult negatively impacts the decision they make when they are expecting."

Hanning thinks one of the unintended consequences of the new immigration law may be an uptick in the numbers of abortions. "We know that when bills like this pass—for example, Proposition 200 or Prop 300 in the past—that Planned Parenthood and others prepared for an increase in abortions, so we are anticipating more of a need when there is another reason for an expectant mother to question bringing that child to term," Hanning said.

Phoenix Bishop Thomas J. Olmsted as well as Bishop Gerald Kicanas of Tucson and Bishop James Wall of Gallup signed a public statement of opposition to the immigration bill.



Abortion performed at St. Joseph's Hospital

The revelation last month that St. Joseph's Hospital allowed an abortion to be performed on its premises—with the full knowledge and approval of a Catholic nun—garnered national headlines.

Bishop Olmsted issued a statement that he was “gravely concerned” by the abortion and stressed that “an unborn child is not a disease.”

The hospital insisted that it followed the Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services and that the abortion, performed at 11 weeks, was necessary since the mother was suffering from pulmonary hypertension.

Bishop Olmsted stated that “the Catholic Church will continue to defend life and proclaim the evil of abortion without compromise, and must act to correct even her own members if they fail in this duty.” He also said that if a Catholic formally cooperates in an abortion, he or she is automatically excommunicated.

Sr. Margaret McBride, who was vice president of mission integration at St. Joe's and was part of the group of people who decided on the abortion, has been reassigned.

The following is a statement written by Fr. John Ehrich, pastor of St. Thomas the Apostle Parish and medical ethics director for the Diocese of Phoenix.

Catholic Morality and Pregnant Mothers Who are at Risk

A recent news story has brought to our attention the potential dangers that still exist during pregnancy for both mother and child. We naturally ask, what is the right thing to do if a pregnant woman's life is in danger? Is it ever legitimate to perform an abortion to save the mother's life? As Catholics, we have clear teaching in this area that helps us to act in accord with God's will and in recognition of the human dignity of every person.

Some Basic Principles

It is important to note at the outset that these are very complex issues which demand careful reflection. We first need to start with some basic moral principles.

First, no one can do evil that good may come. We commonly know this as “the end does not justify the means.” Just because we can do something does not mean that we should.

Second, when speaking of a woman who is pregnant, we are always referring to two people: mother and child. Therefore, any medical intervention must seek the good of both mother and child. In short, we are dealing with two patients, not just one. So, we never would speak of how the mother's life is at risk without reference to her unborn child. Her child has as much dignity and value as she does. Morally speaking we can never prefer one life over the other.

Third, the unborn child can never be thought of as a pathology or an illness. That is, the child is not that which threatens the life of the mother, rather it is the pathology or illness (cancer, premature rupture of membranes, hypertension,

preeclampsia, etc.) which threatens the mother's life. While it is often possible that the pregnancy will aggravate an existing condition, we should never accuse the child of being a threat to the mother.

In difficult situations when the mother's life is threatened by an underlying condition, the solution can never be to directly kill her unborn child. To do so is an abortion. A Dilation and Curettage (D&C) or Dilation and Extraction (D&E) procedure in this context is the same thing as an abortion since it is the direct killing of an unborn child. The reason for such a procedure never matters. It is also important to note that the secondary intention or goal does not change the moral evil of this act. As John Paul II taught infallibly in his encyclical “The Gospel of Life,”



I declare that direct abortion, that is, abortion willed as an end or as a means, always constitutes a grave moral disorder, since it is the deliberate killing of an innocent human being. This doctrine is based upon the natural law and upon the written Word of God, is transmitted by the Church's Tradition and taught by the ordinary and universal Magisterium. (EV 62)

What Can Be Done?

So what can be done in such a situation? That depends upon the actual pathology or illness. The pathology should always be treated, to the extent possible, all the while remembering that there are two patients who are at risk. When treating the illness, physicians should always try to protect the life of the child, who has just as much a right to life as the mother. In the best of circumstances a physician will treat the mother's pathology and hold off on more aggressive treat-

ment until the child is past the point of viability, at which time labor can be induced. Sometimes, however, the actual pathology must be treated prior to the viability of the child and may indirectly cause the death of the child. This situation is altogether different from a D&C, since a D&C is the dismembering and removing of the body of the child. A D&C or D&E in this circumstance is the same as an abortion, since it is the direct killing of the child. There is a significant difference, morally speaking, between directly killing versus allowing a child to die as an unintended side effect of life saving treatment. A similar, although not completely analogous, distinction is made between murder and self-defense. The end result is the same, but the action taken and the circumstances change the way we evaluate the end result. Once again, the end does not justify the means.

The Catholic Position

Today we often hear people say, “I'm against abortion unless in cases of rape, incest or situations that threaten the life of the mother.” The Catholic position is much simpler; “We are always against abortion.” Every abortion is murder since it constitutes the unjust killing of an innocent life. Thus, it can never be justified under any circumstance.

