

Family & ProLife News Briefs for Catholics

December 2018

Life Brings Joy !

Building a Fulfilling Marriage

[Ed. note: every month we will present excerpts from Pope Paul VI's encyclical, *Humanae Vitae*, the brief but prophetic papal letter to all people of good will, proclaimed in 1958. Pope Paul VI was canonized in October 2018.]

● **Married love** is not confined wholly to the loving interchange of husband and wife; it also contrives to go beyond this to bring new life into being. "Marriage and conjugal love are by their nature ordained toward the procreation and education of children. **Children** are really the **supreme gift of marriage** and contribute in the highest degree to their parents' welfare."

● **Parenthood** Husband and wife must be fully aware of their obligations in the matter of responsible parenthood, rightly understood. In its biological, emotional, social and environmental aspects, the exercise of responsible parenthood requires that husband and wife recognize their own duties toward God, themselves, their families and human society. It follows that they are not free to act as they choose in the service of transmitting life, as if it were wholly up to them to decide what is the right course to follow. On the contrary, they are bound to ensure that what they do corresponds to the will of God the Creator. The very nature of marriage and its use makes His will clear; the constant teaching of the Church spells it out.

● **Intimacy** The sexual act, in which husband and wife are intimately and chastely united with one another, is the means through which human life is transmitted. The Church urges observance of the precepts of the natural law, which it interprets by its constant doctrine, and teaches that each and every marital act must of necessity retain its intrinsic relationship to the procreation of human life.

"It is poverty to decide that a child must die so that you may live as you wish."

St. Teresa of Calcutta

Incidence of STDs Continues to Rise

Over 110 million Americans have one or more sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and the number keeps rising. Some can pose **permanent health problems**; some persist for years without any symptoms; others can be treated and cured with antibiotics. The surest way to avoid infection is to practice **sexual abstinence while single**. If you marry, ensure that your partner is not infected with an STD, and remain sexually faithful during marriage. [*STDs: What You Should Know* booklet, www.abstinenresources.com]

Adoption: Sharing New Life & Bringing Joy

For each child who is available for adoption in the U.S., approximately 36 couples are waiting, hoping and praying for a chance to adopt. **Open adoption** helps pregnant women choose from dozens of approved families waiting to adopt. Contact arrangements with the adopting family are flexible and can be changed over time. **Adoption services are free**, and many expenses through pregnancy are covered through the adoption process. Adoption isn't "giving your baby away." Learn about Open Adoption in confidence at 800-923-6784. [www.LifetimeAdoption.com]

Healing Brings Peace

For help after having, or participating in, an abortion, seek God's peace and reconciliation through one of the following organizations:

- **Rachel's Vineyard** 877-467-3463 rachelvineyard.org
- **National Helpline for Abortion Recovery** 866-482-5433 nationalhelpline.org
- **Project Rachel** 888-456-4673 hopeafterabortion.com
- **Abortion Recovery International** 866-721-7781 abortionrecovery.org

Law Suit Filed Over "Disorderly Conduct"

A case was recently filed by the American Center for Law and Justice on behalf of two pro-life activists challenging the constitutionality of Iowa's disorderly conduct statute. Two peaceful counselors were arrested on a **public sidewalk** outside an abortion business for preaching Scripture, carrying pro-life signs, and talking to passers-by.

The ACLJ has a superb track record of protecting free speech outside abortion clinics, having just won victories in two cases, *Turco v. Englewood* (NJ) and *Devine v. City of NY*. The ACLJ remains steadfast in its decades-long commitment to defending the free speech rights of those on the front lines who are speaking up to protect the lives of the unborn.

"It's my body, so it's my choice!"

If the preborn child is just a part of her mother's body (like an organ) or growing on her mother's body (like a tumor), this rhetoric might make sense.

But the reality is that from the moment of fertilization, the child in the womb possesses her own individual, complex genetic makeup, **separate from her mother's DNA**. A preborn child is definitely not part of the mother's body – she is her own self, with her own body. [*Who Do You Believe*, magazine for teens & young adults, www.humanlife.org]

Recommended Books from Notre Dame U.

