

CITIZENS
CONCERNED



BLAIR COUNTY
CHAPTER

Citizens Concerned for Human Life

Blair County Life News

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Presenting the Pro-Life Message to Blair County, Pennsylvania

Winter 2018



MARCH FOR LIFE

WASHINGTON, D.C.

01.19.2018



March with us! The Blair County Chapter of Citizens Concerned for Human Life is arranging bus transportation from the Altoona area to the March for Life. Cost: \$15 Adults; \$10 Students ♦ Call 946-0681; 695-8008 or 942-2723



2018 STUDENT ORATORY CONTESTS REGIONAL ORATORY CONTEST

Written Copy Due: February 23, 2018
Regional Competition: March 4, 2018

The Citizens Concerned for Human Life Regional Oratory Contest is open to all 9th-12th grade students in **Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Centre, Clearfield, Fulton, Huntingdon, Juniata, Mifflin and Somerset Counties.**

Students must prepare a five to seven minute pro-life talk on abortion, infanticide, euthanasia or embryonic stem cell research. Speeches must be from a pro-life perspective and delivered as written, but need not be memorized. The student may use a podium and appropriate hand gestures but may not use props. A written copy of the speech must

be emailed by **February 23, 2018** to: **Janet Creighton, contact@webparish.com.** In the email, send the following: name, address, city, county, phone, email address, school, name of parent(s)/ guardian. Then call Jan, **814-623-1314**, to let her know that you emailed your entry.

Awards

Varsity (Grades 11 & 12) - 1st Place \$200, 2nd \$125, 3rd \$75

Novice (Grades 9 & 10) - 1st Place \$150, 2nd \$100, 3rd \$50

All regional contestants may also be a contestant for the state competition. Being a contestant for the regional competition does not automatically enroll you in the state competition.

Pro-Life Dinner Invite—All regional contestants will be invited as our guests to the Bedford County Annual Pro-Life Dinner. The top two Varsity contestants will be invited to speak at the dinner.

PA STATE VIDEO/ORATORY CONTEST

PENNSYLVANIA PRO-LIFE FEDERATION

Submit video/written entry by April 16, 2018

Speak Up for Those Who Cannot Speak for Themselves!

The Pennsylvania Pro-Life Federation contest is open to high school juniors and seniors; a Novice Contest will be held for high school freshmen and sophomores. Students must write and give an original 5-7 minute pro-life speech on abortion, infanticide, euthanasia or stem cell research. Students must video record the speech and submit the video and written speech to the Pennsylvania Pro-Life Federation by **April 16, 2018.** Cash prizes will be awarded. In addition, **the first-place winner of the Senior High Oratory Contest will receive an expense-paid trip for the National Oratory Contest** at the National Right to Life/Teens for Life Convention, June 28-30, 2018, in Overland Park, Kansas. For complete contest rules: www.paprolife.org or call 717-541-0034.

2018 STUDENT ESSAY CONTESTS

PENNSYLVANIA STATE ESSAY CONTEST

Written Copy Due: March 12, 2018

The 2018 Pennsylvania Pro-Life Federation “Be a Voice for the Voiceless” Essay Contest is open to PA students in grades 7-12. Students must write a pro-life essay about abortion, infanticide, euthanasia or stem cell research. There is a 500-word limit for essays submitted by students in grades 7-9 and a 750-word limit for students in grades 10-12. Each essay must include a cover page with the student’s name, home address, home phone number, name of school (or the fact that the student is homeschooled) and grade. Winning essays will receive cash prizes. Deadline for entries is **March 12, 2018.** Essays can be e-mailed to lifelines@paprolife.org or mailed to the **Pennsylvania Pro-Life Federation; 4800 Jonestown Rd., Suite 102; Harrisburg, PA 17109.**



NFL Player Who Refused to Meet Pro-Abortion President Obama to Headline March for Life

By Micaiah Bilger

Former NFL player Matt Birk grew popular in pro-life and conservative circles several years ago when he refused to meet President Barack Obama because of the president's pro-abortion policies.

This January, pro-life advocates at the March for Life will hear more from Birk, a former Baltimore Ravens center, and his wife, Adrianna, about their passion for the pro-life cause.

The March for Life recently announced Birk as one of the keynote speakers at the annual event, which draws hundreds of thousands of pro-lifers to the nation's capital.

"Each of these speakers bear witness to this year's theme 'Love Saves Lives' in a unique and powerful way that is sure to resonate with the hundreds of thousands of pro-life Americans from across the country who will be coming to march in defense of life this year," said Jeanne Mancini, president of March for Life. "We look forward to hearing how love has empowered each speaker to create a culture of life within their individual communities and platforms."

