



National Pro-Life Religious Council, Inc.
109 2nd St. N.E., Washington, DC 20002

Uniting For Life

Spring 2007

“Do not despise the day of small beginnings”

By Randolph Sly and Kirk van der Swaagh

What’s the old adage? “Each journey begins with the first step?” It’s pretty cliché, but as is the case with sayings that become cliché there is the quality of the maxim about it that makes it applicable to many situations. In the light of the Supreme Court decision upholding the federal ban on partial-birth abortions, the NPRC gratefully embraces this cliché as expressing our hope that our society will yet make the long journey out of the barren wilderness that is the abortion culture.

The majority opinion in *Gonzales v. Carhart* is narrow in scope. Of this, there can be no doubt. When one reads it, one senses that plans are already being implemented to work around the ruling, assuring that child killing at all stages of gestation can proceed unabated. But, as is noted elsewhere in this issue (see “Considering *Gonzalez v. Carhart*,” p.2, highlighting important language in the decision), we believe a sign has been posted that points to the way out. It is the first such sign that we have seen in 34+ years of wandering in the wilderness.

There are some whom we consider colleagues in the pro-life movement who, we suspect, consider the decision to have accomplished little to nothing, and that there should be no rejoicing until all human beings, born and unborn, are protected by the laws of the land. Not content with the thought of a partial victory on any front, they desire unqualified surrender by those

who perpetrate the horror of abortion. We understand their unwavering convictions and we share them. We believe, however, that there is a difference between viewing the recent decision as a partial victory versus viewing it, and each battle, as a small victory to be won in the larger war. We embrace the latter perspective.

This is not without biblical precedent. As Zechariah declares, “Do not despise the day of small beginnings.” (Zechariah 4:10) These words, given by God through the prophet, came at a time when the idea that God’s people could actually accomplish what was in their heart to do could not be imagined. The forces that conspired against them were too great. No one could have believed that the Temple could have been rebuilt and the walls of Jerusalem repaired. But God was at work and through his chosen vessel began to restore the glory that had been lost.

In this spirit, we rejoice to see this triumph of truth over falsehood and dare to believe that it is the “day of small beginnings” for the protection of the vulnerable and defenseless among us. Clearly, the journey is not over; indeed, it has only just begun. It will prove to be a long one for we have wandered deep into the wilderness. Nevertheless, we believe the first step has been taken. As a result, we do not see this merely as a partial victory, which can lead to indifference, but a small victory... a battle won in our struggle toward the triumph in the war for securing the womb as a place of safety for all persons.

New Name, New Logo, Same Mission for Organization

By Georgette Forney, President of Anglicans for Life

Pittsburgh, PA – Names are important. That is why the Board of Directors of the only Anglican/Episcopal organization dedicated to affirming life recently voted to change their ministry’s name from NOEL to **Anglicans for Life**. The mission will remain the same: “to uphold the sanctity of human life from conception to natural death in the Church and society.”

Our staff, board of directors, and other key leadership have met over the past several months to discuss this change primarily because we needed a name that better represented the broadening scope of our work on behalf of all life. Life issues have become important to members of our Church worldwide

and they are looking to us for help.”

Name changes don’t mean relationship changes though! We will continue to serve those in the Episcopal Church (TEC) as well as all the other continuing groups. Anglicans for Life will work with everyone who affirms the sanctity of life, and we encourage everyone to adopt our Declaration of Life Statement: *God, and not man, is the creator of human life. Therefore, from conception to natural death we will protect and respect the sanctity of every human life. Furthermore, we recognize that the unjustified taking of life is sinful, but God gives absolution to those who ask for His forgiveness.*

If you are interested in learning about our Chapter ministry, contact



Uniting For Life

A Christian Pro-Life Newsletter

Spring 2007

National Pro-Life Religious Council, 109 2nd St. N.E., Washington, DC 20002
website: www.nprcouncil.org e-mail: mail@nprcouncil.org

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.

Member Organizations

Anglicans for Life

Conservative Congregational Christian Conference (CCCC)

Common Good Foundation

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

Life Education and Resource Network (LEARN)

Lutherans for Life (LFL)

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)

Words DO Matter

by Georgette Forney, President of Anglicans for Life and Co-founder of the Silent No More Awareness Campaign

I was shocked to see the news about the Supreme Court’s decision on the Partial Birth Abortion Ban on the front pages of all the newspapers in the stands as I walked through the airport the morning after the announcement. I stopped to read the article of one paper and started crying as I got to the second paragraph, where it said, “Some women come to regret an abortion.”

