



For Life

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FIGHTING SLAVE LABOR IN BRAZIL

—PARÁ, Brazil—Lured by \$30 for his family and the promise of more money from a recruiter, Paulo left his home in northeastern Brazil in February for a job clearing bush in the Brazilian Amazon. Days later, he found himself with nine others in the middle of an unfamiliar forest, sleeping in a stable, eating rice and beans, and drinking the same dirty water given to farm animals.



For 19 days, they cleared some 148 acres of bush, while another group of workers applied pesticides to coconut trees without the benefit of protection. When it came time to get paid, they received nothing, not even a ride to the nearest town, some 10 miles away. They are some of the estimated 40,000 laborers working under conditions akin to slave labor on the fields of Amazonian Brazil.

It's been more than a century since Brazil banned slavery, but forced labor continues today as growing economic pressure mounts to develop the Amazon's vast agricultural frontier. Like Paulo, most victims are poorly skilled, illiterate, landless workers from the outskirts of cities. Lured from the impoverished northeastern region of the country by traffickers, known as *gatos*, who are seeking labor for ranches, farms and charcoal plants, they migrate to remote areas on the agricultural frontier, far from their families and out of reach of official inspectors.

These workers are subjected to a life of slavery — indebted for their food, travel, equipment and even accommodations, which are often nothing more than a shack with no electricity and no running water. By way of physical and psychological coercion — threats, attacks and even armed surveillance — they are forced to work until their debt is paid off.

CRS [Catholic Relief Services] Brazil is working to eradicate slave labor through the U.S. Department of Labor-funded program Trails of Liberty (*Trilhas da Liberdade*), which operates in four northern states where recruitment or use of slave labor is common. Together with a range of partners, CRS helps form a network that offers social and legal support, alternative means of income and increased awareness of the problem.

"The practice of slave labor is one of the many paradoxes that exist in Brazil," says Luis Claudio Mattos, chief of party for Trails of Liberty. "It is a country of two extremes: the enormous concentration of wealth and land ownership coexisting alongside abject poverty. You get the creation of a second-class citizenry which is subjected to the will and power of the elite."

—CRS.org

FREEDOM OF CHOICE ACT COULD RESCIND EXISTING LEGISLATION

—Chicago, Illinois, Nov. 20, 2008, Zenit.org

Legislative fences have been erected that significantly reduce abortions. [These laws are in jeopardy if the Freedom of Choice Act is passed]

- Approximately 40 states have physician-only laws (limiting abortion practice to physicians);
- 32 states follow the funding limitations of the federal Hyde Amendment, while 17 states provide broader funding for abortion;
- 36 states have passed informed consent laws;
- 36 states have passed parental involvement laws;
- 47 states have passed laws to protect rights of conscience;
- 22 states have passed abortion clinic regulations;
- 16 states have passed ultrasound laws;
- fetal homicide laws exist in 36 states that treat the killing of an unborn child as a homicide;
- wrongful death laws have passed in at least 38 states that allow a civil suit for killing an unborn child at some point of gestation. These laws have limited abortion and serve to marginalize abortion as the outstanding (if not the sole) area in which unborn children are not legally protected.

Results of FOR LIFE Post Card Responses

Postcards Mailed: 617

Question 1: Has this publication been of assistance to you in your ministry? Yes = 98 No = 3

Question 2: I pass this publication on to others as a resource of authentic Catholic Social Teaching? Yes = 64 No = 21

Thank You!

Your suggestions and comments help to shape future issues!

Please copy and distribute freely.

From the Director —by Peggy Gerovac

Over the last month or so I have received many email messages and phone calls related to a piece of national legislation called the Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA). This comprehensive bill could widen the scope of abortion in our country in many ways including providing governmental funding for international and domestic abortions, removing conscience rights for institutions and individuals, repealing many state laws limiting abortion, as well as many other items. The U.S. Bishops Conference and our diocese are committed to work toward preventing this law from passing.

Here is some information about the bill. There is a draft of legislation, called FOCA that has not yet gone to hearing. We are not at the stage of voting in either the House or the Senate and there is nothing for the Office of the President to approve at this time. Letters have been written to the members of the house, the senators and the President-Elect regarding the Catholic position on such legislation. The USCCB, as well as the Catholic Health Care Association, are currently discussing the proposed bill with the numerous sponsors of both the House and Senate bills so that the legislators clearly understand the scope proposed.

