



FOR LIFE

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What Have We Learned About Death With Dignity in Oregon in the Past 10 Years?

by Juli Loesch Wiley

—excerpt from *Our Sunday Visitor*, May 20, 2007



Providence Sister Karin Dufault, a registered nurse and executive director of the Supportive Care Coalition based in Eugene, said the political movement for suicide-oriented “treatment” has had one paradoxical effect: It has spurred palliative-care providers into greater action to strengthen positive, nonviolent alternatives.

“What is now the 16-member Supportive Care Coalition came into being in 1994, when six Oregon Catholic health ministries became deeply concerned about the underlying causes behind the push for legalized suicide,” said Sister Dufault. “We were determined to address the public’s expressed fears of poorly managed pain, unbearable suffering at the end of life and fear of burdening their families.”

“The coalition began by listening carefully to what people had to say about the effect of failing health on their lives, and particularly about how well or poorly the health care system met their needs.”

The Oregon Department of Human Services recently released 2006 figures documenting that about one-tenth of 1 percent of those diagnosed with terminal illnesses in Oregon—292 over nine years’ time—have opted for physician-assisted suicide. The main reasons stated for choosing a fatal drug overdose were loss of autonomy, loss of the ability to engage in enjoyable activities, loss of dignity, loss of control over bodily functions and concern about becoming a burden to family and friends.

Although severe pain has been strongly highlighted in the campaigns to legalize physician-assisted suicide in other states, it didn’t even make it into the top five reasons why people actually asked doctors for prescriptions for lethal drug overdoses in Oregon.

Looking back on her long experience in oncology and gerontology, Sister Dufault agreed that highly effective treatments exist for pain and other physical symptoms of terminal illness. “We know that we can successfully address pain, nausea and other physical symptoms in people who are seriously ill. A lethal overdose of barbiturates is not an appropriate treatment. In fact, it’s not a treatment at all.” she said.

Stem-Cell Fairy Tales

by Father Tadeusz Pacholczyk

—excerpt from *Our Sunday Visitor*, May 6, 2007



In our society, the harvesting of human embryos to obtain cures has almost taken the form of a popular mythology. A Washington Post article summarized it this way a few years ago:

“‘To start with, people need a fairy tale,’ said Ronald D.G. McKay, a stem-cell researcher at the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke. ‘Maybe that’s unfair, but they need a story line that’s relatively simple to understand.’ Human embryonic stem cells have the capacity to morph into virtually any kind of tissue, leading many scientists to believe they could serve as a ‘universal patch’ for injured organs.”

This idea, though still purely speculative, is simple and easily marketable, especially to desperate patient-advocacy groups. Scientists like the myth, too, since they believe that this kind of “master cell” from the earliest stages of human life could help unlock very primordial and tantalizing biological powers, maybe even leading to the “Tree of Life” itself.

As researchers ambitiously wrest control of the powers of life into their own hands, it should perhaps come as no surprise when some of them start yielding to the seductive siren songs of our day: “Good ends can sometimes justify evil means” and “One life can sometimes be taken to benefit another.”

Although it is a basic biological truth that each of us was once a human embryo, promoters of embryonic-stem-cell research diligently portray those embryos as different from the rest of us.

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From the Director

Each of us, with our own gifts, talents and resources, are all called to be stewards for life. In pro life we talk about life from womb to tomb. What can it mean to be a steward for those at the end of life?

We often hear about end of life issues in the news, we experience them with our own family and friends and we have heard Church teaching regarding the value of life to the last breath. Can we experience, learn and honor life in its final stages even more by seeing it as both a social issue and a responsibility as a Catholic Christian? It seems the Church has been calling us to this all along. Caring for, attending to and advocating for the sick and dying is being a steward for life.

Over the past several years I have been involved with two very important ministries related to the end of life in our diocese. The process of being involved with both ministries has been very hopeful and enlightening for me

First, I am participating in a facilitating group to assist parishes with pastoral care of sick as well as the Rites of Anointing and Viaticum. As a group, we returned to the Rites as given to the Church by the Congregation for Divine Worship of the Holy See. It was an enlightening and hopeful experience to re-read not only the sacred words of the Rite but to read and discuss all the educational text provided in the Rite for full expression by the Church.