Other featured speakers include NFL/MBL star Tim Tebow's mom Pam Tebow, U.S. Rep. Dan Lipinski, a Democrat from Illinois, U.S. Rep. Chris Smith, a Republican from New Jersey and Sister Bethany Madonna. The March is scheduled for January 19, near the anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court decision *Roe v. Wade*.

Birk is a Catholic and a strong pro-life advocate. Birk grew up in St. Paul, Minnesota, where Planned Parenthood did abortions for decades. The godfather of one of Birk's five children opened a pregnancy center across the street from the abortion facility; and Adrianna, his wife, volunteered at the center. Eventually the Planned Parenthood abortion clinic closed.

In 2013, Birk said he took offense to Obama's comments about abortion and refused to meet him with the rest of his team. "I wasn't there," Birk said in 2013 when he refused to meet with Obama. "I would say this, I would say that I have great respect for the office of the Presidency but...our president made a comment in a speech and he said, 'God bless Planned Parenthood.'"

"Planned Parenthood performs about 330,000 abortions a year," Birk continued. "I am Catholic, I am active in the Pro-Life movement and I just felt like I couldn't deal with that. I couldn't endorse that in any way."

"I don't think I'm a superstar by any means, but I'm glad (for) the platform that football allows me. I'm glad to use it to support causes that I passionately believe in and this is one of them. For me, it comes down to what's right and what's wrong—what's God's will and what's not," Birk said.

—LifeNews.com, December 22, 2017



Good News for Mothers and Babies as Abortions Decrease in Pennsylvania

By Maria Gallagher

The annual number of abortions has declined in Pennsylvania, bringing them to their lowest level ever recorded in the Commonwealth, according to figures released by the Pennsylvania Department of Health.

The figures show that, in 2016, 30,881 abortions occurred in the Keystone State, down about three percent from 31,818 the previous year.

"The decline in abortions is good news for Pennsylvania mothers and babies," said Maria Gallagher, legislative director for the Pennsylvania Pro-Life Federation, an affiliate of National Right to Life. "Our protective laws, scientific advances such as 4D Ultrasounds, and pregnancy resource centers around the Commonwealth are contributing to this encouraging trend," Gallagher added.

The Department of Health reports more than 80 percent of abortions in Pennsylvania occurred in four counties: Philadelphia (14,626), Allegheny (6,080), Northampton (3,042), and Dauphin (1,504). The figures indicate the largest contingent of women having abortions were in the age range of 20 to 24 years.

Abortion totals in Pennsylvania would be much higher were it not for the vast number of pregnancy resource centers around the state. "The caring, compassionate individuals within these centers offer everything from diapers to day care referrals, from mentoring to maternity clothes to women and their families," Gallagher said. "These pregnancy centers are truly a lifeline for women facing challenging circumstances."

"Make no mistake—every single abortion is a tragedy, because it is the taking of an innocent, unrepeatable human life. Yet, Pennsylvanians can take great pride in the decline in abortions, which has been aided by the loving alternatives to abortion that exist in the Commonwealth," Gallagher added.

—Pennsylvania Pro-Life Federation, January 2, 2018



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Legislative Update



2017— A Great Year for Life in Pennsylvania

The year 2017 has been an outstanding year for the cause of life in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

The Pennsylvania Senate and the House of Representatives took a strong stand against dismemberment abortions with the passage of Senate Bill 3. Governor Tom Wolf's rejection of this compassionate piece of legislation demonstrates the extreme nature of his pro-abortion agenda.

After years of serious health and safety violations, the Hillcrest abortion facility in Harrisburg shut its doors for good—a clear victory for women in the midstate.

Pregnancy help centers throughout the state served women and their families with selfless support, understanding, and kindness. Our abortion rate would be much higher if it were not for these often unsung heroes.

The Pennsylvania Pro-Life Federation has been reaching hundreds of thousands of people through radio and television appearances, newspaper columns and letters to the editor. A half-million Pennsylvania teenagers have benefited from our successful Internet outreach program, which connects them with life-saving, life-changing information. [Teenbreaks.com]

From fairs to festivals, from conferences to community events, chapters of the Pennsylvania Pro-Life Federation have been educating friends and neighbors about the steps to take to rebuild a culture of life in the Commonwealth. As we look forward to 2018, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to all of you for your commitment to the pro-life cause.

—Maria Gallagher, Legislative Director
Pennsylvania Pro-Life Federation

Newborn Protection Act

Legislation by Pennsylvania State Representative Jesse Topper (R-Bedford/Franklin/Fulton) to allow parents who are in distress to relinquish newborns to emergency medical responders at fire and EMS stations is heading to the governor's desk after it was unanimously approved in the House.

"House Bill 1139 better protects newborns and ensures families have options in the most desperate of circumstances," Topper said. "The legislation grows the list of locations to include fire stations where parents can surrender a newborn aged 28 days or less."

