



## A Pro-Life Religious Outreach Newspaper

### ACLU Pressures Catholic Hospitals to do Abortions

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) has sent a letter to the Centers for Medicaid & Medicare Services claiming that Catholic hospitals nationwide are refusing to do supposedly life-saving abortions, saying "emergency reproductive health care" includes abortions.

Catholic norms allow physicians to treat a life-threatening condition even if it indirectly causes an abortion, but does not permit direct abortion.

The Beckett Fund for Religious Liberty said in a letter to the Department of Health and Human Services that ACLU is misinterpreting the Emergency Medical Treatment Act, a law which initially was designed to protect the conscience rights of health care workers, and that ACLU's claim overturns 25 years of case law. "The ACLU has no business radically re-defining the meaning of 'emergency health care,'" the legal group asserted.

The Beckett Fund letter stated they would sue if HHS tried to force religiously-affiliated hospitals to do abortions against the conscientious objections of their doctors and nurses. The letter stressed that ever since the *Roe v Wade*

decision legalized unlimited abortions, the conscience of medical professionals has been protected.

"Forcing religious hospitals to perform abortions not only undermines this nation's integral commitment to conscience rights, it violates the numerous federal laws that recognize and protect those rights," the Beckett Fund letter stated.

The Beckett Fund also pointed out that "forcing Catholic or other religiously-affiliated hospitals to perform abortions will only result in nationwide closures, thereby reducing access to health care for everyone." Moreover, this "would constitute a large step backwards for religious freedom and would turn this nation's foundational commitment to conscience rights on its head," the group added.

Beckett Fund President Kevin Hasson offered to represent pro-bono any religious hospital threatened because of their conscientious objection to abortion.

Tom Brejcha, president of the Thomas More Society, called on Catholics to provide "an enlightened, invigorated and sustained response" to the ACLU challenge.

### Military Doctors Sign Letter Opposing Abortions on Military Bases

A letter to the U.S. Senate protesting an amendment requiring U.S. military hospitals to provide abortions was signed by more than 200 military doctors. The letter was organized by the Christian Medical Association (CMA).

Pro-abortion Senator Roland Burris (D/Illinois) sponsored the amendment which would break the current long-standing policy of not allowing abortions at military medical facilities.

The letter urged senators to vote no on the National Defense Authorization Act unless the Burris amendment is removed.

The senior vice-president of CMA, Gene Rudd, M.D. emphasized that, "If enacted, requiring military physicians to perform abortions threatens military readiness. Morale will suffer among those already serving. Morale is a key component of military effectiveness."

"Furthermore," Dr. Rudd pointed out, "just as we have seen a marked decrease in young doctors entering OB/GYN training for fear of being forced to do abortion, this requirement will discourage young doctors from joining the military."

The Senate Armed Services Committee approved the amendment 15-12, with all 11 Republicans plus Democratic Senator Ben Nelson voting against it. Senator Roger Wicker (R/MS), who fought against the amendment in committee, is planning to sponsor an amendment on the Senate floor to strike the language.

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# Information for Homilies in Respect Life Month

*The following information is offered for your consideration when you are preparing homilies during October*

## Faithful Citizenship and the Gospel of Life

Politics is about values and issues as well as candidates and officeholders . . . some issues involve principles that can never be violated, such as the fundamental right to life.” (*Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship – A Call to Political Responsibility from the Catholic Bishops of the United States, 2008 #63*)

“Our 1998 statement *Living the Gospel of Life* declares, ‘Abortion and euthanasia have become preeminent threats to human life and dignity because they directly attack life itself, the most fundamental good and the condition for all others’ (no. 5). Abortion, the deliberate killing of a human being before birth, is never morally acceptable and must always be opposed. Cloning and destruction of human embryos for research or even for potential cures are always wrong. The purposeful taking of human life by assisted suicide and euthanasia is not an act of mercy, but an unjustifiable assault on human life.” (*Ibid, #64*)

**Abortion** - Abortion has been the greatest destroyer of innocent human life in the history of the world. The estimated death toll from abortion world wide probably exceeds ONE BILLION and in the United States alone, since 1973, more than 52 million unborn babies have been killed. In a world of huge numbers, our society has become desensitized to the real scope of abortion. The Russian dictator, Joseph Stalin, stated that the death of one man is a tragedy but the death of a million is a statistic. We cannot let the unspeakable tragic death of even a single unborn child become lost in the impersonal statistics encompassing millions.