One very prominent teaching that surprised many of us as we read the document and shared it with several parishes was the essential role of the parish community in the pastoral care of the sick and dying. These Rites and the accompanying ministry are not meant to be segregated from the parish at large. The Rite states,

“Every scientific effort to prolong life and act of care for the sick, on the part of any person, may be considered a preparation for the Gospel and a sharing in Christ’s healing ministry. It is thus especially fitting that all baptized Christians share in this ministry of mutual charity within the body of Christ by doing all they can to help sick return to health, by showing love for the sick and by celebrating the sacraments with them.” (*Pastoral Care of the Sick: Rites of Anointing and Viaticum nos. 32-33*)

Prayer Corner

Faith

Faith can move mountains,
Faith can change lives,
Faith can heal suffering,
Faith can open our eyes.

Give us the faith, Lord,
To trust Your ways.
Walk beside us and guide us
For all of our days.



It seems that being pro life at the end of life extends beyond my own personal decisions or that of my family. We are called to the physical, spiritual and emotional care of the sick and dying. Ministry with the sick and dying is honoring their sanctity and the sanctity of all life.

The second end of life opportunity I was given was a collaborative ministry of the Pro Life Office and the Office for Marriage and Family. There is a program prepared by the Ohio Conference of Catholic Bishops and funded by the Knights of Columbus. It is called “Living with Hope Confronting our Fears: A Series on Death and Dying: The Catholic Perspective.” The Cleveland Diocese has used it for several years, and I am privileged to co-facilitate this for parishes and other groups in the diocese.

In the documents for this series we read:

We believe that in some mysterious and marvelous ways the Creator continues to fashion each of us and to breathe life into us. As a result we are inspired with God’s life and holiness. This is the basis not only of our reverence and respect for life, but also for stewardship of life. (*Living With Hope Confronting Our Fears, Catholic Conference of Ohio*)

With this program help, people prepare for their own death and that of loved ones by looking at the Church’s teaching and inspiration. We are also able to assist in the decision making and preparation of medical end-of-life documents. We are helping others become stewards of life in preparation for some possible very difficult and holy moments.

When those at the end of life are part of our parish, our family and our society, this reminds us of their dignity. When we minister with the sick and dying, we are in the pro life ministry of direct service and evangelization with those who could be compromised due to a medical condition. Honoring life with an attentive focus to the importance of all the people of God, in this case the sick and dying, is one way we can be stewards for life.

—by Peggy Gerovac

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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.

Pro Life Office
7911 Detroit Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44102
(216) 334-2965

www.clevelandcatholiccharities.org/prolife

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Not Just a Material World Poverty Falls, Many Problems Remain

by Father John Flynn
ROME, APRIL 22, 2007 (Zenit.org)

. . . The Pope has spoken out on a number of occasions on matters related to poverty and economic development. "Once again I invite the leaders of the wealthiest nations to take the necessary steps to ensure that poor countries, which often have a wealth of natural resources, are able to benefit from the fruits of goods that are rightfully theirs," he said Jan. 8 in his annual speech to the diplomatic corps accredited to the Holy See.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church also speaks clearly on the matter: "Rich nations have a grave moral responsibility toward those which are unable to ensure the means of their development by themselves or have been prevented from doing so by tragic historical events" (No. 2439).

For those who argue that the Church is meddling in affairs outside its competence, the Catechism points out that the Church leaves to the laity the work of directly intervening in these matters (No. 2442).

Moreover, the Church does not propose a specific program, as action in this area can legitimately take a variety of forms. What is important, the Catechism continues, is that the action taken be inspired by the message of the Gospel, the common good, and the teaching of the Church.

Benedict XVI developed in greater depth the Church's contribution in his 2006 message for Lent. The primary contribution of the Church does not consist in technical solutions, but in proclaiming the truth of Christ, he explained. It is Christ, the Pope added, "who educates consciences and teaches the authentic dignity of the person and of work. . ."

Words Gave Life

Doors were opened. Words spoke truth.
Possibilities are now real.
Gates were held tightly for thirty four years
broke open with new words.
Hope beyond hope emerged.
Millions previously discarded are raised up.
The Word broke free in Jesus.
Today the words broke free for Jesus' beloved.
Voice was given by the ruling body
long after love's source gave life.
Rejoice! Sing Hallelujah!
Dance for life sprung free!
Keep bringing words of freedom
for millions in waiting.
Life will gain its true expression.



