

## You and Me ... Masterpieces of God's Creation

### Pope Francis' Day for Life Greeting:

*"Even the weakest and most vulnerable, the sick, the old, the unborn and the poor, are masterpieces of God's creation, made in his own image, destined to live forever, and deserving of the utmost reverence and respect."*

This is the theme of this year's Respect Life Month that has been observed each October since 1972. This year, **Respect Life Sunday falls on October 5, 2014.**

The U.S. Bishops, through the Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, have developed six new brochures for our consideration. You are bound to find one or more of these helpful in your own life. Just ask your pastor or respect life committee to obtain a copy for you.

• **Healing Within Marriage from an Abortion.** Drawing from firsthand accounts, this article illustrates that although many marriages suffer from the effects of one or both spouses' involvement in an abortion, healing and growth as a couple is possible.

• **Children as Commodities?** While recognizing the true suffering caused by infertility, this article demonstrates that some reproductive technologies do not respect the dignity of children produced by them.

• **Poverty and Abortion: a Vicious Cycle.** Addresses the increasing abortion rate among American women experiencing poverty, the effect of abortion on poverty, and how we are called to respond.

• **Solace and Strength in the Sorrow of Miscarriage.** Aided by a personal story, this article shows the heartache of losing a child through miscarriage and offers guidance on how to respond to those who are hurting.

• **An Adoption Love Story.** One couple's journey adopting their son gives an honest look at some concerns, challenges, and joys of welcoming a child through adoption.

• **Advance Medical Directives: Planning for Your Future.** Discusses concerns raised by various types of advance medical directives.

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**Communities around the country are participating in Life Chain Sunday, October 5<sup>th</sup>. For example, in the NJ Morris area, starting at 2:15 pm, people may prayerfully spend an hour opposite Morristown Hospital, holding positive, life-affirming signs (provided by organizers).**

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More information about all the resources available from the U.S. Catholic Bishops, in English and in Spanish, may be found at [www.usccb.org/respectlife](http://www.usccb.org/respectlife), and [facebook.com/peopleoflife](https://www.facebook.com/peopleoflife), or by calling 1-202-541-3054.

### October 5 also "Pulpit Freedom Sunday"

A recent Pew Research Center study released on Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup> revealed that a growing number of Americans (49%) support religious leaders weighing in on social and political matters, up from 40% in 2012. However, most Americans still believe that churches should not back political candidates.

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*According to Pew, 60% of Americans still want members of Congress who have strong religious beliefs, a number that hasn't changed since 2010.*

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Many churches are now challenging the constraint of losing their tax-exempt status if they endorse candidates, by supporting an annual "Pulpit Freedom Sunday," launched in 2008, encouraging church leaders around the country to "preach an election sermon" on Oct. 5<sup>th</sup>. [Source: Tamara Audi, "More Americans Back a Voice for Religion in Politics," *Wall Street Journal*, 9/23/2014.]

### Having Children Without Marriage?

Latest figures reveal that more than 40% of new mothers are unmarried. Yet college-educated young adults are still marrying before having children and planning their families more intentionally. The rest of America, about two-thirds of the population, is not.

For every child lifted out of poverty by a social program, another one is entering poverty as a result of the continued breakdown of the American family. Moreover, studies have found that our biggest social programs like food stamps do not reduce child poverty as much as unmarried parenthood has increased it.

Many attempts at bolstering marriage have not been successful. So children continue to be born outside of marriage. Nevertheless, **what is needed is a new ethic of responsible parenthood.** Social norms can change, but only if schools, government and society at large unite behind a clear message of responsible parenthood. [Source: Isabel V. Sawhill, "Beyond Marriage," *NY Times*, 9/14/2014.]

**GIGO** How many times have we been told, "garbage in, garbage out" whether discussing computer or other problems? The same applies to our personal and social lives. What kinds of TV shows do we let "into" our life, our brain, our heart? How about the magazines we read, the movies we see, the online sites we visit? To get better stuff into our heads and hearts, we need to start viewing and reading positive sources that will enhance, not degrade, us.