Under current law, the Newborn Protection Act, infants can only be surrendered to medical staff at a hospital, or a police officer at a police station.



Topper's legislation allows for infants to be relinquished at entities similar to fire stations that employ emergency medical responders. Additionally, the bill gives fire stations, hospitals and police stations the option to install incubators to receive newborns. Should an infant be left in an incubator, a 9-1-1 call would be automatically triggered if an onsite response isn't made within a reasonable time.

Under the act, once a newborn is surrendered, he or she is placed into protective custody and must undergo a medical evaluation. The county children and youth agency and local police or state police must also be contacted. Parents who surrender an infant at proper locations cannot be held criminally liable unless the newborn has been abused or is the victim of criminal conduct.

"The aim of this bill is to ensure the safety and well-being of innocent newborns," Topper said. "I am grateful the bill will reach the governor's desk for his signature and will help newborns have a chance to live the full, healthy lives they deserve."

—Rep. Jesse Topper, December 13, 2017

Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf Vetoes Ban on Dismemberment Abortions Tearing Off Babies' Limbs

By Micaiah Bilger

Pro-abortion Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf vetoed a bill on December 18 that would have protected nearly fully-formed unborn babies from brutal dismemberment abortions.

State Sen. Michele Brooks' Senate Bill 3 passed the state legislature last week with strong, bipartisan support. It would prohibit brutal dismemberment abortions that tear nearly fully-formed unborn babies limb from limb while their hearts are beating, and ban abortions after 20 weeks when strong scientific evidence indicates unborn babies can feel pain.

Wolf, who has close ties to the abortion industry, vetoed the legislation in Philadelphia, surrounded by abortion activists from Planned Parenthood and local elected officials, including Mayor Jim Kenney, Fox 43 reports.

"This is a sad day for women and children in Pennsylvania," said Michael Ciccocioppo, executive director of the Pennsylvania Pro-Life Federation. "No living child should have to endure being ripped limb by limb from a mother's womb, and no mother should have to endure the emotional pain of losing a child in such a brutal manner."

Wolf repeatedly said he would veto the legislation, and he made several visits to Planned Parenthood abortion facilities throughout the state in recent months.

"This legislation is a disingenuous and bald-faced attempt to create the most extreme anti-choice legislation in the country," Wolf said in a statement. "This legislation is an attempt to criminalize the decisions that women make about their own health care, and this legislation destroys health care options for victims of the horrors of rape and incest."

Michael Geer, president of the Pennsylvania Family Institute, countered that current Pennsylvania abortion laws are the true extreme. He said the United States is one of only seven nations that permits elective abortions past 20 weeks—a fact confirmed by the *Washington Post* fact checker.

"Pennsylvania is better than that," Geer said. "And yet, we have a governor who proudly celebrates the work of an abortion industry that relentlessly resists any and all humane efforts to protect unborn children—even those seconds and inches away from birth."



Though the bill received strong, bipartisan support, the state legislature appears to be just short of enough votes to override Wolf's veto, according to *Fox News*.

Some of the strongest advocates of the bill were female lawmakers, including sponsor State Sen. Michele Brooks, State Rep. Dawn Keefer and State Rep. Kathy Rapp.

Another pro-life female lawmaker, State Rep. Judy Ward, asked lawmakers to consider that babies are surviving outside the womb before 24 weeks of pregnancy, the current abortion limit in Pennsylvania.

"If you have any conscience, the only vote you can make is a yes vote," Ward said, according to *NPR Pittsburgh*.

And pro-life advocates in Pennsylvania said they have been hearing from women across the state who want the protections in Senate Bill 3 to become law.

"Women throughout the Commonwealth have been asking me when brutal dismemberment abortions will finally end in Pennsylvania," Maria Gallagher, legislative director of the Pennsylvania Pro-Life Federation, told *LifeNews* previously. "We are thankful that both the Pennsylvania House and the Senate have heard the voices of those women."

Gallagher said about 1,550 babies are killed in Pennsylvania every year in dismemberment abortions. State Department of Health reports indicate that nearly 400 unborn babies are aborted past 20 weeks annually.

A handful of states also have passed dismemberment abortion bans, which are the brainchild of the National Right to Life Committee.

The bill also is modeled, in part, after the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act, which 16 states passed into law. The legislation prohibits later-term abortions after 20 weeks as medical advancements push the line of viability earlier in pregnancy and as substantial medical evidence indicates unborn babies at this stage are capable of experiencing pain.

—*LifeNews.com*, December 18, 2017

36th Annual Pro-Life Auction February 3rd

State College Knights of Columbus Hall 850 Stratford Dr

Come Early to Eat & Check Out Our Items!

Doors Open at 9 am

Gift Baskets Galore!

Antiques, Collectibles

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PSU Celebrity Autographed Footballs...

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Lots & Lots of Food!