—Response to the US Supreme Court ruling
banning one method of abortion
Written by Peggy Gerovac

Finding Real Alternatives to Abortion

Interview With Official of Pro-life Government-Funded Agency

HARRISBURG, Pennsylvania, APRIL 19, 2007 (Zenit.org).- In 1995, Pennsylvania started a bold, state-funded initiative to reduce the number of abortions by providing pregnant women the necessary resources to keep their children.

In 1994, Pennsylvania Governor Robert Casey placed alternative to abortion services program funding in the state budget.

In 1995, I answered an advertisement in the local newspaper from a pro-life organization looking for a director to start a statewide government-funded program.

Real Alternatives was established to be the statewide administrator of the Pennsylvania Alternative to Abortions Services Program (PAASP).

With a dedicated staff of 12 and nine board members, we contract with 120 service providers made up of pregnancy support centers, social service agencies like Catholic Charities, adoption agencies and maternity homes throughout the state to reach out to women in unplanned or crisis pregnancies.

—www.realalternatives.org/aboutus

Post-Abortion Initiative to Heal More Hearts



Project Rachel Offers Training Session in Rome

ROME, MAY 18, 2007 (Zenit.org).- Project Rachel, the U.S.-based initiative that helps women to heal in the aftermath of an abortion, is putting itself at the service of the universal Church.

Founder Victoria Thorn led a training session in Rome today on the teaching tools of Project Rachel. The course was organized by students from the John Paul II Institute in Rome, the Pontifical Lateran University and the Emmanuel Community. . .

[Thorn said] that she has been overwhelmed with requests from abroad to help other dioceses set up Project Rachel, including invitations from Uganda, India, Lithuania, Ukraine, New Zealand and the Philippines. . .

Many women that seek the help of Project Rachel may have had an abortion 20 or 30 years earlier. Thorn explained that an abortion is something a woman never forgets, and that healing is a process.

The founder said that women grieve after an abortion, which is amplified by guilt, isolation and shame: "Even if a woman is forced into an abortion with a gun at her head, a woman will always feel guilty. As a woman, she realizes that her job was to protect her child and she didn't do it."

"She may feel a deep anger at all the pressures in her life that compelled her to abort, but she will not feel entitled to that anger because of what she has done. . ."

—ZE07051811

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Upcoming Events . . .

Wed., July 11, 2007—The 3rd Annual Joseph M. Foley, MD, Lecture—Sponsored by the Catholic Ministry of Health Care Professionals. *“Is A Revolution in Health Care Needed?”* Speaker, Lois Margaret Nora, MD, JD, President and Dean of Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine. Reception, 6 p.m.; dinner & lecture at 7 p.m. at the Center for Pastoral Leadership, 28700 Euclid Ave., Wickliffe. Registration form can be found on the Pro Life Website at: www.clevelandcatholiccharities.org/prolife

Wed., Sept. 26, 2007—“Stand Up for an End to Executions”—sponsored by Ohioans To Stop Executions; endorsed by the Catholic Conference of Ohio and the Diocese of Cleveland. Join us Outside the Ohio Statehouse for a march, rally, prayer, vigil, teach-in and lobby day. Pre-register with OTSE at 513-579-8547 or Email: OTSE.org@gmail.com.



Websites of Interest . . .

Recommended by the USCCB

Hands Off Our Ovaries

This organization is concerned about the adverse effects of biotechnological research and development on women. Sadly, there have been too many instances of coercion and deception and violations of informed consent.

www.handsoffourovary.com

Comment on Reproductive Ethics

This is a public interest group focusing on ethical dilemmas surrounding human reproduction, particularly the new technologies of assisted conception.

www.corethics.org

**Pro Life Office
Catholic Charities
Parish and Community Ministries
7911 Detroit Avenue
Cleveland, OH 44102**



Wish List . . .

Alternatarm Pregnancy Services is requesting the following items:

- Gently used infant clothing, size 0-6 mo, especially for boys
- Baby bottles
- Cribs and bassinets; crib sheets
- Baby wipes
- Blank note cards
- New or gently used books on pregnancy and infant care
- Maternity clothes, especially pants, shorts, & skirts in sizes 14+, 1X, 2X, and 3X

These items go out the door almost as quickly as they come in. Consequently, needs seem never ending! If you can help with any of the following, call 216-371-4848.