## Pope Francis Met Former Abortionist

On April 11, 2014, the Holy Father received and spoke to 470 members of the Italian Movement for Life:

“Every civil right is based on the recognition of the first, fundamental right, the right to life, which is not subject to any condition, of a qualitative, economic and certainly not of an ideological nature. Let us remember the words of Vatican Council II: ‘Therefore **from the moment of its conception life must be guarded with the greatest care** while abortion and infanticide are unspeakable crimes.’

“I remember once, a long time ago, I participated in a conference with doctors. One of them called me to one side. He had a package and said: “Father, I want to leave this with you. These are the instruments I have used to carry out abortions. I have encountered the Lord and repented, and I fight for life.”

We can assist Pope Francis by listening to anyone who leaves the abortion industry. Point those individuals to Priests for Life, which works closely with the Society of Centurions, a well-established medical and spiritual program for former abortion industry workers. [Source: newsletter of Priests for Life, July-August 2014, pp. 3-4]

## Humans as Cyro-Preserved Embryos

Discarding an embryo, to be clear, means ending the life of a tiny human life that each of us once was at an earlier time. In vitro fertilization inevitably leads to storing surplus frozen embryos.

A few years ago, the *New York Times* ran a piece, “The Job Nobody at the Fertility Clinic Wants.” A clinic director in Chicago described how often he had to destroy spare embryos himself because his staff found the task so distasteful. The staff had seen firsthand how such **embryos, when implanted, would yield beautiful babies** who brought happiness to their parents. They seemed to appreciate instinctively how living human embryos, even in the deep freeze, should never be dropped into the biohazard disposal, or used as ‘raw material’ for medical research.

We must continue to store “excess” embryos just as we have a moral duty to care for our own offspring. They should be preserved until a morally acceptable option for rescuing them presents itself, or until they die naturally. [Source: Fr. Tad Pacholczyk, “Humans as Frozen Orphanages,” *The Beacon*, 9/18/2014.]

## Support NJ Right to Life When Shopping on

**Amazon:** Save this link <http://goo.gl/f4E8rl> and use it every time you shop at Amazon. Every time you use it, NJRTL earns up to 8% back on your purchase. Thanks for doing your part.

## Reflection

“But when her baby is born, she no longer recalls the suffering, because of her joy that she has brought a child into the world.” Jn 16:21.

St. Gerard Majella (18<sup>th</sup> c.) is the patron saint of pregnant mothers, of childbirth, and of unborn children. Thousands of children have been named after St. Gerard by parents who are convinced that it was his intercession that helped them to have healthy children.

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*The term “pro-choice”, now being abandoned by pro-abortionists, arose as a way for abortion supporters to describe themselves and their position without mentioning the procedure. When it comes to euphemism, the abortion lobby outdoes the Victorians. [National Review, 8/25/14].*

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## A Funny, Frank, and Totally Catholic Look at Natural Family Planning

Disheartened over Natural Family Planning (NFP)? You are not alone. If you’ve tried NFP and discovered that your marital life is now more confusing than ever, don’t panic.

Catholic author and speaker, Simcha Fisher, writes a blog that appears in Patheos under the column “I Have to Sit Down” and other Catholic venues. In the same vein, she has written a witty, truthful, Catholic book on NFP that offers tips on how to achieve all the fabled benefits of marriage, and find intimacy that is still holy and human.

“**The Sinners Guide to Natural Family Planning**” is a funny, frank, and totally Catholic look at NFP. It may be ordered at Our Sunday Visitor Press, [www.osv.com](http://www.osv.com), or by calling 1-800-348-2440.

## U.S. Catholic Conference of Bishops Takes the Lead in Support of Life

The Bishops’ Committee on Pro-Life Activities has seven bishop and archbishop members, and an extensive list of consultants including other archbishops, law professors, college deans and bioethics experts. Their resources of books, flyers, DVDs, posters, etc., cover the following major areas:

- Culture of Life
- Church Documents
- Abortion
- Post-Abortion Healing & Reconciliation
- Life-focused Prayer & Worship
- Biotechnology
- Capital Punishment
- Euthanasia & Assisted Suicide
- Natural Family Planning

Parishioners interested in learning more about one or more of these topics should call 1-866-582-0943, or visit the Bishops’ website, [www.usccb.org/respectlife](http://www.usccb.org/respectlife), or [facebook.com/peopleoflife](https://www.facebook.com/peopleoflife).