Great advice and good moral teachings for courting, marriage and raising kids may be found in many recent books from Ignatius Press, EWTN and Notre Dame's **Ave Maria Press**. Dr. Greg and Lisa Popcak, authors of **Just Married**, published another book, **Then Comes Baby**, the Catholic guide to surviving and thriving in the first three years of parenthood. Author Dawn Eden revised and updated the Catholic edition of her book **The Thrill of the Chaste**, with the theme of "finding fulfillment while keeping your clothes on." Author & radio personality Patrick Coffin said: "Very few writers can crank out prose that is at once elegant and funny ... and spiritually enriching with no treacherous aftereffects...."

And from Emmaus Road Press: **Sex Au Naturel: What It Is and Why It's Good for Your Marriage** by Patrick Coffin. Making the case against contraception, this book presents a clear and compelling case for the timeless teaching of the Church on "birth control."

Why Cohabiting Couples Have Higher Divorce Rates

First, consider what research shows: most couples who live together never marry. Those who do marry have a **divorce rate up to 80% higher** than those who waited until after the wedding to live together. Cohabiting couples report greater **marital conflict** and poorer communication.

Those who cohabit are **less likely to be faithful** to one another. Cohabiting women are far more likely than wives to suffer **domestic violence**. Women who cohabit are more than three times as likely to be **depressed** as married women. Cohabiting couples are **less sexually satisfied** than married couples.

As to the higher divorce rate, cohabiting partners who marry think less of marriage and are less likely to work tirelessly to preserve it. Having sex during the courtship period hinders their ability to look at each other clearly. And cohabitation undermines commitment. On the one hand, the couple desires complete intimacy, but they also want to leave a way out if their partner does not measure up. This **lack of faith in the other** sows seeds of doubt and distrust from the start.

Successful marriages are not the result of few annoying qualities in one's spouse, but the result of choosing to love and **forgive the other** each day, with all his or her imperfections. Wanting to "test drive" a marriage really shows a lack of understanding of what makes a marriage work. [www.chastity.com; also, www.usccb.org/laity/marriage/cohabiting.shtml]

"I depend on life support, but I won't ask for 'aid in dying'"

That's what Diane Coleman said recently in a guest newspaper column. "I have an advanced neuromuscular condition and must use breathing support with a mask 18 hours a day." Regarding so-called assisted suicide laws in some states, "disability groups have pointed out the inherent discrimination and empty pretense of safeguards in these bills. Why does everyone else get suicide prevention, while **old, ill and disabled people get suicide assistance?** How could a doctor who's known a person for an average of only 13 weeks know if he or she is being pressured to ask for assisted suicide?" Requests for suicide come from feeling a loss of autonomy, loss of dignity, or feelings of being a burden. Yet these "could be addressed by consumer-directed in-home care services. **People who need home care are treated as disposable.**"

Regarding assisted suicide bills like those proposed in New Jersey, if "the only other person present at the end is a greedy heir or tired care giver, there are **no safeguards** to determine whether they self-administered the lethal drug or were cajoled, tricked or forced."

"We urge [elected officials] to consider the dangers to the many elders, ill and disabled people who are not safe from mistake, coercion and abuse." [Newark Star-Ledger, 10/28/18]

"We must not be surprised when we hear of murders, of killings, of wars, of hatred. If a mother can kill her own child, what is left but for us to kill each other."

St. Teresa of Calcutta

Questions for the New Year

Can Catholics who take God seriously yet request procedures, use certain prescribed drugs, or support health policies that attack the sanctity of unborn children or the elderly, can they still be right with God? Or if they vote for officials who support policies that undermine the dignity of human sexuality and the family, **won't God demand an accounting?**

In his remarks to the Phoenix Catholic Physician's Guild, Archbishop Charles Chaput of Denver condemned **moral indifference** in the face of the culture of death as dishonesty towards God and ruinous to America; and reminds us that God will hold us responsible for our lack of action in support of Life.

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Past issues: posted on the Diocese of Paterson, NJ website.

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