Hannah’s Home is a maternity home that provides a respite for young single women who are pregnant where they can continue their education and become better equipped to make life-long decisions consistent with the Christian Gospel. Currently, Hannah’s Home is requesting the following donations:

- Gas grill (large)
- George Foreman grill
- Electric can opener
- Paper products (TP, paper towels, etc.)
- Ink cartridges for computers (HP 7310xi, HP 9697, HP 6127, Lexmark X1240 and X73, Ricoh GX3050N)
- Digital camera

Please contact 440-209-9615, ext. 111 to donate. For more information about Hannah’s Home, visit their website at www.hannahshome.org.

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Amnesty International on Sexual and Reproductive Rights

—excerpt from their Policy, April 2007



Under our policy, we call on states to:

- Provide women and men with full information on sexual and reproductive health.
- Repeal laws that allow women to be charged, imprisoned or otherwise subjected to criminal penalties for seeking or having an abortion.
- Ensure that any woman who suffers complications from an abortion will have access to the medical services she needs, whether she obtained the abortion legally or illegally.
- Ensure access to abortion services to any woman who becomes pregnant as the result of rape, sexual assault, or incest, or where a pregnancy poses a risk to a woman's life or a grave risk to her health.

Amnesty International does not take a position on whether abortion should be legal or whether it is right or wrong. Amnesty does not counsel individuals as to whether they should continue or terminate a pregnancy, nor will Amnesty campaign generally for abortion. The policy allows Amnesty International to address specific issues associated with abortion to the extent that these are directly relevant to the organization's work, such as the right to health, and violence against women.

Some religious believers consider abortion a violation of the right to life. International law is silent on the question of when life begins and Amnesty International takes no position on this question. The organization recognizes and respects the diversity of religious viewpoints on abortion and believes that one of its greatest strengths has been the solidarity forged among people of diverse beliefs who nonetheless share a commitment to ending human suffering. In this spirit, the organization's leadership believes that its members and supporters can continue to collaborate on specific human rights issues without having to change or challenge their moral standpoint or view on issues such as abortion. It is in this spirit that Amnesty International calls on its members and supporters to work with the organization to end violence against women, which often lies at the root of unwanted pregnancies.

CHURCH RESPONSE:

"IF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PERSISTS IN THIS COURSE OF ACTION, INDIVIDUALS AND CATHOLIC ORGANIZATIONS MUST WITHDRAW THEIR SUPPORT, BECAUSE, IN DECIDING TO PROMOTE ABORTION RIGHTS, AI HAS BETRAYED ITS MISSION."

—CARDINAL MARTINO
HEAD OF THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE

Where there is sadness, joy

by Dave Robinson

—excerpt from *The Catholic Peace Voice*,
Winter 2007, Volume XXXII, No. 1



To be a peacemaker must mean that we bring something different to our world. Our world is awash in sadness. Pain and brokenness abound. If we remove the filters that allow us to make it through each day, the pain and sadness we see is overwhelming. It can immobilize us. It can crush us under its sheer weight. As we seek to be peacemakers in our daily lives, as we see to build right relationships, overcome deception, and point to another Way, we must do so with joy. Emma Goldman famously said, "I don't want to be a part of any revolution that won't allow me to dance." Indeed, we must be in love with life in order to overcome the culture of death. We must dance, rejoice and reinforce the elements of beauty and joy that God intends for all. Otherwise we risk becoming the very sadness that we seek to banish.

Water Facts:



- The average Sub-Saharan African uses the same amount of water in a day as someone in a developed country uses brushing their teeth for two minutes with the tap running, running a lawn sprinkler for a minute or flushing a toilet.
- An estimated seven million people die a year from waterborne diseases, including 2.2 million children under five. That means a child under five dies every 14 seconds.
- An estimated 1.1 billion people do not have access to safe drinking water, nearly two-thirds of whom are in Asia. An estimated 2.6 billion worldwide lack access to improved sanitation.
- Countries where water is scarce tend to need more for irrigation than water-rich countries. The US uses almost twice as much water per person as Egypt, however.
- The worldwide bottled water industry is worth an estimated \$22 billion, roughly twice the amount spent on cruises, make up and perfumes yearly.

—www.bbc.co.uk
May 26, 2007

GIVE US YOUR EMAIL



If you are interested in being notified of timely updates through our **email alert system**, please send a request to pmgerovac@clevelandcatholiccharities.org. This means you will be notified with updates not only for action alerts, but events, Catholic articles regarding life issues and new links for pro life websites.