*“All that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing.”*

*Edmund Burke*

**Post Abortion Syndrome (PAS)** – While the actual number of women and men suffering from their participation in abortion is not known, thousands have come forward to express their grief and sorrow about their abortion experience. Many pastors who have publicly offered to counsel those suffering from PAS, have been amazed at the number of women seeking help. Most dioceses and some pregnancy help centers offer programs to help post abortion victims.

**Federal funding of abortion under the new Health Care Reform Act** – The *Health Care Reform Act* has been strongly opposed by the Catholic Church because it allows of the use of federal funds to pay for abortion and to subsidize health plans that cover abortion, a sharp departure from long-standing federal policy. Despite the media hype, there is no language in the new law and no language in the President’s March 24th executive order that will effectively prevent federal subsidies for abortion on demand under the new law.

**Euthanasia, Assisted Suicide, and Abortion of the Disabled** – Increasingly in our society those with severe disabilities or debilitating illnesses are being killed because they are judged to have an insufficient “quality of life.” Oregon, Washington and Montana already permit euthanasia or physician assisted suicide, and Maine, Hawaii, and Vermont have tried to pass similar laws. Of the children diagnosed with Down Syndrome prior to birth, 90% are killed through abortion. Individuals like Terry Schiavo who are in a permanent “vegetative” (or minimally conscious) state are being starved to death with the approval of the courts. Yet, Pope John Paul II has clearly stated, “the value of a man’s life cannot be made subordinate to any judgment of its quality expressed by other men,” and “Even our brothers and sisters who find themselves in the clinical condition of a ‘vegetative state’ retain their human dignity in all its fullness.” (Address of John Paul II to the International Congress on “Life-Sustaining Treatments and Vegetative State: Scientific Advances and Ethical Dilemmas”)

**Health Care Rationing** – As part of the Health Care Reform Act, an 18-member “Independent Payment Advisory Board” is given the duty, on January 15, 2015, to tell doctors, hospitals, and other health care providers just what diagnostic tests and medical care is considered to meet “quality” and “efficiency” standards – not only for federally funded health care programs like Medicare, but also for health care paid for by private citizens and their nongovernmental health insurance. And these will be “quality and efficiency” standards specifically designed to limit what ordinary Americans spend on health care. Treatment that a doctor and patient in consultation deem needed or advisable to save that patient’s life or preserve or improve the patient’s health but which the government decides is too costly – even if the patient is willing and able to pay for it – will run afoul of the imposed standards. In effect, Washington bureaucrats will enforce these standards by limiting what private citizens are allowed to spend on saving their own lives. We will also not be allowed to spend our own money on health care for members of our families and others we love.

# Potential Homily Themes by Week with Scripture References

**October 3** - In the first reading, Habakkuk the prophet cries out to the Lord lamenting the violence, ruin and misery of his people. Today, much like Habakkuk in the Old Testament, we are facing unspeakable violence against the most vulnerable members of our society. Abortion, euthanasia, and assisted suicide have created a culture of death in our country. In 1998, the U.S. Bishops' document *Living the Gospel of Life* stated, "Abortion and euthanasia have become preeminent threats to human life and dignity because they directly attack life itself, the most fundamental good and the condition for all others." Yet, we are often tempted to overlook these very real attacks on innocent human life. But, the Lord calls us to "harden not your hearts" - - to go beyond our own concerns, and to act on behalf of life. In the 2nd reading, St. Paul tells us, "do not be ashamed of your testimony", but "bear your share of hardship for the gospel with the strength that comes from God", because God "did not give us a spirit of cowardice but rather of power, love, and self-control." Each one of us needs to pray, to speak out on these issues, and in November, to vote for candidates who will build a culture of life in our society.

