

## Is That Your Final Answer? *By Fr. Terry Gensemer, CEC for Life*

We are all familiar with the game show “Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?” A series of questions, growing in difficulty and value, are posed to a random (and hopefully knowledgeable) contestant. The closer he comes to the million dollar question, the more ominous the background music seems to sound, the hotter the lights seem to grow...and the closer the audience watches his face. Watching to see what he will do, with thousands or hundreds or even a million dollars at stake, when the emcee looks him hard in the eye and says, “Is that your final answer?”

I would love to sit in the place of that emcee some time and ask that mighty question. Only instead of a random contestant, I’d choose philosophers of history, rulers of antiquity, politicians and media pundits--the people whose thoughts and voices constantly shape the way we think. And my question wouldn’t be something like, “In what battle did the Duke of Wellington end Napoleon’s rule?” The category is “Life,” and the question in need of a final answer is, “When does it begin?”

Maybe that doesn’t seem like a hard question--definitely not a long question--but it must be an important question, because its footprints can be tracked through the thoughts and writings of societies in almost any given era. From the Spartans and Plato, to the Catholic Church, to the Soviet Union and present day America--everyone has an opinion about when life begins, and from those opinions spring laws, beliefs, and controversies. But those are all just by-products. I want the answer to the equation, and there have been quite a few submitted.

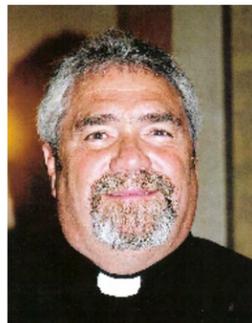
Plato, for example, along with many others of his day, believed that a soul was bestowed upon the body at birth. On the other hand, Plato’s contemporary, Hippocrates, was convinced that a soul came into being at the moment of

conception. (Scott Gilbert, *When Does Human Life Begin?*) That is why the Hippocratic Oath, still taken by doctors today, actually says, “...I will not give a woman a [tool] to cause an abortion. But I will preserve the purity of my life and my arts.” Now Hippocrates may have been the minority at the time, he may even have lacked the scientific data we have today, but he felt absolutely certain that conception started something completely new and irreversible in the human realm, and that act required protection, especially when practicing medicine.

Six hundred years later, an early Christian apologist named Tertullian would reach the same conclusion: “Prevention of birth is a premature murder, and it makes no difference whether it is a life already born that one snatches away or a life that is coming to birth...the future of man is a man already: the whole fruit is present in the seed.” (G. Bonner, *Abortion and the Sanctity of Human Life*). And just as the agents of medicine continue to take Hippocrates’ Oath, for two thousand years the Church has held close to Tertullian’s words, believing creation to begin in the mind of God and human life at conception.

As a Christian (and avid thinker) I suspect this to be our answer, measurable within the truth of God and compatible with the world of science and medicine. At the moment of conception something entirely new enters the world, a DNA code that we have never witnessed attached to cells that can’t become anything other than a human. And though that human is incredibly small, though she may be weak, unintelligent, and less than mobile, she is also unstoppable. Because, as long as she is given an environment, nurturing, and time, that child will undoubtedly grow stronger, more intelligent, and more mobile. It’s the same with a six-year-old, a twenty-year-old, even a man at the age of fifty. While we live, we grow, and that growth begins at conception. And because we do not have the ability to give it, we are not deemed the right to take it, only the responsibility to protect the life of a child.

That’s our final answer.



Fr. Gensemer

## NRLC Sounds Alarm on Pro-Abortion Provisions in Health Care Bill

The Obama White House and Democratic congressional leaders have made it clear that they would like to pass a final health care bill that includes abortion-related provisions along the general lines of those contained in the Senate-passed bill. These provisions, however, have been denounced by **National Right to Life Committee** as well as by the **United States Conference of Catholic Bishops** and other pro-life groups.

“NRLC believes that enactment of the abortion provisions in the Senate-passed health bill would result in great expansions of abortion, driven by federal administrative decrees and federal subsidies,” explained NRLC Legislative Director Douglas Johnson. “In contrast, the abortion-related provisions of the House bill, as it was amended by the NRLC-backed Stupak-Pitts Amendment, would preserve long-established federal policies--preventing federal subsidies for abortion, preventing pro-abortion federal mandates, and protecting the conscience rights of pro-life health care providers.”