**Enjoy our Hot Dogs,
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& Homemade Desserts!**



Flyer at www.ProlifeCentreCounty.org/auctionflyer

Email us at cchlcentreco@comcast.net

More Upcoming Pro-Life Events

The Bedford County Chapter of CCHL will sponsor buses to the March for Life on the **19th of January**. They will depart from Walmart in Everett at 9 a.m. and will stop for dinner on the way back. The cost is \$20 for adults and \$15 for students. Call 814-652-6755 for information and reservations.

The Thirty-First Annual March for Life in Tyrone is **Sunday, January 21st**, at 12 noon with a Prayer Service at St. Matthew Church and followed by a walk to Oak Grove Cemetery to the grave of Baby Agnes Doe for another prayer service. A hot luncheon is served after the March in the parish hall. It is sponsored by St. Gregory Knights of Columbus Council #1218. Participants are encouraged to bring a sign for the March. For further information, call Peter Kreckel at 814-935-5436 (cell) or email: pharmcanoe@aol.com.

The Annual Precious Life Banquet will be held on **March 9th** at Jaffa Shrine. The theme for this year's program is Onward and Upward—celebrating 33 years of pro-life ministry to the Altoona and central Pennsylvania area! For reservation information, please call 814-944-2669.

America Faces a Massive Underpopulation Problem as Families Have Too Few Kids to Replace the Population

By John Stonestreet

America is shrinking. I don't mean we're getting shorter, I mean that we aren't having enough babies. Here's why that's bad news.

An old Far Side cartoon by Gary Larson portrays an average American couple welcoming visitors to their home. In the corner of the living room sits a little boy watching TV and next to him, is half of another little boy. "Come on in!" exclaim the couple, "Have you met Russel and Bill, our 1.5 children?"

Larson's attempt to make fun of the American average, unfortunately, wasn't that far off. In fact, America's fertility rate may be hitting a historic low.

Lyman Stone, an economist at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, writes at *Medium* about what he's calling "the great baby bust of 2017."

The latest official estimate—taken from two-year-old data—puts the U.S. fertility rate at 1.84. In other words, the average American woman will have just under two children in her lifetime. This is well below the replacement rate, or the average number of children necessary to keep a country's population from declining.

But as Stone argues, this estimate is already hopelessly out-of-date. Using monthly birth data from 2016 and 2017, he suggests the birth rate in America has plummeted to somewhere near 1.77 births on average. His graph of American fertility since 2008 looks like a double diamond ski slope.

Millennials—who right now are in their prime child-bearing years—are the ones mainly driving this downhill trend. Not only are they getting married at lower rates than their parents did, but they're having fewer children total. Many struggle to find stable work, are too focused on their careers, and find themselves saddled with college debt. Others just don't like kids, or vastly overestimate the cost of raising them, or just think the world is overpopulated—a myth now thoroughly debunked, by the way.

Whatever the reason, young adults are choosing to keep their nests mostly empty. And this is bad news for our economy, our culture, and our future as a nation.

As *Weekly Standard* digital editor Jonathan Last writes in his book, "What to Expect When No One's Expecting," countries where citizens aren't having enough babies can look forward to long-term economic stagnation and social deterioration. "There is no economy that has managed to knock out gangbuster growth with a declining population," he told *The Atlantic*, recently.

Journalist Philip Longman explains that "As governments raise taxes on a dwindling working-age population to cover the growing burdens of supporting the elderly, young couples may conclude they are even less able to afford children..." This creates a vicious cycle of childlessness, overwork, and despair, as seen in graying, shrinking countries like Japan, or in Europe, where some governments actually pay couples to get pregnant.

Also, children, because they are tomorrow's labor force and consumers, are also the economic engines of the future. And on an individual level, the regret of having fewer children is verifiable. According to a Pew poll in 2014, a whopping 40 percent of mothers nearing the end of their childbearing years say they have fewer kids than they would have liked.

But that's not all: a declining population also hurts us in ways that are harder to quantify in dollars and cents.

Babies, in a unique way, tend to make adults care about the future that's beyond their own lifetimes. They're often the reason people save, invest, make sacrifices, and most importantly defer gratification. When children become scarce, people are less apt to do these things and therefore they stop thinking about a future that's beyond themselves.

Note: John Stonestreet writes for BreakPoint.org. This article was originally posted there.

—LifeNews.com, December 18, 2017



Pope Francis

Speaking to the world's growing underpopulation problem, Pope Francis described children as a "blessing" that the devil is trying to destroy.

"The devil wants infertility," the pontiff said during his homily at the Vatican on December 19, according to the *Church Militant*. "He does not want us to give life, be it physical or spiritual, to others."

Pope Francis said God's first commandment to man was "Fill the earth, be fruitful!"

"Where there is God, there is fruitfulness," he said. "Fruitfulness is always a blessing of God."

