

FOCA, Beyond *Roe v. Wade*, Invalidates Pro-Life Laws and Speech

Barack Obama has promised to sign the so-called "Freedom of Choice Act" (FOCA), which would obliterate the hard-won victories that pro-lifers have secured. FOCA would make partial-birth abortion legal again, require taxpayer funding of abortion, and would strike down all limitations on abortion such as parental notification laws and informed consent.

Obama is a cosponsor of the FOCA. However, in order for him to sign it into law, it would first have to be approved by the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives, after the 111th Congress convenes in January.

The FOCA goes way beyond *Roe v. Wade*, nullifying all of the major types of pro-life laws that the Supreme Court has said are permissible under *Roe v. Wade*. It would invalidate "any statute, ordinance, regulation administrative order, decision, policy, practice, or other action" of any federal, state, or local government or governmental official (or any person acting under government authority) that would "deny or interfere with a woman's right to choose" abortion.

One result of this language would be to nullify the federal ban on partial-birth abortion, which went into effect in 2007 after the U.S. Supreme Court upheld it.

Another provision of the FOCA prohibits any law or government policy that would "discriminate against the exercise of the right...in the regulation or provision of benefits, facilities, services, or information." According to Douglas Johnson, NRLC's director of federal legislation, "This sweeping mandate could cover everything from rural health clinics, to health education

programs in public schools--and even to pro-life speeches by public officials."

About half of the states have parental notification or informed consent laws which the Supreme Court has said are permissible under *Roe v. Wade*, but these will be wiped out under FOCA. The Hyde Amendment, which prohibits federal funding of most abortions, was allowed under *Roe v. Wade* but will be invalidated if FOCA becomes law. Under *Roe v. Wade*, laws that prohibit abortions in public hospitals were allowed, but FOCA will override this.

Conscience rights of doctors, nurses, hospitals, health care providers and any state-licensed professionals to decline to provide or pay for abortions would be placed in jeopardy under the FOCA. Medical professionals who are committed to protecting all human life will likely face a decision whether to act contrary to their conscience or lose their position.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Pro-Life Activities Chairman, Cardinal Justin Rigali of Philadelphia, pointed out in a letter to Congress that: "We can't reduce abortions by promoting abortion. We cannot reduce abortions by invalidating the very laws that have been shown to reduce abortions. We cannot reduce abortions by insisting that every program supporting women in child-birth and child care must also support abortion. **No one who sponsors or supports legislation like FOCA can credibly claim to be part of a good faith discussion on how to reduce abortions. Therefore, I urge all members of Congress to pledge their opposition to FOCA and other legislation designed to promote abortion.**"

Pro-Life Warrior Fr. Frank Pavone Celebrates 20th Anniversary of Ordination



Fr. Frank Pavone

Priests for Life celebrated Fr. Frank Pavone's 20th anniversary of ordination to the priesthood and 15 years as National Director of Priests for Life. The celebration was held at the Hilton Garden Inn on Staten Island, New York on November 22.

Fr. Pavone was ordained a priest by John Cardinal O'Connor, Archbishop of New York City, in November 1988. He assumed the position of National Director at Priests for Life five years later in 1993.

Pro-life leaders from across the nation joined the Priests for Life Pastoral team and staff with Mass at the organization's headquarters before proceeding to the party at the Hilton, where celebrated Irish tenor Mark Forrest delighted the guests with classic Christian songs. To mark the event, Priests for Life compiled an album with letters of congratulations to Fr. Pavone from such figures as Cardinal Renato Martino at the Vatican, Senator Sam Brownback, and Representative Chris Smith along with numerous bishops and pro-life leaders from around the country.

Fr. Pavone has been active in the pro-life movement since 1976. After working in parishes and teaching in seminaries, Cardinal O'Connor called on him to provide full time pro-life leadership for priests as National Director for Priests for Life. In this position, he has traveled to all fifty states and to five continents preaching and teaching against abortion and helping other priests to do the same. He produces programs regularly for religious and secular radio and

television networks.

In 1999, Fr. Pavone was named among the Top 100 Catholics of the Century. The National Right to Life Committee awarded him the Proudly Pro-Life Award, and the Franciscan University of Steubenville gave him an honorary doctorate in recognition for his pro-life work.

Currently, Fr. Pavone serves as president of the National Pro-Life Religious Council. He also serves Dr. James Dobson's Focus on the Family Institute and is pastoral director and chairman of the board of Rachel's Vineyard, an international retreat program for post-abortion healing.

