

Life Matters

The Newsletter of the St. Rose of Lima Pro-Life/Pro-Family Committee

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A Thought About Gift Giving

By: Fred Dwyer

[*Note: If this sounds familiar, it's because we originally published it in 2001, but thought that it might be worth a second printing for Christmas 2003.*]

Tis the season to be jolly, to share the joy we feel from the news of our Savior's birth. For most of us fortunate enough to live in this land of plenty, this season of joy brings about a flood of gift giving. We give to those in need, we give to our friends, our extended family, and most generously of all, we give to our children. Hopefully, there is none among us who would deliberately give a child a dangerous gift, it's unthinkable. Unfortunately there are many often-requested gifts which are dangerous in very subtle ways, gifts which offer violence as entertainment. Prime examples are the many video games which focus on destruction and killing. You will hear people say, "I grew up watching action movies and I've played these action games and I'm not a violent person," or "It's just a game, the kids know it's not reality." On the surface those assertions may seem to make some sense, but here's where the subtlety manifests. No, we don't all become violent felons, but all of us who have been subjected to, and become involved in violent entertainment, are a little more violence prone than we might have been. The effect is cumulative. In some it may be angry impulses which are kept in check. In others it's just a "quick temper" which results in angry words, or it's "road rage" or "air traveler rage." It can and does lead to broken marriages, physical abuse, and even murder. Yes, the children do know they're just games, but games are excellent tools for learning. That's why we commonly use games to teach reading and numbers to very young children, and why we use war games to train armies. Whatever you practice in a game, becomes a little part of you. As exciting and challenging as these action entertainments are, and as much as they are desired by the children you give to, do realize that games, toys, movies, and TV shows which teach that humans are violent, are dangerous. The danger is subtle, you will not see an overnight metamorphosis, but when these gifts of violence are given, be aware the message they teach will be with the child every day for the rest of his/her life.

Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace to men of good will. Luke 2:14

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The Truth Squad Visits St. Rose

By: Celeste Vodola

On September 7, 2003, the Truth Squad visited St. Rose of Lima Parish as part of a diocesan wide Pro-life meeting. About 100 people from around the diocese

attended the event which was hosted by Fr. Greg Markey. Father Markey complimented the St. Rose Pro-life/Pro-family committee for its many projects and visibility. He congratulated the parish, also, for having a Natural-Family-Planning teaching couple, and he called Natural Family Planning the cornerstone of the Pro-life movement.

The presentation by the Truth Squad was a high-tech computer graphic show aimed at educating the general public about the reality and horrors of abortion. The talk moved rapidly and incorporated several different speakers to address the various aspects of the abortion crisis.

The first speaker, Bert Hilburger, is a lawyer who relates the laws, or lack there of, regarding abortion. Most people do not realize that abortion is legal in this country throughout all nine months of pregnancy, right up until the very moment of birth. In addition, although a parent must sign a waiver for a school nurse to give a child Tylenol, a minor child can undergo an abortion without her parents' knowledge or consent.

A physician, Dr. Tom Messe, was the next speaker. The truth that he revealed included the fact that a person is genetically complete at the moment of conception. A pre-born baby feels pain at the sixth week of a pregnancy, which is often before a woman knows that she is pregnant. The doctor also described the brutal methods of abortion, from the abortifacient properties of the Pill, to the unspeakable partial-birth abortion. (Author's note: The graphic that was used to portray partial-birth abortion, a squirming baby on his way to being born who drops limply with the insertion of a pair of scissors into his brain, caused me to look away, and I have seen many horrifying pictures of abortions.)

The final speaker during the computer graphic portion of the presentation was Corinn Dahm, a Ph.D., who tells of the many lies that the billion dollar abortion industry uses

to victimize women and to keep the truth from them. Because most abortion related deaths are not reported, few people realize that legal abortions are the fifth leading cause of maternal death in the United States,. Women who have had an abortion before bearing any other

children, are 2.4 times more likely to develop breast cancer than other women. In a recent year, 1,035,000 women received a diagnosis of pregnancy at Planned Parenthood affiliates. Of these, 183,000 pregnancies were terminated by abortions, and only 19,000 were provided pre-natal care.