The final bill that congressional Democratic leaders and President Obama agree upon will be presented as a single,

unamendable package--first to the House of Representatives, where majority approval will be required to send it to the Senate. Because House Republicans are united against the legislation, the bill will fail if as few as 39 Democrats vote against it. (The Democrats currently control the House by a margin of 256-178.)

NRLC’s alarm at the Senate bill’s abortion provisions is widely shared among pro-life organizations. Roman Catholics in around 19,000 parishes in the country are receiving copies of a nationwide alert distributed by the **U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops**, headed, “Urgent...Stop Abortion Funding in Health Care Reform!” (See p. 4 for more on the bishops’ Jan. 7 alert)

**Knights of Columbus** sent an alert to all its local leaders throughout the organization of 1.7 million members, urging members to contact their federal representatives in opposition to health care legislation that lacks the House-approved pro-life language. Supreme Knight Carl A. Anderson stressed that, “Time is of the essence. We must prevent this health care legislation from becoming the largest expansion of abortion in our country since *Roe v. Wade*.”

For the current status of the health care legislation, go to **www.nrlactioncenter.com**.



# Uniting for Life

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Photo Courtesy of LifeNews.com

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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

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)

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), United Church of Christ

## The Best Videos in the World of our Unborn Neighbors

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



Fr. Frank Pavone

It’s light years beyond ultrasound and will make you practically fall off your chair when you see it.

We at Priests for Life are now promoting and distributing to every sector of the Church and the pro-life movement the most vivid, powerful, and striking videography of the unborn child that exists. Obtained through a rarely used technique called embryoscopy, in which a video camera the size of a pen-point is inserted abdominally or cervically, this video footage has been incorporated into a 42-minute video called “The Biology of Prenatal Development,” now available from Priests for Life.

You can see segments of this imagery at Priests for Life’s special website **www.unborn.info**.

It is widely known in the pro-life movement that ultrasound imagery changes the minds and hearts of abortion-minded women and even abortion providers, and has created the beginnings of a cultural shift in the attitudes of the general public and the medical profession toward the unborn child.

With this stunning, color imagery of the child from four to twelve weeks after fertilization, we expect even more radical conversions to the position that the child in the womb is one of us and fully deserves protection.

The DVD “The Biology of Prenatal Development” was produced by the Endowment for Human Development, written and researched by a medical doctor, and endorsed by numerous medical school professors and experts in embryology. The video has received 11 video awards for the excellence of its research and presentation, and has even been distributed by National Geographic!

The video does not address the abortion issue, but certainly will inoculate anyone from the arguments of abortion advocates who try to deny the humanity of the unborn. The video is intended for a non-professional audience of ages 12 and higher, and yet does not oversimplify its subject matter. Hence, it is even useful for medical school audiences. Along with the embryoscopy method, five other medical imaging technologies are used in the video, with accompanying commentary on the scientific facts of the child’s development.

Priests for Life intends to make this video available to every pregnancy center, every school, and every Church in America. You can help us to do that! Here are some steps you can take:

1. Sign up at **www.unborn.info** to keep informed about this project.
2. Purchase your own copy of the DVD from Priests for Life and an additional copy to give to a school principal or pastor in your community. Let us know that you are doing this so that we can keep track of what parishes and schools are covered.
3. Make a donation to cover the cost of sending the DVD to every parish or school in your community, diocese, or state!
4. Recruit others to support the project by showing the DVD at your pro-life group meeting, other meetings, or at gatherings you can host in your home.

## Motherhood Calling

By Georgette Forney, President, Anglicans for Life

This summer I read a book entitled, *To Be A Mother*. The author, Deanna Jones, begins the first chapter with the story of her aunt asking her what she wanted to be when she grew up. As a six-year-old, the author replied, "I want to be a mommy." The author then described her aunt's negative reaction to her 'mommy' answer and how the aunt's response caused her to rethink her dream of growing up to be a mommy.

I was reading the book because, after years of working with women who have aborted their babies, I believe the correlation between feminism, abortion, and the role of motherhood in our society needs further study as we seek to end abortion. What should be seen as the noblest job in the world, being a mom, nurturing life, is instead dismissed and devalued.

There is a subtle lack of respect for motherhood that becomes subtly apparent in certain situations. Many of us "Moms" have been out at a social event and had somebody ask, "What do you do?" When we respond with, "I'm a full-time, stay-at-home mom," the person posing the question dismisses us from all future conversation!