**October 10** - In today's Gospel Jesus cures ten lepers who had begged Him to have pity on them. Lepers in Jesus's day were shunned and isolated. In our day, those with severe disabilities or debilitating illnesses are often judged as having "lives not worth living". Of the children diagnosed with Down Syndrome prior to birth, 90% are killed through abortion. Patients in a persistent "vegetative" state are being starved to death with court approval, and several states have enacted laws which permit euthanasia and assisted suicide. Yet, the Church has always taught that each human life has inherent value and dignity because we are made in the image and likeness of God. Pope John Paul II clearly stated, "the value of a man's life cannot be made subordinate to any judgment of its quality expressed by other men." As Jesus took pity on the lepers, we must work for laws that respect the dignity and protect the lives of the disabled and severely ill.

**October 17** - Today's Gospel is the story of a widow who had to deal with a judge who neither feared God nor respected any human being. Yet, the widow was undeterred in her pursuit of justice. She persevered until the judge relented and delivered her a just decision. Similarly, today many of our government officials have turned a blind eye to our repeated pleas to end abortion. Consequently, in the 37 years since *Roe v. Wade*, over 52 million unborn children have been killed in this country. No matter how unproductive our efforts may sometimes seem, like the widow, we must persevere in asking our elected officials to enact laws that protect unborn children and we must hold those legislators who refuse to do so accountable at election time. We must also encourage our brothers and sister in Christ who have not spoken out, to answer God's call and become witnesses for life - - to symbolically hold up Moses' arms in this great battle for life. Unborn children cannot speak on their own behalf. They will only find justice if we speak out for them.

**October 24** - In our readings today, we hear both about God's justice and His mercy. In the 1st reading we are told, "The Lord is a God of justice who knows no favorites . . . The prayer of the lowly . . . does not rest till it reaches its goal, nor will it withdraw till the Most High responds, judges justly and affirms the right." Those words should serve as a wake-up call to a nation in which one out of five pregnancies now ends in abortion. We must ask ourselves how the richest society in the world, can offer no better solution to a woman who is struggling with an unwanted pregnancy than to kill the child within her. There are more pregnancy help centers than there are abortion mills in our country, yet many women are never told of their services or given the encouragement that they need to use them. We must pray for pregnant women in need and do more to offer the support necessary for them to carry their babies to term.

Fortunately, the Lord is also a God of great mercy. As the psalmist writes, "The Lord redeems the lives of his servants; no one incurs guilt who takes refuge in him." And today's Gospel tells us that the tax collector who humbly prayed, "O God, be merciful to me a sinner" was forgiven. Let us pray for God's mercy on our nation and His guidance as we work to restore a respect for life in our country.

**October 31** - Our 1st reading today focuses on the Lord's love, His mercy, and His call for repentance. It is a beautiful reading which states, ". . . you overlook people's sins that they may repent. For you love all things that are and you loathe nothing you have made . . . you spare all things, because they are yours, O Lord and lover of souls, for your imperishable spirit is in all things! Therefore you rebuke offenders little by little . . . that they may abandon their wickedness, and believe in you O Lord."

Today, as we conclude respect life month let us pray for those who have been wounded by abortion. Despite the misinformation promulgated by the promoters of abortion, the reality is that abortion is an unnatural act that leaves scars on all those who participate in it. Since 1973, thousands of women have come forward publicly speaking out about their sorrow and regret for having had one or more abortions. Post Abortion Syndrome is a major health issue for many women and men. In addition, there are many more women who are suffering symptoms of Post Abortion Syndrome without realizing the root cause of their problems. Blessed Mother Teresa said that in abortion there are two victims, the baby and the mother. Thankfully we have a loving God whose mercy is boundless. No sin is too great, no wound too deep for our God to heal. Therefore, no one ever needs to be afraid to come before the Lord in the sacrament of reconciliation. His forgiveness will liberate us from the yoke of sin and guilt. As a Christian community it is our responsibility to reach out to those who have experienced the personal tragedy of abortion. Seeking forgiveness is often only the first step in the healing process. We must support the pro-life ministries which work to educate and change the law on abortion, those that directly aid pregnant women in need, and those that supporting victims of abortion.