The Truth Squad presentation ended with the testimony of Nicole Taylor, an accountant who relates her story of abortion and spiritual healing. When she was fifteen, Nicole, who is now in her forties, was pressured into an abortion. Nicole's testimony was stark and honest. She is a beautiful and poised speaker who relates the emotional pain and life-long set-backs that her abortion has caused in her life. She feels victimized by her unapproachable, spiritually bereft parents, the proximity of the abortion facility to her high school, and the lack of caring shown to her during and after the abortion by the medical personnel. Nicole's later life included use of the "Pill" and divorce. It was particularly revealing to hear her tell of the regret that she has for any possible abortions resulting from the "Pill." Most women who take the "Pill" do not know about it's abortifacient properties and are not informed of them by their doctors. Nicole's current devotion to prayer and the Church, as well as her participation in the Truth Squad, are true signs of hope in the fight to end abortion.

The Truth Squad presentation ended with a request from Mr. Hilburger to join them in their mission. They want to bring this message to as many groups as possible, including Confirmation classes. In order to accomplish this, they are looking for more women, and legal and medical professionals, to participate in and travel with additional squads. If you or anyone you know would be interested in helping this cause, please contact **Bert Hilburger at (860)739-3619, or by e-mail at hilpat@myeastern.com**

Lazarus of the 21st Century

Submitted by: Mark Dennen

A homily given by Deacon Vincent P. Walsh on October 13, 2003 at Holy Trinity Catholic Church, West Harwich MA

You and I learn many lessons from those who go to Heaven, but in the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus, we learn a lesson from one who went to Hell.

Why was the Rich Man condemned? Was there something inherently sinful about the purple and linen in

which he dressed or the feasts in which he indulged? No! The Rich Man went to Hell because he ignored the other man. He was not condemned for what he did, but for what he did not do. He did not treat Lazarus as his equal – his Brother. Instead, he thought that because Lazarus' possessions were less valuable than his, that Lazarus was less valuable than he. The beggar's cries went unheeded.

What would we do if we were there? Sisters and Brothers, we are there! You and I have an appointment with Lazarus today and you and I will be judged on how we respond. The Lazarus of the 21st Century is in our midst. He is in our midst in the poor, the troublesome, the annoying person who is smaller and weaker than we are and the person who seems different and less valuable.

But today, it seems to me, the Lazarus of the 21st Century is our "Pre-born Brother or Sister." This is the person rejected by society, the person who begs for help to live, but whose cries are rejected 4,000 times a day in our country. This is the person torn apart and thrown away by abortion. Can you believe it? 43 million abortions in the United States since Roe vs. Wade became law. The Rich Man was condemned for not treating Lazarus as his Brother. We also will be condemned if we do not treat the Pre-born as our Sister or Brother.

Now we know that many oppose abortion. Our Pro-Choice Catholic Politicians, for instance, who say that they personally are against abortion, but they say, "Who am I to interfere with a woman's choice to abort?" I will tell those people who they are, "You are a Sister or a Brother of the child in the womb." Next, they say, "Who am I to interfere with her choice?" My answer is, "That you are a human being who should have enough decency to stand up and say 'No' when you see another human being about to be killed." They might answer, "Who am I to interfere with her choice?" My answer, "You are a person who has enough wisdom to realize that injustice to one human being is an injustice to every human being and that their lives are only as safe as the life of the Pre-born child. They come back with, "Who am I to interfere with her choice?" My answer, "You are a follower of the One Jesus Christ who said 'Whatsoever you do the least of my Brothers, you do to Me.' "

Do we not believe that if we allow a person to die of starvation that we are allowing Christ to die of starvation? Do we not believe that if we leave the sick and the elderly unattended that we are leaving Christ unattended? Must we not then also believe that whenever a child in the womb is ripped apart, burned, crushed and then thrown away that Christ is ripped apart, burned, crushed and thrown away? It is Christ in the womb! We stand up for Him!

Finally, if abortion is not wrong, then nothing is wrong. It we cannot be stirred to respond as individuals, as a Church, as a nation to the plight of the Pre-born Children, then we have lost our souls – individually and

collectively. Indeed the Lazarus of the 21st Century is knocking at our door. God have mercy on us and help us to respond.

Amen – God love you!