The current House and Senate FOCA bills, an edited version of either bill, or a completely new bill could become the central focus. At this time, it is important to have the discussions because FOCA or another version could actually be presented and we want the legislators to clearly understand the specific issues so they can apply our concerns to any such proposed legislation.

Here in our diocese in early December, each parish received a letter from my office with the encouragement of Bishop Lennon to participate in a postcard campaign January 24 and 25. Parishes are encouraged to order postcards, educational flyers and the parish instruction booklet to manage the campaign

with ease. I am happy to say that I have received much positive feedback from the parishes to which I have spoken. These postcards are general and do not name the Freedom of Choice Act since we cannot be sure what the final legislation will contain. The Bishops' Conference thought it essential to come out with a message from the Catholic community now, but they want it to apply to many circumstances.

You may find more information including letters and fact sheets at www.clevelandcatholiccharities.org/prolife. There is also much information at www.usccb.org/prolife/. An insert is included in this publication, in sound byte style, about the bill as currently proposed in both the House and Senate.

At this time I am working with the suggestions from the USCCB and Bishop Lennon. I am also working with our local Catholic health care systems to ensure all our government relations departments are informed and are discussing this possible legislation with the appropriate legislators. I can say that my experience has been full cooperation with everyone involved and a real dedication that is beyond my own expectations.

We will continue to work as situations present themselves. At this time we are unsure what will actually transpire by the federal legislators, but keeping them informed and educated is essential. I will also continue to work with parishes as they formulate their own pro life ministry and response to the proposed legislation.

Most importantly I urge everyone to pray that our country and our world will come to respect the dignity of every person, and in the case of the unborn, ensure that the violence of abortion is never their fate. Pray to open the minds and hearts of legislators, scientists, medical personnel, social service providers, individuals everywhere including ourselves to put life and nonviolence first in every endeavor and situation. Finally, please consider helping your parish in their own pro life ministry including the proposed postcard campaign.

WHEN WE SAY "NO" TO ASSISTED SUICIDE, WE ARE CHOOSING LIFE

—Excerpts from *"Living & Dying According to the Voice of Faith,"* 1997 Michigan Catholic Conference

Choosing death by one's own hand contradicts our deepest identity as sons and daughters of God. Such an action also conveys a tragic message to our family and friends—that we reject their genuine love and our solidarity with them.

Above and beyond what civil laws may say, we Christians are ultimately responsible to God our Creator. As a Church, we definitively say "no" to assisted suicide because we say "yes" to life—**from the first moment**

of conception until our last natural breath. Suicide in any form prevents us from fulfilling the plan God intended for us when we were given life.

Euthanasia, or so-called "mercy killing," may at first sound like an appealing form of death because it proposes to eliminate all suffering. Yet it is not at all what it seems! By definition, euthanasia is any action that of itself and by intention causes death so as to relieve suffering. As Catholics we believe euthanasia is morally wrong because it is the destruction of life. It also opens the door to other potential crimes against life, especially against those who are chronically ill or disabled. Euthanasia is unnecessary as well as wrong **because suffering and pain can be relieved in many morally acceptable ways.**

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UPHOLDING THE DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON IN THE MARITAL EMBRACE

—Excerpt from *Sisters of Life*, Issue 27, Winter 2007



An increased number of married couples are finding their anticipation for children shrouded in the suffering of infertility.

The accompanying frustration, heartache and grief are deep and real. So is the temptation to give in to ways of conceiving that seem to promise results, but only at great spiritual, emotional and financial cost.

Many people find aspects of Assisted Reproductive Technologies (ARTs) distasteful—the method of retrieving eggs and sperm and the “production” of extra embryos, children who are later frozen or destroyed, foremost among them. But even those who dislike the processes may not understand why they are morally wrong, especially since beautiful children may be the result.

There is an intrinsic link between human love and human life. In the design of God, we are made—male and female—in His image. That image is truest when our personal love “looks” most like the total, mutual, self-giving love that is the inner life of the Blessed Trinity. In the Sacrament of Marriage, the Lord anoints a couple’s love with His presence. Their mutual gift of themselves in the marital act participates in His Love. God is with the couple in that moment, blessing them with marriage-sustaining grace and bonding them together in His love. It is here, within this “warm” context of self-donating love, in the embrace not only of his or her parents but of God, that a new human life is meant to have his or her first experience of existence. It is through and in our bodies that the Lord desires to continue His work of creation: bringing into existence a unique someone who did not exist and yet will now ‘be’ forever. We are sacred!