—Excerpt from LifeNews.com, December 21, 2017

◆ ◆ ◆
God's greatest desire is to forgive.
You are precious in His sight.
Do not despair. All is not lost.
Come back to God who is love and mercy.
~ www.hopeafterabortion.org ~

Euthanasia Activists Want to Legalize Assisted Suicide in All 50 States—We Have to Stop Them

By Arthur Goldberg

We must act now to prevent assisted suicide from gaining a stronger foothold in the United States.

A bipartisan congressional resolution has been introduced by five Republicans and five Democrats to voice opposition to legalizing physician-assisted suicide, which has already become lawful in some states. These legislators seek to prevent euthanasia from gaining a greater foothold in the United States.

The congressional resolution recognizes that physician-assisted suicide devalues our fellow human beings. The resolution is also consistent with the Noahide Laws: seven laws proscribed by God to Noah after the Biblical flood, which are applicable to all of humanity. This code of conduct is the foundational premise for the three Abrahamic religions and formed the basis of American civilization as set forth in our founding documents. America's founding fathers specified that our society was premised on certain inalienable rights given by our Creator, and that those rights are beyond the power of a legislature or the courts to give or to take away.

One basic principle of these Noahide laws and the Ten Commandments subsequently given by God is "thou shall not kill." In the context of the debate over euthanasia, this means that no active intervention may be undertaken to terminate the life of a dying person or of a person not presently dying but suffering from an illness from which he or she may eventually die. Human life has been given to the human in trust and can only be taken away by God. Since God gives and takes away life, any form of suicide rejects God's sovereignty. Animated by the soul, human life is fashioned by God in His image. Protecting and respecting life requires that we follow the universal ethical values of the Abrahamic faiths and reject contemporary secularism's view that when suffering renders a person's life burdensome to oneself or to others, that life can and may be disposed of.

The History of Assisted Suicide in the United States

The question of legalizing or prohibiting assisted suicide in America has been percolating for more than twenty years. In 1997, the Supreme Court dealt with two federal court cases, *Washington v. Glucksberg* and *Vacco v. Quill*, in which it was asserted that assistance to commit suicide was a fundamental liberty interest protected by the Constitution. To the contrary, the Court determined that no such right exists in our nation's Constitution. The Court said that a patient may decide to discontinue life-sustaining treatment, but that the Constitution does not protect a right to death intentionally inflicted by the joint effort of doctor and patient. The Court recognized that in one case the cause of death is the underlying illness; in the other, it is human action. There is an important distinction between letting someone die and killing someone.



Starting in the early 1990s, several liberal jurisdictions such as Oregon, California and Washington began initiatives to have physician-assisted suicide approved by the voters or by the legislatures. Conservatives fought back and both New York and Washington passed statutes that specifically prohibited assisted suicide. The federal constitutional challenge ensued.

In determining that there is no federal constitutional right to commit suicide with the help of a physician (whether considered under the due process clause or the equal protection clause), the Court left the decision whether to legalize or to ban such actions up to the individual states. In the same year that the Court decided the *Glucksberg* and *Vacco* cases, President Bill Clinton signed the Assisted Suicide Funding Restriction Act in order to prevent any federal funds from being used to promote or carry out assisted suicide. In 1999, a crusader for the right to commit suicide with the help of a physician, Dr. Jack Kervorkian, was convicted of second-degree murder in a Michigan courtroom for killing a terminally ill man. Recently, a group called "the Final Exit Network" was prosecuted in several assisted suicide cases, and its former medical director lost his medical license for participating in such acts. In other parts of the world, as religious observance and belief have receded, prohibitions banning euthanasia are reversed by civil governments.

Dangerous Developments in Canada

Earlier this year, in the case of *A.B. v. Canada*, Justice Paul Perell interpreted the Canadian legislative standard that one's natural death must be "reasonably foreseeable" in order to allow euthanasia to mean that the anticipated natural death need not be "imminent" nor that it even be "connected to a particular terminal disease or condition." This decision has already had a deadly impact.

In response to the ruling, Dr. Ellen Wiebe, a British Columbian physician who "has helped more than 80 Canadians end their suffering since the [Canadian aid-in-dying] law was adopted just over a year ago," reversed her previous practice of limiting her killings to those with a life expectancy of five years or less. (It should be noted that

calculating life expectancy is at best an educated guess but can never be certain.) Dr. Wiebe announced her decision to kill Robyn Moro, a sixty-eight-year-old woman who suffered from Parkinson's disease. She based her decision on a calculation that the woman in the *A.B.* case suffered from severe osteoarthritis and could have lived, based on actuarial tables, a maximum of ten years. This calculation of ten-year life expectancy, based on Dr. Wiebe's reading of judicial precedent, became the new outside limit for Dr. Wiebe's killings.