From the Abortion Providers

As published in: Priests For Life Newsletter, Nov. 7 2003
(Illinois: The Hope Clinic v. Ryan, N.D.III995 F.Supp. 847).

"For first trimester abortions...the fetus can come through the suction tube either intact or dismembered. While dismembered parts of the fetus are suctioned out of the uterus, part of the fetus remains in utero and may be 'alive,' which the experts define as having a heartbeat...At the end of the first trimester and thereafter...[t]he fetus is usually removed in parts..."

Anti-Catholic 'Catholics for a free Choice' Encourages Restoration of US Funding to UNFPA

As published in LifeSiteNews.com

NEW YORK, November 25, 2003 (LifeSiteNews.com) Catholics for a Free Choice (CFFC), is promoting an initiative for renewed US funding of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The UNFPA supports programs aimed at reducing world population. Kissling was one of 9 "religious" delegates (and the only "Catholic") that visited China under a CFFC initiative. In May of 2002, the US State Department investigated UNFPA's involvement in China. The investigation found that "the population programs of the People's Republic of China (PRC) retain[ed] coercive elements in law and practice...The PRC has a longstanding and draconian program of controlling birth rates, including imposing crushing fines on parents who deviate from the number of children viewed as appropriate by the state." UNFPA provides financing for PRC "family-planning" activities including expenditures for "surgical and other medical equipment...Although such equipment has legitimate uses, it also facilitates the...performance of abortions".

The U.S., under the leadership of President Bush, cancelled financial support of the fund because of UNFPA support for China's one-child policy. U.S. law precludes support for the UNFPA. The Kemp-Kasten Amendment prohibited financing for any group that "supports or participates in the management of a program of coercive abortion or involuntary sterilization".

Kissling founded CFFC in the 1980's, a dissenting group which promotes abortion and contraception. In the 1970s, she directed one of the first family planning clinics to provide legal abortions in the United States. CFFC is one of 12 groups included in Lincoln,

Nebraska Bishop Bruskewitz's edict of excommunication. The excommunication applies to individuals who belong to one of these dissenting organizations, characterized as "perilous to the Catholic Faith".

Partial-Birth Abortion and the Courts

By: Fr. Frank Pavone, National Director, Priests for Life

In predictable fashion, the pro-abortion forces have found judges who say that despite the will of the American public and of the Legislative and Executive branches of government to ban partial-birth abortion, this procedure must be allowed to continue.

The courts that have made these judgments have done so based on the absence of a health exception in the legislation. Yet they pay no reverence to the fact-finding powers of the United States Congress, which did not ignore the issue of a health exception, but after many years of investigation and testimony, with far more fact-finding resources than any court system has, and many more hearings and deliberations, reached the carefully considered conclusion that this procedure is never necessary for a woman's health.

The Congress does not overstep its bounds here. It is quite aware of the Supreme Court's rulings. It is also aware of the fact that we have three branches of government, not one, and that each is capable of interpreting and defending the Constitution.

Along with the efforts that will be made to defend the ban in the courts, renewed efforts need to be made on the part of all Americans to understand, appreciate, and assert the authority of the legislative branch of government, and re-establish a true balance of powers, taking away from the courts, if necessary, jurisdiction over certain critical issues on which they have blatantly contradicted the will of the American people. Alexander Hamilton and others, in fact, wrote at the founding of our country that judges who neglected the rightful authority of the Legislature, and the will of the people, deserved impeachment.

President Andrew Jackson summed up the balance of powers issue when he wrote, "Each public officer who takes an oath to support the Constitution swears that he will support it as he understands it, and not as it is understood by others...The opinion of the judges has no more authority over the Congress than the opinion of Congress has over the judges, and on that point the President is independent of both."

The last forty years have seen an amazing and growing display of judicial arrogance, and it continues to intensify. It was the Courts, not the people, which took prayer and Bible reading out of public schools. It was the Courts, not the people, which legalized the killing of unborn children. It was the Courts, not the people, who refuse to prohibit partial-birth abortion. It was the Courts, not the people,

which could not endure a monument of the Ten Commandments in the Alabama Supreme Court. And it is now the Courts, not the people, which are questioning the very nature of marriage.