What message does this send to younger women, potential future mothers?

Recently, *TIME Magazine* did a front cover story entitled, "What Women Want Now," that featured the results of a survey on gender issues designed to assess feminism's influence and impact in today's society. Most of the data extrapolated from the survey compares women's and men's attitudes on their specific roles, with an emphasis on the jobs/responsibilities of mothers and fathers in today's society. Four points stood out for me:

1. Women still earn 77 cents on the dollar compared with men.
2. A majority of both men and women still say it is best for children to have a father working and a mother at home.

3. Women no longer view matrimony as a necessary station on the road to financial security or parenthood. The percentage of children born to single women has leaped from 12% to 39%.

4. As women have gained more freedom, more education and more economic power, they have become less happy.

But the best line in the whole story is by Pulitzer Prize winning journalist and bestselling author Susan Faludi, who is quoted in the article, saying, "**The women's movement wasn't about happiness.**"

For the last 50 years, my generation has been programmed to believe that achieving equality in the work force was the key to happiness, prosperity and self-fulfillment. Legalized abortion was supposed to be the great equalizer. Controlling our reproductive system would allow us to be seen as gender-neutral. Motherhood was holding us back from being all we could be!

So we compromised who we are as women, but still haven't achieved real equality, and are often both unhappy and childless. Or we are left wanting to be at home, but for a variety of reasons have no choice but to leave our kids in day-care while we go to work.

I hear the cries of thousands of women associated with the Silent No More Awareness Campaign (cosponsored by Anglicans for Life) and I see the broken hearts, empty arms, and destroyed spirits—the consequences of abortion. How sad that the 1960's version of feminism ended up exploiting women and denying us the greatest blessing of Motherhood.

Restoring the value and honor of Motherhood is not going to end all abortion, but I believe affirming it will be a huge step towards helping women reconnect with who we really are and who we want to be at our most basic level.

God knew what He was doing when He created women with the ability to nurture life. May we help the next generation reclaim and respect this gift of MOTHERHOOD!

## Health Care Should Have Preservation of Life at Heart

By Marie Bowen, Presbyterians Pro-Life

A friend of Presbyterians Pro-Life recently sent me a copy of a Catechism for Young Children. It was written as an introduction to the Shorter Catechism, one of the documents in the Book of Confessions of the PC(USA), published by the Presbyterian Board of Publication in Philadelphia, copyrighted in 1840. It is a wonderful gem of truth and teaching.

The first several questions offer teaching about God's creation of human life and about our substance as beings that are more than the bodies we inhabit.

- Q. Who made you?  
A. God
- Q. Why did God make you and all things?  
A. For his own glory.
- Q. How can you glorify God?  
A. By loving him and doing what he commands.
- Q. Why ought you to glorify God?  
A. Because he made me, and takes care of me.
- Q. Are there more gods than one?  
A. There is only one God.
- Q. Have you a soul as well as a body?  
A. Yes, I have a soul that can never die.

Our nation is embroiled in a heated debate about health care. It's not a new debate. There is, however, a growing sense that our current system of health care is broken and an intense desire to find a solution quickly. Recently, faith groups--mainline denominations, interfaith coalitions, and advocacy groups-- have joined in calling for a speedy resolution that will provide health care for everyone. The PC(USA) is one of the denominations joining the discussion.

Presbyterians have long displayed an active concern for society and involvement in our country's government. We take seriously the commands of Scripture to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Matt. 19:19). The years of Presbyterian caring are visible in the countless colleges, hospitals, children's homes, mission organizations, food pantries, pregnancy centers, and other works of help and care that have been established. Our compassion causes us to want good health care to be accessible to everyone and the prospect of a quick solution is enticing. But there is grave danger here that in our hurry to help we will sacrifice more lives than we will save.

Once before, Presbyterian compassion led to the abandonment of principles of faith that strike at the heart of who we are as created beings in Christ. In the late 60s and early 70s, Presbyterian women became concerned by the numbers of women dying from botched back alley abortions and they began to work in the church and in the nation for support for legal abortion. Their compassion for women was sincere, but they proposed the wrong solution. Where they should have addressed the spiritual, social, and economic needs that caused women to feel so desperate about their pregnancy, they instead provided abortion as the answer to a "problem" pregnancy.