As Rabbi Dr. Shimon Cowen and I pointed out in a previous Public Discourse essay, it's hard to imagine when death would not be reasonably foreseeable under the standard set forth in *A.B. v. Canada*. The absurdity of this kind of thinking (or more colloquially stated, "playing God") proves how hard it is to control the consequences of the reasoning in the *A.B.* decision. The truth is, we have no way of knowing how long a person may live.

Jeffrey Davitz's Story

Jeffrey Davitz's recent article in the *Washington Post* powerfully illustrates this. Davitz, a resident of California, was diagnosed in 2015 with a lethal and aggressive brain tumor. Davitz was told that without treatment he might survive for a few months. With treatment, he would probably last no more than six months, and in no event would he survive more than one year. His doctor assured him that he would provide the appropriate prescriptions to help him end his life.

In October 2015, Governor Jerry Brown signed a law allowing assisted suicide in the state of California. The California statute would not become effective until June 2016, a date beyond Davitz's predicted death. Nevertheless, Davitz worked with family members to seek death prior to his natural demise. As his strength diminished, he went into a hospice program. But God had other plans! While in hospice, he began regaining his balance and walking



Pushing Doctors to Perform Assisted Suicide

By Maria Gallagher

The old Hemlock Society wants to push doctors to perform assisted suicide—which is more aptly described as doctor-prescribed suicide. Under the revised name of Compassion & Choices, they want the American Medical Association to end its long-standing opposition to the lethal practice. Urge the AMA to stand strong by visiting: pacatholic.org. In addition, the lawyer who tried to create a *Roe v. Wade*-style judicial edict for assisted suicide is now suing a California hospital that refused to perform doctor-prescribed suicide. As ethics expert Wesley Smith notes: The lawsuit illustrates where the assisted suicide/euthanasia movement wants to go. As in Ontario, Canada, they want doctors and hospitals to be forced to participate in assisted suicide or get out of medicine. For resources to fight the threat of doctor-prescribed suicide in Pennsylvania, visit www.noassistedsuicidepa.org.

—Pennsylvania Pro-Life Federation

ability. His physical strength increased, and his brain cancer became dormant. Eventually, his condition improved so much that he was "kicked out" of the hospice program and returned to normal life.

Because of this experience, Davitz is now seriously

conflicted about self-termination. Once he regained his health, he was able to celebrate his brother's sixtieth birthday, attend his daughter's graduation, and celebrate his parents' seventy-second wedding anniversary, all of which occurred after his medically projected death sentence. Davitz admits that he no longer has "clear simple feelings" about assisted suicide. "Instead, long beyond what was expected, I am simply living."

The Inalienable Right to Life

Although America's Declaration of Independence declared that Americans have an inalienable right to life, a handful of American states are clearly ignoring that directive. Inalienable rights are by nature so essential to a person that they cannot be overridden by another or by a civil government.

America's founding fathers specified that these inalienable rights—endowed by our Creator—are beyond the reach of civil government. The American Revolution was based on a religious belief that crucial fundamental rights and obligations derive from God, not from the government. Nevertheless, as we approach 250 years of independence, secular humanists continue to argue that the state has the power to override God's commandments. The truth is, however, popular opinion cannot and should not override the foundation of inalienable rights and obligations granted by a Creator. These rights are beyond the influence of government.

Because secular humanism is attempting to replace God as the final moral arbiter of life and death, it is urgent that we restore the biblical values of America's founders. We ignore at our peril the universal moral ethics given to us by God through the Noahide Code, which were incorporated in our founding documents. These values were recognized on a bipartisan basis as the ethical and moral underpinnings of America. One immediate action that can be taken to support these inalienable rights is to encourage Congress to pass its resolution condemning assisted suicide.

Note: Arthur Goldberg is Co-Director of the American-based Jewish Institute for Global Awareness, former Co-Director of JONAH, Inc.

—LifeNews.com, December 20, 2017



The Power of the Powerless

continued from back page

Yet because of Oliver, my mother began asking, and wrestling with, bigger questions: Why these trying circumstances of life? Why to her family? What is the meaning of its mystery? How do we live with the knowledge of what could have been in the face of what is?

Most of us will know this sort of pain and uncertainty at one time or another in our lives. But not all of us have the courage to stick with someone like Oliver, loving him in the face of all the impossible hurdles.

Professor Singer, no doubt, would have counseled my mother to place him in an institution, free herself of this "burden." Wouldn't this increase the "total amount of happiness"?

But how does one measure the worth of Oliver's laugh, the color of his eyes, the feel of his tender skin? Could anyone have anticipated that from the small seed of Oliver's helplessness, there would come forth what millions around the world would come to see as a modern parable?

Years later I wrote a small article for the *Wall Street Journal* about Oliver that struck a responsive chord. Hundreds of people wrote me letters about "The Power of the Powerless," explaining the impact of the powerless people in their lives.