There *are* morally acceptable methods to assist fertility, methods which also uphold the dignity of the person and the marriage. A good rule of thumb when presented different options is any method that assists the marital act to achieve its purpose of procreation is licit; anything that substitutes for it is not. Certain fertility drugs and surgeries to correct underlying issues are morally fine. Artificial Insemination by husband or donor, IVF, and any form of surrogacy are not. Many well meaning couples have chosen ARTs, unaware of God’s plan for life and love. *Regardless of the circumstances of conception, all children are created in God’s image, beloved by Him, and destined for eternity.* There remain, however, far-reaching spiritual and emotional consequences for the parents. Nevertheless, the Lord always invites us to begin anew through repentance and continued efforts to love as Christ loves. The truth will set us free!

CONGRATULATIONS BIRTHRIGHT!

On Fri., Sept. 19, 2008, **USA Birthright** was presented The President’s Volunteer Service Award in Washington, DC. Birthright, an emergency pregnancy service, assists women facing an unplanned pregnancy. The group’s motto states, “It is the right of every pregnant woman to give birth and the right of every child to be born.” The letter from President Bush states (in part):



“Congratulations on receiving the President’s Volunteer Service Award from the President’s Council on Service and Civic Participation. Through service to others, you demonstrate the outstanding character of America and help strengthen our country. I congratulate you and all Americans who have answered this call and have earned a Gold Award from the President’s Council.”

CONSEQUENCES OF THE WAR IN SUDAN

—excerpt from *Comboni*, Vol. 13, No. 3, Fall 2008

- Mass displacement of populations: more than four million from South Sudan and 1.2 million from the Darfur region and displaced within and outside the country
- Continuation of slavery—directly when young people are abducted and indirectly through the exploitation of cheap labor
- Destruction of tribal structures and value systems, leading to cultural disparity and loss of “identity”
- Loss of life: more than 2.5 million dead
- Poverty ... everything is lost
- Famine
- Lack of education
- Diseases



Volume 15

Issue 1

For Life is a quarterly publication of the Pro Life Office, Catholic Charities Parish and Community Ministries, Catholic Diocese of Cleveland, as an educational service for the people of this diocese.

The mission of the Pro Life Office is to proclaim the sanctity and value of human life as a gift from God and the foundation of human dignity, and work to ensure the quality of life at all stages of existence. This office encourages a Consistent Ethic of Life approach in promoting reverence for life, which is rooted in the Gospel and teachings of the Church.

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Upcoming Events . . .

2009 March for Life—Bus Trips to Washington, DC

In memorial to the over 45-million aborted babies in our country, march to Capitol Hill and Supreme Court. Join the March for Life in Washington, DC on January 22, 2009.

🚌 Wed.-Thurs., Jan. 21-22—A bus will leave from St. Francis Xavier Church, Medina, at 9:30 pm on Wed., Jan. 21 to Washington, DC. Mass at the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception and pro-life rally and March for Life on Jan. 22. Bus will return approx. 1 am on Fri., Jan 23. Cost is \$55 per person. Contact Larry at 330-667-8213 for reservations.

🚌 Thurs., Jan. 22—A bus will leave from St. Ladislav, Westlake, for the 36th Annual March for Life. Call Bob at 440-250-0514 for reservations and more information. Cost is \$55 per person; no overnight stay.

🚌 Thurs., Jan. 22—“Rosary for Life” is sponsoring trips to Washington DC for the March for Life. For more information and reservations, contact the following:

Westside: Call Frank at 216-362-6091

Eastside: Call Chuck at 440-257-7835

Thurs., Jan. 22, 2009—Youth Rally for Life—Downtown Cleveland Public Square at noon. This is a public speaking opportunity for high school students and young adults under the age of 26 to present a pro-life message in a public forum. Please contact Virginia Hanley, coordinator, at 216-226-6663. Sponsored by Cleveland Right to Life.



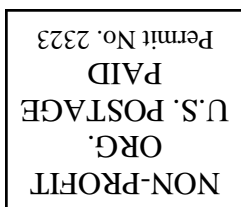
Wish List . . .