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## *Bulletin Inserts*

**November 7** – Cells derived from the destruction of an embryonic human child will be used in tests on humans for the first time as a result of authorization from the Food & Drug Administration, according to a July 13 announcement. This decision ignores reported dangers of implanting such cells in humans, and the successful therapy for more than 70 diseases already accomplished with adult stem cells obtained without killing human embryos.

**November 14** – Based on three consecutive Gallup polls, more people self-identify as “pro-life” than “pro-choice,” which is a major public opinion turnaround. Self-identifying as “pro-life” is now the “new normal,” according to senior Gallup editor Lydia Saad. *NRL News*, June, 2010

**November 21** – Connecticut lawmakers have three times rejected attempts to allow doctors to help patients end their life. Compassion and Choices, the major organization leading efforts to legalize physician-assisted suicide, then tried to win a victory through the courts but a judge blocked their efforts to legalize assisted suicide by rejecting their semantic ploy of re-labeling it “aid in dying.” *NRL News*, June, 2010

**November 28** – “Women are sanctuaries of human life. We bear the most amazing privilege of having life formed within our own bodies. What a glorious gift from God, what a wonderful sanctity He has bestowed on women.” These words from a prize-winning essay by junior high school student Anna Maria Divozzo should cause all pro-life hearts to rejoice this Thanksgiving season. *NRL News*, June, 2010

**December 5** – “Caring for the sick, frail, elderly and dying patient is a noble endeavor. Our future generations will use as a measure of civilization how well our society cared for the elderly and dying, how we protected our elders’ rights and dignity, and, finally, how well we strove every day to enhance their care.” Dr. Alex Kodiath in *Elder Care : Precious Presence*

**December 12** – The Christmas storytellers, Matthew and Luke begin with Jesus’ conception. When Matthew sets out to tell us about the Nativity, he first talks of events taking place during the pregnancy. Luke gives us even more details of the pregnancy. The message? Jesus was conceived through the power of the Holy Spirit. He was God from the moment of conception. *Life Date*, The National Newsletter of Lutherans for Life, Winter, 1998

**December 19** – “Every child with Down syndrome, every adult with special needs, in fact every unwanted, unborn child, every person who is poor, weak, abandoned or homeless—each one of these persons is an icon of God’s face and a vessel of His love.” Archbishop Charles Chaput of Denver, *Southern Cross*, November, 2009

**December 26** – “In every child which is born and in every person who lives or dies we see the image of God’s glory. We celebrate this glory in every human being, a sign of the living God, an icon of Jesus Christ.” Pope John Paul II, *The Gospel of Life*

## *Suggested Prayers*

**November 7** – For those working to restore the Culture of Life, that they may turn to Christ for encouragement and strength, we pray

**November 14** – For those who are persecuted for their pro-life beliefs, that they may persevere, we pray

**November 21** – In this thanksgiving season, may we show in action our gratitude for God’s gift of life, we pray

**November 28** – For women who have had abortions, that they may find healing and peace in Christ, we pray

**December 5** – As we prepare for the birth of the Christ child, may we help others to see the sanctity of life of the pre-born child, we pray

**December 12** – May the Virgin Mary’s care of her cousin Elizabeth inspire us to reach out to pregnant women in need, we pray

**December 19** – For those troubled with an untimely pregnancy that they may not give in to the despair of abortion, we pray

**December 26** – That Americans may grow in appreciation for the sanctity of human life from conception to natural death, we pray