President Reagan read the article in the White House the very morning it appeared and sent me a personal letter in celebration of Oliver's life. Eunice Kennedy Shriver and her husband Sargent Shriver invited me to Washington, D.C., to write for the Special Olympics.

Oliver's influence extended all the way to Rome. Pope John Paul invited me to the Vatican to deliver the closing speech at an international conference on disabilities. I was asked to end the conference with the story of Oliver, and then I, Oliver's brother, was brought to meet the pope. *The Reader's Digest*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the New York papers, all asked permission to reproduce my essay.

Again and again people recognized the paradox that in all his weakness Oliver possessed great strength. Oliver survived because for thirty-two years other human beings placed food at his lips.

With each meal, Oliver was physically nourished. With each meal we who gave him food and drink were spiritually nourished.

In accepting Oliver for who he was, rather than lamenting what he was not, my mother rose to a new level of understanding that enriched her in the same way that Pearl Buck was enriched. Buck, the Nobel Prize winner, wrote about her severely disabled daughter in her slim classic, "The Child Who Never Grew":

"There must be acceptance and the knowledge that sorrow fully accepted brings its own gifts," Buck wrote. "For there is an alchemy in sorrow. It can be transmuted into wisdom, which, if it does not bring joy, can yet bring happiness."

When we are confronted with emotional pain, or loss, or sadness, some of us give up. Some destroy all that is around us. Some push away everything that is good. Some

lock hope in a box, carry it up to the attic, and throw away the key.

But then there are other people who embrace their sadness and the possibility of peace, no matter how impossible or distant it seems to be. My father was such a man.

When he was asked how he managed to tend to Oliver's needs for 32 years, he just said "It was not 32 years. It was one day at a time. Can I feed Oliver today? Yes. Can I bathe Oliver today? Yes. Can I love Oliver today? Yes."

Can we be sad one day at a time? Can we love one day at a time? Can we handle our great joy one day at a time? Can we tend to our inner turmoil one day at a time? Yes, we can.

And will all this lead to peace? Yes, yes it will, if we tend to the burdens of our lives with love, faith, hope, charity, joy, courage, dignity, humor. Oliver and my mother taught me this.

Over the long distance between Oliver's birth and his death, my mother believed there was a unity of purpose in the journey. This assurance sustained and strengthened my mother, confirmed her faith, and, ultimately, brought her happiness. She believed in the power of the powerless, the mystery of sadness, and in the lost chances that opened her to other possibilities.

Because she was confined to the house, my mother fed her tested soul with books, poetry, and prayer. From these raw materials she fashioned a talent that made her one of the most influential women poets in America.

And because my mother said yes to life she decided to have four more children, passing along to each of us a vision that the Peter Singers of the world will likely never understand.

Sorrow pricks our hearts, and like any wound, we react to the pain. And when we are in pain, we seek solace from the hurt.

It is in this search for solace, which is universal, where we find God, or husband, or wife, or friend, or self in the most significant levels of meaning. In the quest for solace we discover who we are. Such a discovery leads, irrespective of circumstance, to the revelation of an inner peace.

I do not know why this is so, but it is. I do know that if we do not look for the joy in the sorrow, the sorrow will consume us, and we will perish.

No matter how little rain, no matter how few people admire the garden or the gardener, if we tend to the roses, the blossoms will come.

Academic truth based on dry, unfeeling logic would never have quenched Oliver's thirst in an August heat wave. Fortunately, we are far better people than the bio-ethicist could ever imagine.

It is too bad that Peter Singer never took my brother Oliver in his arms and carried him down the hall for a warm bath.

Editor's note. Mr. deVinck is the author of many books. "The Power of the Powerless" can be purchased from Amazon and Barnes and Noble.

—National Right to Life News Today, December 21, 2017

From the President's Desk

From a recent letter to the *Altoona Mirror*:

It is sad at this time of the year, when we have been celebrating Christmas, to contemplate the actions of two of our leading government officials.

Governor Thomas Wolf just vetoed a bill that would have prohibited the dismemberment of the bodies of unborn children over twenty weeks gestation. This bill would have prevented the dismemberment of the unborn child after science has shown that a child can feel pain, has brain function, a beating heart and is fully developed with the exception of growth. Governor Wolf, who has been a strong advocate of Planned Parenthood for most, if not all, of his adult public life, strongly supports that organization which has received over four billion dollars in taxpayer funding over the past ten years. Hopefully, we will remember this action when Governor Wolf seeks re-election.

The second leading state official who has sided with radical feminists is Attorney General Josh Shapiro. Attorney General Shapiro has taken the Little Sisters of the Poor, who provide aid to the poor and elderly, to Court—in an attempt to require them to provide abortifacients and contraceptives to their employees.