Womankind Request for Volunteers—Womankind Maternal & Prenatal Care Center is accepting applications for client support volunteers. Training classes are now forming for late January 2009 and will be held at the center at 5400 Transportation Blvd. in Garfield Hts. Interested volunteer candidates need to complete an application and submit it by Jan. 15. Contact Dianna Ulatowski, Volunteer Coordinator, at 216-662-5700 or dianna@womankindcleveland.com. Womankind is a nonprofit prenatal and maternal healthcare center that offers a full range of support services—free of charge—to pregnant women and their families in emotional and financial need.

. . . FROM THOMAS MERTON

It is true, political problems are not solved by love and mercy. But the world of politics is not the only world, and unless political decisions rest on a foundation of something better and higher than politics, they can never do any real good. When a country has to be rebuilt after war, the passions and energies of war are no longer enough. There must be a new force, the power of love, the power of understanding and human compassion, the strength of selflessness and cooperation, as the creative dynamism of the will to live and to build, and the will to forgive, the will for reconciliation.

Honorable Reader. Robert E. Daggy, Editor
(New York: Crossroads Publications, 1989): 125



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A GIFT OF LIFE: CONSIDERATIONS ON ORGAN DONATION

—Excerpts from the address Benedict XVI gave to the participants of the above-named international congress Nov. 7, 2008, Zenit.org

Organ donation is a unique testimony of charity. In a time such as ours, frequently marked by various forms of egotism, it is more and more urgent to understand how it is necessary to enter into the logic of gratitude to correctly understand life. There exists, in fact, a responsibility of love and charity that commits oneself to make one's own life a gift for others, if one truly seeks one's own fulfillment. As Lord Jesus taught us, only by giving one's life, can you save it (cf. Luke 9:24).



If we turn our gaze to the entire world, it is easy to confirm the numerous and complex cases in which, thanks to the technique of organ transplantation, many people have overcome extremely grave illnesses, and in them the joy of life has been restored. This would never have happened if the commitment of the doctors and the competence of the researchers had not been able to count upon the generosity and altruism of those who have donated organs.

Unfortunately, the problem of the lack of available vital organs is not a theoretical one, but a considerably practical one; one can see this in the long waiting list of those whose only hope for survival is linked to the small number of non-useful donations.

Regarding the technique of organ transplants, this means that one can only donate if this act doesn't put one's own health and identity in serious danger, and if it is done for a valid moral and proportionate reason. Any reasons for the buying and selling of organs, or the adoption of utilitarian and discriminatory criteria, would clash in such a way with the meaning of gift that they would be invalidated, qualifying them as illicit moral acts. Abuses in transplants and organ trafficking, which frequently affect innocent persons, such as children, must find the scientific and medical community united in a joint refusal. They should be decidedly condemned as abominable.

The same ethical principle must be reiterated in the case of the creation and destruction of human embryos destined for therapeutic objectives. The very idea of considering the embryo as "therapeutic mate-

rial" contradicts the cultural, civil and ethical foundations on which the dignity of the person rests.

The act of love, which is expressed with the gift of one's own vital organs, is a genuine testament of charity that knows how to look beyond death so that life always wins. The recipient should be aware of the value of this gesture that one receives, of a gift that goes beyond the therapeutic benefit. What they receive is a testament of love, and it should give rise to a response equally generous, and in this way grows the culture of gift and gratitude.

The path that must be followed, until science discovers new and more advanced possible therapies, needs to be that of the formation and diffusion of a culture characterized by solidarity and that opens itself to others without excluding anyone. Organ transplants that are in line with ethic of giving require the commitment of all sides to invest every possible effort in formation and information, so as to increasingly awaken consciences to a problem that directly affects the lives of so many.

WORKS OF MERCY IN A NEW WAY

—excerpt from *Catholic Update*, October 2008

The Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy can serve as a guide for care of creation.

🌍 **Feeding the hungry** expands to cooking and giving our families, friends, neighbors and the economically poor nutritional food produced and offered with an ethical concern for land, water and creatures.

🌍 **Prayer for the living and the dead** leads us to listen to the voices of people in Africa suffering from hunger and drought due to global warming.

🌍 **Giving drink to the thirsty** means taking short showers, turning off dripping faucets and conserving water in our homes.

🌍 **Converting the sinner** takes on new meaning for each of us to convert consumer lifestyles to ones of sustainability so there are resources for future generations.

🌍 **Instructing the ignorant** becomes educating ourselves and those close to us about ecological challenges and actions that we might engage in.