It is time for action. Let your elected representatives in Congress know that you want the legislature to assert its authority more vigorously. Let your Senators know that you want them to confirm judges who realize the limits of judicial authority. Help everyone within your reach understand these critical problems and their solution. And in 2004, vote accordingly!

Is it Different Here?

Canadian Teacher's Federation Survey Produces Alarming Stats on Children's Exposure to Electronic Media

As published in LifeSiteNews.com

OTTAWA, November 25, 2003 (LifeSiteNews.com) A recent Canadian Teachers Federation (CTF) survey questioned young people about the effect of today's electronic media on their lives. The research involved 5,756 students in Grades 3 to 10 across Canada and produced what some consider to be alarming results.

The study reported that "Forty-eight percent of the children surveyed have their own TV set and 35 percent have their own VCR. Twenty-six percent have a computer with an internet connection for their personal use".

Regarding computer games, the study found the youngest children, especially boys, "are the most frequent video and computer-game players" and that most parents do not limit what computer games their children can play. The survey continued that "Almost 60 percent of boys in Grades 3-6 play video or computer games almost every day; even in Grade 10, 38 percent of boys chart it as a daily activity. For girls, the picture is very different: 33 percent of Grade 3 girls play interactive games every day; by Grade 10, the figure has dropped to 6 percent."

One of the top video games for Grade 3-6 boys was found to be "Grand Theft Auto, an ultra-violent action game aimed at mature audiences, which involves murder, bludgeoning and prostitution."

Despite commonly lewd, crude and violent fare on television these days, about 30% of Grade 3-6 children claimed "that they never have any adult input about what TV shows they can watch." "By Grade 6," the study reports, "50 percent report no adult input as to how long they can watch. In Grade 8, the figures for those who experience no parental supervision of their TV viewing rises to approximately 60 percent."

The Globe and Mail reported that Terry Price, president of the Canadian Teachers' Federation found the results to be "absolutely frightening."

Family and child-raising experts and organizations have for years advocated that parents not permit children to have their own televisions (and now computers) in their bedrooms and to carefully guide children's viewing habits. Nevertheless, it appears that a large percentage of parents have still not gotten the message and are not alarmed by media formation of their children's minds.

TV You May Wish To Watch

Fr. Frank Pavone's TV series "Defending Life" airs on EWTN every Tuesday at 5:30pm, Wednesday at 5am, and Fridays at 10pm.

Abortion Survivor Continues to Tell Her Story

As Published on ProLife Infonet 4/18/03

Lancaster, PA -- Gianna Jessen could be bitter. She could be angry and resentful. But she's not any of those things. The 26-year-old Tennessee woman says that every day is a blessing and that her life is proof that miracles exist. After all, she wasn't even supposed to be alive. She plans to share her story when she travels to Lancaster County next Thursday [April 2003] to speak at a dinner sponsored by A Woman's Concern, a crisis pregnancy and resource medical center.

In 1977, Jessen's 17-year-old mother, at 7 1/4 months of pregnancy, decided [to] abort her. An abortionist in southern California injected a saline solution into the teenager's amniotic sac. The fluid poisons the baby and burns her lungs and skin. The abortion procedure -- less commonly used today -- can last up to 24 hours.

Eighteen hours into the process, Jessen slid out. Alive. "Without any burns on my body," she says proudly. "They said I should be blind and burned and that I shouldn't be able to sing." Who knew that 26 years later she'd be recording an album and traveling around the country and the world to talk about her experiences?

As it happened on that day, a nurse picked up the 2-pound newborn and took her to a nearby hospital, where staff placed her in an incubator. "After several months of not dying, they concluded I had a tremendous will to live," she says.

Eventually, doctors diagnosed Jessen with cerebral palsy, from lack of oxygen to her brain during the abortion, she says. Meanwhile, she had been placed in a foster home. Doctors believed she'd never move -- never sit, stand, crawl or walk. Today, she walks with only a limp and even runs and rock climbs. She calls cerebral palsy her "gift."

Jessen credits her faith in God and the love and prayers of her foster mother for helping her to prove the doctors wrong. Her foster mother's daughter, Diana DePaul, later

adopted Jessen and made her a permanent member of the family. It was DePaul who told Jessen, at age 12, the story of her birth and why she had cerebral palsy.