There Will Always Be A Place for Charity

—VATICAN CITY, MAY 2, 2007 (Zenit.org)

Excerpts from message of Benedict XVI to the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, on the occasion of their plenary session April 27-May 1, 2007

The Church's conviction of the inseparability of justice and charity is ultimately born of her experience of the revelation of God's infinite justice and mercy in Jesus Christ. At the heart of that teaching, as you well know, is the principle of the universal destination of all the goods of creation. According to this fundamental principle, everything that the earth produces and all that man transforms and manufactures, all his knowledge and technology, is meant to serve the material and spiritual development and fulfillment of the human family and all its members.

[There are] three specific challenges facing our world:

1. The environment and sustainable development to prevent the destruction of that natural capital whose fruits are necessary for the well-being of humanity. Particular attention must be paid to the fact that the poorest countries are likely to pay the heaviest price for ecological deterioration. This in turn calls for a responsible relationship not only with creation but also with our neighbors, near and far, in space and time, and with the Creator.
2. If human beings are not seen as persons, male and female, created in God's image and endowed with an inviolable dignity, it will be very difficult to achieve full justice in the world. This recognition to bear upon such global problems as the growing gap between rich and poor countries; the unequal distribution and allocation of natural resources and of the wealth produced by human activity; the tragedy of hunger, thirst and poverty on a planet where there is an abundance of food, water and prosperity; the human suffering of refugees and displaced people; the continuing hostilities in many parts of the world; the lack of sufficient legal protection for the unborn; the exploitation of children; the international traffic in human beings, arms and drugs; and numerous other grave injustices.
3. The need for a dialogue which can help people to understand their own traditions vis-à-vis those of others, to develop greater self-awareness in the face of challenges to their identity, and thus to promote understanding and the acknowledgement of true human values within an intercultural perspective. To meet these challenges, a just equality of opportunity, especially in the field of education and the transmission of knowledge.

The Drama of Human Freedom

—from *Sisters of Life*, Issue 25, Spring 2007

Everyday we're faced with decisions. Most of them are of small matters, made spontaneously. These are decisions to be kind, or not, to be patient, or not, to speak the truth, or not. Then there are decisions that weigh a bit heavier, usually made with a little deliberation. Will I allow my child (or myself) to watch that movie? Will I visit that elderly neighbor? We tend to think that these aren't very serious matters. But the serious matters come, too, in each life. When we are faced with these choices of gravity, whose outcome to some degree determines who we are, how we see ourselves, and how we think God sees us, all the little decisions we made up to that point weigh in. Yes, each choice we make in freedom, no matter how big or small the matter seems, affects us, changes us. And this is the drama of human freedom, and the call to moral greatness. Every decision, for good or for ill, makes the next good decision easier or more difficult. And each time we choose the way of Jesus, dying to our selfishness, we give Him more room to breathe in our lives, paving the way for His resurrection to take place in us.



Makes you go hmmm....

(A Column of Quotes)

"By living faithful, vibrant, intelligent Christian lives in dialogue with the questions of our day, the Gospel will be powerfully expressed to those with whom we share a planet. And as a believing community, we must also attend to those outside the community."

—Archbishop Philip Wilson, President
Australian Bishops' Conference

God's love does not differentiate between the newly conceived human infant still in his or her mother's womb and the child or young person, or the adult and the elderly person. God does not distinguish between them because he sees an impression of his own image and likeness (Gn 1:26) in each one.

—Pope Benedict XVI, Address to the
12th General Assembly of the
Pontifical Academy for Life
February 27, 2006

Thus, a human life is precious when someone thinks it is, be it a parent or be it a civil court, and when that life is deemed not to be human or otherwise to be without value, then it is expendable. This kind of gross inconsistency is not questioned in our society but is taken for granted with serenity, sad to say.

—Bishop Robert C. Morlino
National Catholic Prayer Breakfast
April 7, 2006

"The moral test of a government is how it treats those who are at the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the aged; and those who are in the shadow of life, the sick, the needy and the handicapped."

—Hubert Horatio Humphrey
former U.S. Vice President

Violence is a lie, for it goes against the truth of our faith, the truth of our humanity. Violence destroys what it claims to defend: the dignity, the life, the freedom of human beings. Violence is a crime against humanity, for it destroys the very fabric of society. ...To all of you who are listening I say: Do not believe in violence; do not support violence. It is not the Christian way. It is not the way of the Catholic Church. Believe in peace and forgiveness and love, for they are of Christ.

—Pope John Paul II