Norma McCorvey, the "Jane Roe" of the Supreme Court *Roe v. Wade* decision, called Fr. Pavone "the catalyst that brought me into the Catholic Church."

Fr. Pavone was with Terri Schiavo in her final moments and was an outspoken advocate for her life.

At the request of the late Mother Teresa of the Missionaries of Charity, Fr. Pavone spoke in India on the life issues. He has also served as an official of the Pontifical Council for the Family at the Vatican, which coordinates the pro-life activities of the Catholic Church. He has addressed the pro-life caucus of the U.S. House of Representatives.



Cardinal John J. O'Connor



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National Pro-Life Religious Council

The National Pro-Life Religious Council (NPRC) is a Christian coalition which acknowledges Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and works to encourage every Christian denomination to affirm and witness to the biblical standard of the value, dignity and sanctity of human life, and to foster ministry to those vulnerable to the violence of abortion or euthanasia.

Anglicans for Life

Common Good

Conservative Congregational Christian Conference (CCCC)

International Communion of the Charismatic Episcopal Church (CEC for Life)

Life Education and Resource Network (LEARN)

Lutherans for Life (LFL)

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS)

National Black Pro-Life Union

National Clergy Council (NCC)

National Pro-Life Action Center

Presbyterians Pro-Life (PPL)

Priests for Life (PFL)

Religious Outreach, National Right to Life Committee

Taskforce of United Methodists on Abortion and Sexuality (TUMAS)/Lifewatch

United Friends for Life (UFL)

A Grave Mistake and an Abiding Hope

By Fr. Frank Pavone, President, National Pro-life Religious Council
National Director, Priests for Life

The man elected to the Presidency this year said during the campaign that he does not know when a human being starts to have human rights. How can one govern from that starting point? Governing is about protecting human rights; to do it successfully, you have to know where they come from, and when they begin.

The American people do not share Barack Obama's extreme and offensive views on abortion. They never have and they never will. The coming four years will see a widening gap between the people and their President on this fundamental issue. As Americans come to know how extreme his position is, the intensity of the struggle to protect these children will only increase.

The pro-life movement has made significant gains in the courts and in the law in these last eight years. For the next four, the movement will work to prevent the erosion of that progress.

It would be a serious mistake for people to think that this election means the pro-life movement has no political power. All politics is local. Political power is about people. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was once told that given the political realities, civil rights legislation would be impossible to pass. "We'll just have to see about that," he replied. And the civil rights movement was born, stirring the hearts of the people to lead the nation to the victory of justice.

So it is with our movement. The vast majority of Americans are pro-life. They will fight abortion on the local level, opening pregnancy centers and closing abortion mills, activating their Churches and educating their children, proclaiming the message in the media and demonstrating in the streets. The pro-life movement is winning this battle in the hearts and minds of the American people, as opinion polls show and as the shrinking number of abortion mills and abortion providers prove.

Political races are always a swinging of the pendulum. As soon as you win, you begin to lose, and as soon as you lose, you begin the ascent again to winning. In the next two election cycles (2010 and 2012) the pro-life movement will make up for political ground lost in this one.

It is all right to be disappointed at the end of an election season, but one must never walk away. Amidst disappointment is abiding hope in America, where everything remains possible, and where a new chapter of the pro-life movement has just begun. The efforts that were made, and the sacrifices endured in this election season made a difference, and we will build on that difference to see another day when the work and the ballots of pro-life people will dismantle the Culture of Death. We will keep marching toward that pro-life America we seek, and won't stop until we get there.

"The care of human life and happiness and not their destruction is the first and only legitimate object of good government."

-Thomas Jefferson



ASK AUGUSTINE

By Paul A. Tambrino, Ed.D., Ph.D.

This article first appeared in Presbyterians Pro-Life News

Was Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi correct (regarding the issue of when life begins) when she recently said “over the centuries, the Doctors (those theologians who established the doctrines) of the church have not been able to make that definition. St. Augustine said at three months;” and then she went on to say that “it’s only been about 50 years that the church has understood life to begin at conception?”

Pelosi’s few words could not have contained more falsehoods. In saying that the church has only had the “life begins at conception” philosophy for about 50 years, Pelosi made a factual error concerning the church. In saying that my namesake, St. Augustine, said “three months” she made an historical error involving the greatest theologian of Christianity’s first 1,000 years.

It is true that secular laws and penalties concerning abortion have evolved through the ages; BUT without question, Christian tradition from the earliest days has always held a firm anti-abortion attitude. Such has been the church’s unwavering 2,000 year old doctrine regarding the sanctity of life.