Jessen has never met her biological mother, but has "completely forgiven her." She says, "My life is truly a miracle. I'm a Christian, and I truly believe it was God who allowed me to live. How can you be alive like this and not believe there's this awesome Creator?"

Jessen, now a Christian motivational speaker and outspoken pro-life supporter, uses her story and her passion for music to speak and sing to audiences around the world.

Jessen, in a telephone interview from her home in Franklin, Tenn., said she fully supports the work of A Woman's Concern and the thousands of crisis pregnancy centers across the country. The center offers medical services, pregnancy testing, material assistance and counseling and support to women and their families facing unplanned pregnancies. "We offer an alternative to abortion because we don't believe that's ever a solution," says Cathy Hendrixson, the center's executive director.

Jessen says, "There may be someone...who says that it's a woman's right to choose (whether or not to have an abortion.) Just simply put, I would ask, "If it's all about women's rights and there's nothing else involved, what were my rights? As a female in the womb, what were my rights?"

"I feel that in our culture we perpetuate the idea that our decisions only affect us. But I live with the choice that someone made 26 years ago. Her decision didn't just affect her," Jessen says.

Biotechnology Lobby Opposes Weldon Amendment, Seeks Open Door to Patents on Human Embryos

By: Douglas Johnson, NRLC Legislative Director
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November 11, 2003

As published on the National Right to Life Web-site
<http://www.nrlc.org/>

NRLC [National Right to Life Committee] strongly supports the Weldon Amendment, a provision of the appropriations bill for the departments of Commerce, Justice, State, and certain other agencies (H.R. 2799), passed by the House last July. The Weldon Amendment would prohibit patents from being granted on human embryos or fetuses, including cloned human embryos or fetuses.

The Weldon Amendment would bar the U.S. Patent Office from issuing any patent on any "human organism," meaning a member of the human species at any stage of development, including a human embryo or fetus. This "non-patentability" would cover members of the species *Homo sapiens* who are created by human

cloning, by in vitro fertilization, or by any other process.

A patent is, of course, a government-conferred property right. It is a violation of fundamental human rights, including the right to life, to confer such property rights over a member of the human family. Indeed, the U.S. Patent Office itself has suggested that any patent on a human being would violate the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which prohibits human slavery. But others dispute that position, and it is not at all clear that a federal court would allow the Patent Office to deny a patent for a cloned human embryo, unless Congress acts now to clarify the law.

We agree with what President Bush said in his April 10, 2002 speech on human cloning: "Life is a creation, not a commodity. Our children are gifts to be loved and protected, not products to be designed and manufactured."

The biotech industry's push to begin human cloning raises particularly acute concerns about turning humans into patented property. In early 2002, the magazine *National Journal* ran a detailed article on the desire of some biotechnology firms patent cloned human embryos as "medical models.

In recent weeks, the Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO) has circulated a memo opposing the Weldon Amendment that confirms the industry's desire to seek patents on any human organisms that are created through "human intervention" (or "the hand of man"), which could include human embryos with any genetic modifications whatever, including any cloned embryo.

In a letter dated September 11, BIO further underscores the industry's desire to patent cloned human embryos, complaining that the Weldon Amendment "would preclude the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (PTO) from granting patents on an organism of human species at any stage of development produced by any method, [or] a living organism made by human cloning . . ." That part of BIO's description of the Weldon Amendment is accurate – but BIO has also claimed that the amendment would ban patents on stem cells, genes, and cell and tissue therapy products, none of which is true.

Under BIO's theory of patent law, patents could be issued on the occupants of what President Bush has called "human embryo farms," and also on the occupants of future "human fetus farms," in which cloned human fetuses would be grown to provide desired tissues or organs using artificial or animal uteruses. BIO disingenuously proclaims that the industry does not desire to patent a "human being," but it requires no very sophisticated analysis to discern that here they mean the term "human being" to apply only to born humans, and only to those who have been conceived and gestated by entirely natural means.

The Weldon Amendment stands for the principle that human life is not a commodity, and that a member of the

human family can never be regarded as a mere human invention. Enactment of the Weldon Amendment would be an important bulwark against some of the darker trends in contemporary biotechnology research.

“In Sickness”

The unfettered right to love, honor, and pull the plug.