The question might arise, “Isn't it better to save one life as opposed to allowing two people to die?” One thing we must always remember is that no physician can predict what will happen with 100% accuracy. We will never be able to eliminate all risks associated with pregnancy. What we should not do, however, is lower risks associated with pregnancy by aborting children.

It is not better for a woman to have to live the rest of her existence knowing that she had her child killed because her pregnancy was high risk.

When we try to control every possible situation in life, we end up playing the role of God. As people of faith we know that our lives are always in God's hands. In these situations the reality of our dependence upon Him becomes ever more clear and pronounced.

Fr. John Ehrich, STL
Medical Ethics Director Diocese of Phoenix



PRO-LIFE PROFILE:

Melanie Pritchard



Joyce Coronel/CATHOLIC SUN

Melanie Pritchard, the education director of Phoenix-based Life Education Corporation for the last four years and a familiar face to pro-lifers all over the country, recently announced she is embarking on a new adventure. Pritchard resigned her position with LEC in April to found an organization called Foundation for Life and Love.

“The Lord has called me to pursue a new avenue that will combine all of my current work with pro-life issues, self-worth, modesty, chastity, marriage, family and NFP under one umbrella,” Pritchard said. “FFLAL is an educational organization that seeks to preserve and promote the dignity and sanctity of human life at all stages and to promote a culture dedicated to the wisdom that each person is an unrepeatable being whose deepest desire is to have healthy relationships and happy marriages.”

Pritchard is well-known for her work with Pure Fashion, a ministry designed to teach young women the values of modesty and chastity.

Through FFLAL, Pritchard hopes to use a holistic approach to help build a culture of life. She plans to use the organization to provide resources to churches and schools about issues like self-worth, modesty, chastity, marriage and Natural Family Planning. She’s also planning for FFLAL to hold educational programs, retreats and conferences on these topics.

For more information about FFLAL and to read about its dynamic speakers bureau, visit www.FFLAL.org.

50th anniversary of the pill

Ironically, the 50th anniversary of the FDA’s approval of the birth control pill fell May 10, the day after people around the world celebrated Mother’s Day.

What many Catholics don’t realize is that the eugenicist founder of Planned Parenthood (known as the Birth Control League prior to 1942), was born into a Catholic family. Margaret Sanger was the sixth of eleven children born to a woman who was pregnant 18 times in 22 years and died at age 50.

The experience radicalized Sanger and she devoted the rest of her life to finding someone to invent a pill that would prevent pregnancy. She eventually joined forces with Gregory Pincus, a researcher who helped develop the birth control pill.

This seemingly ingenious solution—completely at odds with Catholic teaching—in conjunction with the so-called sexual revolution of the 1960s, unleashed a disastrous wave of cultural events, culminating in the legalization of abortion in 1973. The sexual act had been separated from the bonds of marriage; American life would never be the same.

Widespread sexual immorality, divorce and abortion as well as a slow slide towards euthanasia are all byproducts of the fateful FDA approval 50 years ago last month. The call to build a culture of life and renew marriage is more urgent than ever.



Please refer questions or comments about Respect Life to the Editor at JoyceCoronel@aol.com.

This newsletter is produced by the Diocese of Phoenix’s Marriage and Respect Life Office.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Fr. Pavone at Mt. Claret June 11

Fr. Frank Pavone, national director of Priests for Life, will be celebrating a 6:30 p.m. Mass on Friday, June 11 at the Mount Claret Retreat Center located at 4633 N. 54th Street, Phoenix. The Mass will be followed by refreshments, remarks by Fr. Pavone and a question-and-answer session. Space is limited, so be sure to RSVP by June 7 by calling (602) 285-0063 by 1 p.m.

SAVE THE DATE: Aug 19 Luncheon for parish leaders

The annual Defending and Celebrating Life Luncheon for respect life parish leaders hosted by the Office of Marriage and Respect Life will be held at the downtown Diocesan Pastoral Center on Thursday, August 19 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Keynote speaker will be Teresa Tomeo, host of The Catholic Connection radio program and international speaker on media matters. We will hear from Bishop Thomas J. Olmsted, Mike Phelan and Ron Johnson and look at the upcoming year ahead. Please plan on joining us for an informative and inspiring—not to mention delicious—afternoon.

Arizona Right to Life’s 38th annual conference Sept. 17-18

Mark your calendars now for Arizona Right to Life’s upcoming conference at the Chaparral Suites in Scottsdale Sept. 17-18. As always, the conference is a great way to learn more about abortion, euthanasia, embryonic-stem-cell research and many other life topics. Every year, Arizona RTL brings together pro-lifers from across the state to attend educational workshops and listen to highly regarded speakers.