One of the earliest documents of the early church fathers is “The Didache (The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles)” illustrates that the church’s teaching on abortion has always been quite clear. Some have dated this document as early as 50 AD, but most suggest that it was composed around 70 AD. In this very early summary of basic instruction about the Christian life we read, “You shall not abort a child” (2.2).

Regarding Pelosi’s reference to Augustine, initially I thought she meant St. Thomas Aquinas, the 13th century theologian who subscribed to a “delayed hominization” or “ensoulment” theory, meaning that the fetus did not receive a soul until a certain point (about the time that a mother feels a baby move) in its development. Aquinas speculated that an embryo gets a soul at the point of “quickening”, the time when a woman can feel the baby move, which would be about three months, but this would have no bearing on when life begins and hence abortion. There is no way to read into any of his writings that Aquinas (or Augustine) would have accepted abortion.

Augustine did address abortion in “The Enchiridion.” In chapter 86 he wrote, “At what time the infant begins to live in the womb: whether life exists in a latent form before it manifests itself in the motions of the living being. To deny that the young, who are cut out limb by limb from the womb, lest if they were left there dead the mother should die too, have never been alive, seems too audacious.” In both of these cases Augustine is dealing with our regeneration or re-birth and not our natural life. Nor is there anything in Augustine’s writings to suggest that he would endorse abortion.

A few days later, Pelosi’s office said her views on when life begins were informed by the views of Saint Augustine when he wrote, “the law does not provide that the act (abortion) pertains to homicide, for there cannot yet be said to be a live soul in a body that lacks sensation.” (Saint Augustine, On Exodus 21:22). But the verse in Exodus about which Augustine was writing clearly supports protecting the unborn -- for it says, “If men fight, and hurt a woman with child, so that she gives birth prematurely (a live birth, yatza in Hebrew, thus not a miscarriage which would require the verb to be accompanied by some form of muth, meaning to die), yet no harm follows, he shall surely be punished accordingly as the woman’s husband imposes on him; and he shall pay as the judges

determine.” Therefore, it is doubtful that Augustine was circumventing Moses.

For those who wonder what today’s leading scientists say on this matter of when life begins: Dr. Hymie Gordon (Mayo Clinic) states, “By all criteria of modern molecular biology, life is present from the moment of conception;” Dr. Micheline Matthews-Roth (Harvard University Medical School) says “It is scientifically correct to say that an individual human life begins at conception;” Dr. Alfred Bongioanni (University of Pennsylvania) writes, “I have learned from my earliest medical education that human life begins at the time of conception;” and Dr. Jerome LeJeune, (The Father of Modern Genetics,” University of Descartes, Paris) concludes, “To accept the fact that after fertilization has taken place a new human has come into being is no longer a matter of taste or opinion . . . it is plain experimental evidence.”

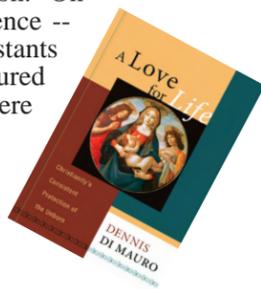
In the final analysis, what really matters is not what Pelosi, Augustine, the church, or the world’s leading scientists say about when life begins, but what does God’s word, the Bible teach about it. The principle of the sanctity of life is clearly established in Genesis 9:6 and in the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20). The biblical teaching of the creation of man in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:27) is the foundation of the dignity and sacredness of human life. And Psalm 51:5; 139:13, 14; Jeremiah 1:5; and Luke 1:44 (among many other passages) provide evidence that the image of God is present in the unborn human being.

When I first read of Speaker Pelosi’s comments, I contacted a Catholic Theologian for whom I have high regard and asked for her thoughts on this matter. She wrote, “Pelosi has so little respect for Christianity that she substitutes her own thoughts for the official teachings of the Catholic Church, for the writings of seminal theologians, and even for biblical passages. On April 22, 2008 (Pelosi) said: “The Bible tells us in the Old Testament, ‘To minister to the needs of God’s creation is an act of worship. To ignore those needs is to dishonor the God who made us.’ On this Earth Day and every day let us honor the earth and our future generations with a commitment to fight climate change.” As you (Paul) know there’s no such quote anywhere in the Bible about needing “to minister to the needs of God’s creation as an act of worship.” There’s an interesting report on Pelosi’s invention of biblical quotations. It appeared in Catholic World Report “The Gospel According to Nancy Pelosi” (Aug/Sept 2008, pp.39-40).”

