

Caring for Both Mother & Child

“The Thought of Giving Up Coffee During Pregnancy Struck Fear into My Heart”

This is one of the statements made by Emily Oster who wrote “Take Back Your Pregnancy” in the *Wall Street Journal* (8/10/13). Her article carefully examined various advice and warnings given to pregnant women – stay away from alcohol; don’t gain too much weight; avoid soft cheeses and deli meat; etc. Her research indicated that **doing things in moderation** was the key to a healthy pregnancy.

What is remarkable in all of this, however, is the fact that in a mainstream publication there is frank and open talk about a developing baby in the womb. It’s not an “it”, it’s a developing human being! This is confirmed by polling of Americans: 80% believe abortion is taking a human life.

“*Cosmopolitan* magazine recently reported the findings of British researchers who studied the reactions of unborn babies to cigarette smoke inhaled by their mothers. The smoke agitated the babies, providing ‘further confirmation that nicotine is terrible for unborn children,’ reporter Tess Koman explained. The findings themselves are significant – but not surprising, in light of our increasing awareness of fetal pain. Astonishingly ... **the terms ‘unborn children’ and ‘babies’ made an appearance.** In the headline, they were ‘unborn babies.’ 20 years ago, that was the language of sentimentalizing anti-abortion zealots, as they were called. It’s now mainstream....” [National Review, 4/20/15]

Deciding to Have Children

Insights from a philosopher: “Part of what makes having a child such a morally transformative experience is the fact that my child’s well-being can genuinely be more important to me than my own. **I would give my life for my children** ... that’s exactly what every parent does all the time, in ways both large and small. Once I commit myself to a child ... my ego has expanded to include another person even though that person is utterly helpless and unable to reciprocate.”

Concluding that a mother will “be unable to imagine life” without her children, Alison Gopnik, from a non-religious perspective, put her finger on the joys of being a mother, a parent. [Wall Street Journal, 9/7/13]

Contrast this with St. John Paul II: “My dear friends, love is not only a spontaneous or instinctive thing: it is a decision to be confirmed constantly. When a man & woman are joined by true love, they each take to themselves the destiny, the very future, of the other as their own at the cost

of much hard work and many sufferings, so that others 'may have life and have it more abundantly (John 10:10).”

It's Normal to Grieve a Pregnancy Loss...

“ ... including the loss of a child by abortion. It can form a hole in one's heart, a hole so deep that sometimes it seems nothing can fill the emptiness.” This is the first statement found on the website **HopeAfterAbortion.com**.

Exploring the website, one finds information and insights on the following topics: After The Abortion; and How to Talk to a Friend Who's Had An Abortion. Touching and heartfelt statements are found on the page Expressions of Healing and Thanks. Plenty of other resources are provided, including info about Project Rachel, the post-abortion healing ministry of the Catholic Church.

Founded in 1984 in Milwaukee, **Project Rachel now is in more than 110 dioceses** in the U.S. and growing. It is composed of a network of specially trained clergy, spiritual directors & therapists who provide compassionate and confidential one-on-one care to those who are struggling with the aftermath of abortion. Project Rachel helps anyone who is struggling after an abortion loss, including women and men, parents, siblings, grandparents, friends and others whose lives have been impacted by an abortion loss. [The National Office of Post-Abortion Reconciliation and Healing, Inc.]

War on Motherhood: Babies Pollute?!

Some people attempt to justify forced abortion, sterilization & contraception because “human beings are destroying the planet.” But people have a choice to be polluters or responsible humans. We have twice as many people living in the U.S. as we did in the early seventies, yet the skies over our major cities are clearer now than they were a half century ago – all due to a conscious decision to switch to better fuels and technology.

Larger populations can actually have a smaller environmental footprint than a smaller population did a century ago. **Population control had no part to play in these successes.** Yet, globally, women’s fertility continues to be attacked in the name of the environment and “sustainable development.” Forced abortions, sterilization & use of unsafe chemicals are supported by the UN Population Fund and U.S. donors, all the while ignoring the massive human rights abuses they entail. [Population Research Institute Review, May-June 2015]

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Speaking Up for Catholic Women

Radical equality of women and men was one of the hallmarks of the early Church. All are sinners and all are recipients of God's love and mercy irrespective of one's station in life. As reported by Bridget Fay, writing in *Our Sunday Visitor* (5/24/15), "the morals and family structures promoted by the Catholic Church, and desired by a super-majority of women, enable women to escape poverty, succeed in the workforce and lead happier, and more fulfilling lives."