Thirty-some years later, even some women who would label themselves 'pro-choice' are admitting that abortion harms women.

The loss of humanity is staggering. Almost 50 million U.S. babies have been aborted. Countless men and women live with regret, grief, depression, drug and alcohol abuse, and other symptoms as a result of their abortion experiences.

Now PC(USA) voices are speaking out in the national health care debate. Our current policy on abortion and our alliances with pro-abortion groups (i.e. Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice) threaten to cause us to propose the wrong solution once more. Presbyterian General Assemblies have called on the government to establish a national health care plan as recently as 2008. Last week, Gradye Parsons, Stated Clerk of the PC(USA) released a statement urging quick action on national health. The PC(USA) is on record as a supporter of a single-payer universal health care plan.

Where am I going with all this? Well, I'm not a fan of single-payer health care--I prefer personal freedom to government control as a general principle--but, it's not a cross I would die on....except when that plan would put human lives at stake! When endorsement of a single-payer universal health care plan is coupled with the current PC(USA) social witness policy on abortion, then the result is advocacy for a health care plan that covers abortions. That puts pro-life Presbyterians in fundamental disagreement with the advocacy of our denomination. A Zogby poll in March surveyed 30,117 Americans from 48 states and found that 51-69% oppose federal funding of abortion. It is reasonable to assume that a poll of

Presbyterians would produce similar results. Like most Americans, a majority of Presbyterians do NOT want to see abortion funded by tax dollars. They do not want to be complicit in destroying innocent human lives.

Abortion is not health care. Pregnancy is not a disease or injury requiring a cure. Pregnancy is a normal and usually a healthy condition. It involves two lives. While a woman does have particular health care needs during pregnancy, abortion is not a treatment. Abortion causes the death of the child and does nothing to enhance the health of the woman. Abortion is the termination

of a human life, as is assisted suicide. Both end life, not in God's timing, but at the whim of human hands. That brings us back to the questions in the Catechism for Young Children: Who made you? Why did God make you...? Do you have a soul? A health care plan that includes abortion and/or assisted suicide goes against everything Presbyterians know and believe about God as creator and owner of human life. It denies who we are as human beings created in His image and for His glory and redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ! We are beings with souls, whose value is more than our bodies and whose purpose is eternal. Our lives, even the care of our bodies, ought not to be placed at the mercy of the political wind.

So, I believe I speak for most pro-life Presbyterians when I say, there are some specific things we ought to see in a health care plan endorsed by the PC(USA):

1. A good health care plan needs a statement excluding coverage of abortion, assisted suicide or any procedure or treatment that would deliberately cause the death of the patient (born or unborn).
2. It should include stated protections against the withholding of care or treatment needed to preserve a life, no matter how limited that life might be, and including those waiting to be born.
3. There ought to be written protections for medical providers so they are never required to participate in procedures or treatments against their religious conscience or risk losing their jobs if they refuse such participation.



## 2010 March for Life One of Largest Ever

Although rain, sleet and snow immediately preceded the 2010 March for Life, at noon the sky cleared in time for the arrival of a massive outpouring of support for the pro-life cause. Most assessed the attendance as larger than usual with even more young people involved. Even a Washington Post reporter was forced to acknowledge the "large number of young people" and that the pro-life movement "feels it's gaining strength."

The youth rally at the Verizon center, sponsored by the Archdiocese of Washington, was reportedly sold out the first day tickets were offered, and was attended by some 26,000 young people. To handle the overflow, many local parishes offered special pro-life liturgies & rallies for groups attending the March.

Some 10,000 people attended the National Prayer Vigil for Life at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, which included evening Mass celebrated by Cardinal Daniel DiNardo all-night prayer, confessions, Rosary for Life, and morning Mass celebrated by Archbishop Timothy Broglio.

The National Pro-Life Religious Council co-hosted the 16th Annual Conference for the Pre-Born and Their Mothers and Fathers at the U.S. Capitol Visitor's Center for a wall-to-wall crowd.

### 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:  
\_\_\_ an individual \_\_\_ a church \_\_\_ a group

I would like to make a tax deductible donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to help NPRC with its important work.

Mail to: NPRC c/o Development Office,  
PO Box 61838, Staten Island, NY 10306-9811

Contact Person \_\_\_\_\_

Church or Group \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Denomination \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (h) \_\_\_\_\_ (w) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_