As Christians we must reflect on our responsibility in a society where human life is regarded cheaply by Speaker Pelosi and others. What kind of society will we become when human life is regarded as disposable? For then all of us will be vulnerable.

A human life begins at conception. On this matter, at least, the church and science -- Roman Catholics and Orthodox Protestants are in agreement. And beloved be assured that God knew you even before you were formed in the womb.

For further reading on the church’s history on abortion see NPRC’s latest publication, *A Love for Life*.



Teens Suffer More From Abortions

In comparison to adult women, teenage girls who abort their child have significantly higher risk of serious physical and psychological problems.

For example, a study entitled “Detrimental Effects of Adolescent Abortion,” by Amy Sobie and David Reardon reports that, compared to adult women, teens are:

- two to four times more likely to commit suicide
- more likely to develop psychological problems, including paranoia, drug abuse, psychotic delusions, projection of their problems onto others, and “acting out” strategies
- more likely to have troubled relationships
- are generally in need of more counseling and guidance regarding abortion
- are nearly three times more likely to be admitted to mental health hospitals

Dr. Wanda Franz, a developmental psychologist and president of National Right to Life Committee, explains that adolescents, unlike adults, often approach problems from their emotions rather than from the rational part of the brain which is still developing. Their newly developed emotional and psychological self identity leads them to an almost compulsive need to protect the self from what is perceived as outside assaults or environmental pressures. This need of the self may reduce the capacity to give love unselfishly or use intellectual capacities objectively.

The Sobie/Reardon study found that teens are more likely to abort because of pressure from their parents or the baby’s father. The attitude of peers and of the social environment surrounding her may also be important factors. When she has an abortion under these pressures, she is at higher risk for adverse psychological effects.

Teens who have participated in post-abortion counseling report that they felt misinformed in pre-abortion counseling, were unsatisfied with abortion services, and experienced greater post-abortion stress than adults. They felt the abortion procedure itself was stressful and experienced guilt, depression and a sense of isolation. Younger women were more likely to report severe pain during abortion and greater levels of anxiety and fear prior to the abortion. They were also more likely to report severe nightmares following abortion and to score higher on scales measuring antisocial traits.

Often a teen may want to keep the baby. They may then conceal their pregnancy in an effort to avoid being pressured into an unwanted abortion. This results in more late-term abortions among teens. The Center for Disease Control reports that 30% of teenage abortions occur after 13 weeks of pregnancy compared to only 12% of all abortions. Abortions in the second and third trimester, combined with the feelings of ambivalence and pressure, result in more severe emotional, psychological and physical problems.

Teens are at higher risk for physical complications and damage. They are twice as likely to receive cervical lacerations during the abortion because they have smaller cervixes than more mature women. They are also more at risk for post-abortion infections such as pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) and endometritis (inflammation of the uterus). Doctors have found

that teens are less likely than adults to take the prescribed antibiotics and are at greater risk for a resulting infertility. When it is a late-term abortion, there are additional risks of future miscarriages, cervical incompetence, ectopic pregnancies, rupture of the uterus, and low birth weight in later pregnancies.

Some studies have found that teens who have lost a child through abortion become pregnant again within 15 to 24 months. These repeat pregnancies are a symptom of unresolved issues from the first abortion, often a desire to replace the lost child with another child. But then the second child is also aborted because the teen still has the same pressures and possibly more than in the first experience. A New York study found that teens with a previous abortion were four times as likely to abort a current pregnancy as teens with a first pregnancy, and in Los Angeles among teens having abortions, 38% had a previous abortion and 18% had undergone two abortions in the same year.

The Alan Guttmacher Institute reports that about 40% of teenage abortions happen without parental involvement. This means that parents have no warning about the emotional or physical harm their child may suffer. They may not understand the cause of the depression, anger or substance abuse in their daughter and their anger or confusion can cause further emotional problem for the daughter and the family.

There have been several tragic cases of death of teens from the complications of abortions that the parents were uninformed about. Following are some that the Sobie/Reardon study reports. In Maryland, 16 year old Erica Richardson died from complications, as

did 13 year-old Dawn Ravenell of New York. A St. Louis 14 year-old girl committed suicide three weeks after an abortion her mother had not been told about.

Parental notification laws can help prevent such tragedies, but sadly pro-abortion advocates still oppose such legislation.



Photo courtesy of LifeNews.com

Associate Membership Application

Yes, I would like to become an Associate Member of the National Pro-Life Religious Council, Inc.

Enclosed is my fee of \$25.00 for membership as:
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