He has done this despite the Trump Administration's support for the religious rights of non-profit organizations like the Little Sisters who have a conscientious objection to providing such chemicals to their employees.

It appears that in Pennsylvania at the present time, the right to life of the unborn and the religious rights of our citizens are being trampled in favor of groups and organizations such as Planned Parenthood despite the efforts of our local State Representatives, our local State Senator and the Trump administration.

—R. Thomas Forr, Jr., President
Blair County Chapter, Citizens Concerned for Human Life



Human beings who never should have been born at all—Margaret Sanger, founder of Planned Parenthood, describing the eugenic value of eliminating persons—minorities, the sick and the disabled—through sterilization or segregation.

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Given by: Patricia Hatch

In Memory of:

James J. Hatch

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For post-abortion counseling, contact **Project Rachel, 814-884-8000; www.ProjectRachel@dioceseaj.org** or **Rachel's Vineyard, 877 HOPE 4 ME (877-467-3463); www.rachelsvineyard.org/**

Family Life, Diocese of Altoona/Johnstown, offers pastoral guidance, call **814-886-5551; email: familylife@dioceseaj.org.**



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The Power of the Powerless

*I do know that if we do not look for the joy in the sorrow,
the sorrow will consume us, and we will perish.*

By Chris deVinck

Editor's note: Mr. deVinck is author of one of the greatest books we ever reviewed at National Right to Life News — "The Power of the Powerless: a brother's legacy of love." He subsequently wrote the following essay for us, which appeared years ago in NRL News. I am reposting it not just because it would be a blessing to do so any day but because a friend of mine lost a child this year whose condition was not so different from Chris' brother Oliver.

On the front page of the *New York Times* this past April, there appeared a story about the impending appointment of Peter Singer, a controversial Australian bioethicist, who was to assume the prestigious Ira W. DeCamp Professorship of Bioethics at Princeton University's Center for Human Values.

Professor Singer, according to the *Times*, is an outspoken advocate for euthanasia "not only for terminally ill adults," the *Times* stated, "but also for severely disabled infants." Not surprisingly, advocates for the disabled vigorously protested his selection.

The newspaper ran a helpful sidebar which quoted from Professor Singer's influential textbook, *Practical Ethics*. One minute is all that is needed to understand why the protesters were so angry: "Killing a disabled infant," Singer writes, "is not morally equivalent to killing a person. Very often it is not wrong at all."

Why? If the parents kill this disabled child, and have a child they would not otherwise have, Singer argues, "the loss of a happy life for the first infant is outweighed by the gain of a happier life for the second," thus increasing the "total amount of happiness."

When I read this amazing statement, I could not help but wonder what Professor Singer's reaction would have been had he met my mother Catherine and my brother Oliver.

Oliver was born in 1948, the second child of Jose and Catherine de Vinck. He was profoundly disabled—blind, crippled, incapable of speaking or even chewing solid food. He would never learn, run, or hold a fork.

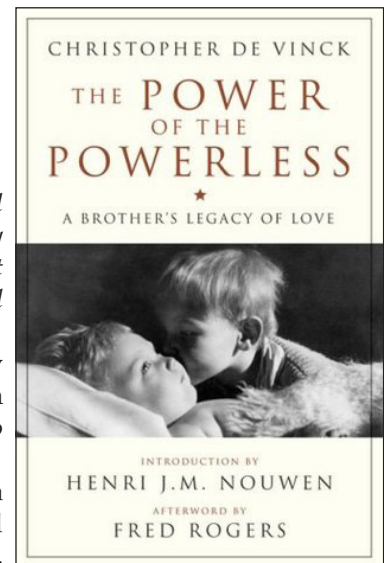
For 32 years, Oliver lay on his back in a bed, in the second room down the hall to the right, in the house of my father and mother. Outwardly, my brother could do nothing except eat, breathe, sleep, and, occasionally, laugh.

When I was a boy, I thought that everyone had a brother like Oliver. He was not the center of the family but, simply, part of the family, just like everyone else.

Tending to Oliver's needs was part of the normal routine my mother and father established for our family. During a hot New Jersey heat wave, for example, it was customary to make sure that Oliver had a cold drink of water two or three times a day.

Often at night, my sister Anne and I would carry Oliver down the hall for a warm bath. She would place her hands under Oliver's knees and I would place my hands under his arms, and together we would lift Oliver out of his bed. All the while my mother would tenderly call out instructions: "Lift him slowly," she'd say. "Don't back up into the chair, Chris. Watch his elbows. Don't bump his elbows against the door frame."

During his 32 years, my brother Oliver brought surprising gifts into my mother's life. This, she admitted, was not apparent to her at first. My mother's initial response was to weep in her pillow, hiding her tears and grief and sadness from her family.



continued on page 10