OUTSOURCING MOTHERHOOD: IVF TOURISTS

Surrogate Births Raise Troubling Questions

—By Father John Flynn, LC, ROME, NOV. 9, 2008 Zenit.org



The boom in surrogate motherhood in India has been the target of increasing media attention. The Australian-based Sun Herald newspaper reported Nov. 2 that India is receiving numerous IVF tourists from Europe and Britain, drawn by brazenly-worded ads such as: "Healthy young women superovulated exclusively for you!" Not only does India offer surrogate mothers, but also offers donor eggs to women who fly to India for them to be implanted.

. . . the International Herald Tribune reported the cost of using IVF services in India—including air tickets and hotel costs—comes to around \$25,000 for overseas couples, about a third of what the cost would be for a similar service in the United States.

The report also observed that a number of ethical questions are being raised about the use of surrogate mothers in India. Critics are worried about the danger of exploitation. As well, couples use the services to skirt laws in their own countries.

Opinion columnist Ellen Goodman also expressed concern over surrogate mothers in a piece published April 11 in the Boston Globe. Goodman expressed her sympathy for couples who have difficulty in conceiving naturally. Nevertheless, she fretted about the commercialism in surrogate motherhood, where a person becomes a mere product to be traded on the international markets. "We cannot, for example, sell ourselves into slavery," she commented. "We cannot sell our children. But the surrogacy business comes perilously close to both of these."

The Catholic Church is clear regarding its opposition, both to IVF as a whole and also to the use of surrogate mothers. In its 1987 instruction on respecting human life in its origin, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith dealt with surrogates among other points. The instruction rejected the practice, not only because it introduces a third person into the relationship of the husband and wife, but also because: "Surrogate motherhood represents an objective failure to meet the obligations of maternal love, of conjugal fidelity and of responsible motherhood." The instruction also argued that the use of a surrogate mother offends the dignity and the right of the child to be brought into the world by its own parents.

2007 OHIO REPORT

1. Down Syndrome Research and Practice journal, claimed that in detecting and preventing the birth of 660 Down babies, 400 healthy fetuses are lost.
2. 28,921 (93.7%) of the abortions were performed on Ohio residents. That figure was the **lowest number of abortions** on Ohio residents since 27,231 were reported in 1990.
3. 35.9% of abortions were performed on **black women**, even though they make up only about 12% of the population.
4. 12,821 reported having at least 1 prior abortion (47.8% of reported abortions were repeat abortions)
5. 385 reported having **5 or more prior abortions**.
6. The number of chemical abortions remained about the same. 4,668 abortions were performed by "non-surgical" methods.
7. 5,583 or 18.1% of abortions were performed on persons **under 20 years of age**.

—WWW.OHIOLIFE.ORG



Makes you go hmmm....

(A Column of Quotes)

Opposing abortion and euthanasia "does not excuse indifference to those who suffer from poverty, violence and injustice. Any politics of human life must work to resist the violence of war and the scandal of capital punishment. Any politics of human dignity must seriously address issues of racism, poverty, hunger, employment, education, housing and health care."

—excerpt from
Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities
A Statement of the US Catholic Bishops

In 2004, 37 percent of all abortions performed in the United States were obtained by black women, 34 percent by non-Hispanic white women, 22 percent by Hispanic women and 8 percent by women of races other than white or black, the report said, "As an African-American I am saddened by evidence that black women continue to be targeted by the abortion industry," Bishop Holley said in an Oct. 15 statement. "The loss of any child from abortion is a tragedy, but we must ask: Why are minority children being aborted at such disproportionate rates?"

—America, Nov. 3, 2008

The president of the University of Dayton, Daniel J. Curran, and Archbishop Daniel E. Pilarczyk of Cincinnati signed a national petition—the Declaration of Principles for a Presidential Executive Order on Prison Treatment—calling on the president of the United States to reject cruelty and torture. Among Catholic bishops, signers include Bishop Thomas G. Wenski of Orlando, Fla., and Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick, retired archbishop of Washington.

—excerpt from *Our Sunday Visitor*, Nov. 2, 2008

This technology ("Reprogramming" Ordinary Adult Skin Cells) avoids the many ethical land mines associated with embryonic stem cell research: it does not clone or destroy human embryos, does not harm or exploit women for their eggs, and does not blur the line between human beings and other species through desperate efforts to make human embryos using animal eggs. ... This advance reminds us once again that medical progress and respect for human life are not in conflict; they can and should support and enrich one another for the good of all.

—excerpt from
The National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly,
Spring 2008, Vol. 8 No. 1