By: Rosemary Oelrich Bottcher

As published on NationalReview Online, November 13, 2003

Terri Schiavo is a married woman. Her husband, Michael, promised at their wedding to love her, to honor her, to comfort her, to keep her in sickness and in health, forsaking all others, and to be true to her as long as they both should live. After Terri was rendered severely brain-damaged due to hypoxia 13 years ago, Michael filed a medical-malpractice suit on her behalf. In his testimony for that lawsuit, Michael reaffirmed his devotion to his now-disabled wife: "I believe in the vows I took with my wife: through sickness and health, for richer or poor. I married my wife because I love her and I want to spend the rest of my life with her. I'm going to do that." The sympathetic jury awarded Michael \$640,000 for loss of consortium; Terry was awarded nearly \$800,000 to be used for her rehabilitation and lifetime care. Because he is Terri's husband, Michael has the authority to administer this fund and to make medical decisions regarding her care.

Less than a year after the money was in the bank Michael apparently suffered a little cognitive deficiency himself, because he seemed to forget all about his promises to his wife and to the jury. The plans for rehabilitative therapy that he presented to the jury were squelched. He had a do-not-resuscitate order placed on Terri's chart. He repeatedly denied treatment for infections that Terri suffered. He began to date other women, and currently lives with a woman who had a child by him. They are expecting another and plan to marry when Terri dies.

Terri's parents, Bob and Mary Schindler, objected to what they perceived as Michael's neglect of Terri's needs, so in 1993 they filed a petition to have him removed as Terri's guardian. Thus began one of the ugliest family feuds of all time.

Michael demands that Terri not be fed or given water, claiming that she told him before she became disabled that she would rather die than be dependent on tubes. He declares that Terri has no significant mental function, so it is up to him as her loving husband to ensure that her desire to die be fulfilled. Terri's parents say that they have known her a lot longer than Michael has, and they never heard her say any such thing. Furthermore, they claim that Terri is not a vegetable, and that she responds to their attention in a meaningful way. They want Terri to live, and they want her to be provided the rehabilitative care that was supposed to have been funded by the malpractice award.

Michael has prevailed in the courts. Even Michael can offer no evidence about Terri's wishes but his word, he is her husband; therefore, the courts have agreed that he should have nearly absolute control over her fate, and her parents none at all.

Why did the courts accept such weak evidence as to whether Terri would want to be fed in her current condition? (If she did tell her husband what he claims she did, was it a well-thought-out opinion or just the sort of casual remark that healthy young people are prone to make?)

Michael wants to marry his current girlfriend but of course cannot as long as he is married to Terri. But if he simply divorces her he will no longer stand to inherit her property, including whatever remains of her medical fund (incredibly, the court allowed him to pay his legal fees from this fund, which was intended to provide care for his wife; he has already paid his lawyers nearly \$400,000 from it in his efforts to end her life.)

It seems odd that a husband with such questionable motives should be granted so much power over his wife's life. The case reminds one of the old view of marriage as the incorporation of the wife into the husband's legal and social identity: Married women had no independent rights. Feminists have been challenging this idea for more than a hundred years. Where are they now? [Feminists for Life](#) is the only feminist group to object to Michael's nearly total control over his wife's destiny. Regardless of one's opinion about what course of action is in Terri's best interest, the courts' given Michael such unfettered control ought to be a cause for concern.

The Florida legislature has given Terri a reprieve from her death by starvation, allowing for a little more time to sort out the wrenching issues illuminated by her predicament. I hope that Michael will divorce Terri and allow her parents to assume responsibility for her. They are convinced that with therapy, her condition can improve. Their belief is supported by recent research described in a recent *New York Times Magazine* article ("What if There Is Something Going On in There," September 28, 2003). This research suggests that "even after an injury that leaves a brain badly damaged, even after months or years with little signs of consciousness, people may still be capable of complex mental activity," and that "a vast number of people who might once have been considered vegetative actually have hidden reserves of mental activity."

This year, a man named Terry Wallis woke up after 19 years in a coma. His wife never gave up on him. If Michael is successful in his efforts to give up on Terri, we'll never know what surprises she might have for us.

— Rosemary Oelrich Bottcher, a former president of the Board of [Feminists for Life of America](#), lives in Florida. She is a former columnist of the Tallahassee Democrat.