Writing in response to a *NYTimes* column entitled "Catholicism undervalues women," Fay says the piece does not cite the views of Catholic women nor ever mention Mary's critical role in salvation history. Moreover, modern technology "has enabled **Natural Family Planning** to be more effective at preventing pregnancy than the pill, and NFP is lauded by everyone from Catholic women to environmentalists for its efficacy and lack of side effects."

"Families are of tremendous import to women, both spiritually and corporeally. Studies show that the most important relationship for women in the workforce is the one with their fathers, and girls with fathers who are involved in their lives are waiting longer to have sex, are less likely to be depressed, and have fewer eating disorders. Remarkably, women who are Fortune 1000 CEOs are more likely to be married & have children than average American women."

"Mothers fare better when their children are raised in a **traditional family**. Single-mother families substantially are more likely to be in poverty than their married counterparts, even when adjusting for race. Married women are less likely to be victims of violent crime at the hands of strangers."

According to the Catholic League, the three largest social service agencies in the nation – Catholic Charities, Catholic Relief Services, & the Catholic Health Association – are all run by women. Of the top three diocesan positions – chancellor, CFO, & schools superintendent – 32% of these 571 positions across the nation are filled by women. In contrast, of the six top jobs at the *NYTimes*, **none are held by women**. Last year, the Women's Media Center rated the *NYTimes* last of 10 top newspapers in having the largest gender gap. [*Catalyst*, June 2015]

The Pope is Coming, The Pope is Coming

This is the first time the Church's World Meeting of Families will be held in the U.S. The Congress itself is set for Sept. 22-25, the Festival of Families on Sept. 26, and the papal Mass on Sept. 27. The last two events will be on the

Benjamin Franklin Parkway in Philadelphia, and may be attended by more than two million people.

Fr. William Donovan is helping coordinate the event, saying that Pope Francis "wants us to look outside ourselves, especially at the marginalized." "**God's first gift in the natural order is life; the second is the family,**" he said. One of the benefits of this first World Meeting of Families in the U.S. is that organizers have embraced a spirit of ecumenism. This, Fr. Donovan believes, is related to the universal recognition of the primary importance of the family. He thinks the Pope is so committed to the family because of the potential ripple effect on all aspects of life: education, culture, business and public policy.

"If you get the family right," said Fr. Donovan, "everything else will improve." [*Our Sunday Visitor*, 6/7/15]

Priests for Life will sponsor a pro-life event on **Wednesday, Sept. 23**, from 6 to 9 p.m. at the Philadelphia Convention Center where the other sessions of the World Meeting will occur. A public presentation from 6 to 8 p.m., followed by a private reception of pro-life leaders, will focus on the fact that **nothing destroys the family more than abortion**, and that family strength requires, first of all, that we protect the family's youngest members, and that we heal the wounds of abortion. Groups will be able to exhibit at the evening event and meet pro-life leaders from around the world. Find out more at ProLifeWorldEvent.com.

March for Life – in Lima and in Rome!

On Saturday, March 21, 2015, more than half million people marched in the streets of the Peruvian capital in defense of innocent unborn human life, making it the **largest pro-life march in all of Latin America**. Susannah Cavanaugh said: "We hope that people around the world will be encouraged by the Peruvian people's conviction and will in turn break the chains of death and destruction in their own countries." [*Population Research Institute Review*, May-June 2015.]

In May, Rome's fifth March for Life signaled the growing pro-life movement all throughout Europe, with more than 40,000 participants from all over the world, especially youth. The event's theme, "Defend Life, No Compromise" was expanded to include **not only abortion but also the practice of euthanasia and assisted suicide** in some European nations. For Joao, a Portuguese university student: "A society that is paying to kill their future generation is a society that does not have any future in itself." [*National Catholic Register*, 5/31/15]