I couldn’t believe they used the word “regret.” That’s our word! That’s the key word the Silent No More Awareness Campaign uses to describe the feelings we who have had an abortion, experience. It’s what our signs say: “I Regret My Abortion.”

As I stood in the middle of the concourse blubbing away, trying to read through blurred eyes, all I could think is that for five years we have stood out in the cold at the Supreme Court building and it wasn’t for nothing. They saw us. They heard our message. They read our testimonies and affidavits. The Supreme Court finally acknowledged the truth about abortion’s second victim. Even though so much of the media ignores our stories, five

of the nine justices helped us be silent no more!!!!

Once the tears subsided, I started praising God for this decision as I firmly believe it marks the beginning of the end of legalized abortion for all nine months of pregnancy in the United States. The barbaric nature of abortion is being exposed.

It seems the abortion advocates also see the writing on the wall. A few days after the PBA decision was handed down, the Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA) was introduced in the Senate by Barbara Boxer (CA-D) and in the House by Jarrold Nadler (NY-D). FOCA would be more radical than the *Roe v. Wade* decision because it would overturn the pro-life laws enacted by state legislators, allowed under *Roe*.

It’s obvious to me that the strategy of the Silent No More Awareness Campaign is working; we are raising awareness about the consequences of abortion, and helping people connect with after-abortion care programs. Ultimately, I believe we will make abortion unthinkable and unnecessary because people will see that no one benefits. I pray that someday the Supreme Court will uphold a law that protects unborn children and entitles every expectant mother and her unborn child to the love and compassion they need.



For more information about Silent No More Awareness, visit our website: www.SilentNoMoreAwareness.org

Considering *Gonzales v. Carhart*: Its Importance, The Future

By Rev. Frank Pavone and Rev. Paul T. Stallsworth

April 18, 2007 is a day of historic importance for the pro-life movement and for all of American society. On that day the United States Supreme Court, in *Gonzales v. Carhart*, upheld the federal Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act of 2003. This Supreme Court decision is of crucial importance for seven reasons. It also lays the groundwork, in three ways, for future pro-life progress.

WHY GONZALES IS IMPORTANT

1. *Gonzales*, for the first time since *Roe v. Wade* in 1973, upholds a law which actually bans, rather than merely regulates, a particular abortion procedure.

2. *Gonzales* allows a legislative ban of partial-birth abortion to stand without an unlimited health-of-the-mother exception. Recall that, according to the United States Supreme Court's *Doe v. Bolton* decision (1973), "health" has a very broad meaning in American abortion law: it includes "all factors—physical, emotional, psychological, familial, and the woman's age—relevant to the well-being of the patient." Inclusion of an unlimited health exception would have, for all practical purposes, nullified the legislated ban.

3. *Gonzales* emphasizes that the state has a legitimate interest in the life of the unborn child throughout pregnancy. Indeed, the decision refers to the state's right to "express profound respect for the life of the unborn" and affirms "that the government has a legitimate, substantial interest in preserving and promoting fetal life."

4. *Gonzales* asserts the state's "legitimate interest in regulating the medical profession in order to promote respect for life, including the life of the unborn." Therefore, the Court reminds the American medical profession to focus on sustaining, not taking, human life.

5. *Gonzales* reinforces the significance of informed consent. Writing for the majority, Justice Kennedy declares: "The state has an interest in ensuring so grave a choice is well informed. It is self-evident that a mother who comes to regret her choice to abort must struggle with grief more anguished and sorrow more profound when she learns, only after the event, what she once did not know: that she allowed a doctor to pierce the skull and vacuum the fast-developing brain of her unborn child, a child assuming the human form."

6. *Gonzales* reminds us that elections matter. The elections of 2000, 2002, and 2004 made this U.S. Supreme Court decision possible. They elected many of the legislators who passed the 2003 Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act, the President who nominated two new Supreme Court Justices, and the Senate which confirmed them.

7. *Gonzales* adopts a new legal language with which to discuss abortion. It oftentimes speaks of: "child" (not "fetus"), "mother" (not "woman"), and "abortion doctor" (not "physician").

GONZALES LAYS GROUNDWORK FOR THE FUTURE

1. *Gonzales* shows a new respect for the legislative branch of government and its moral discernment in responding to the challenge posed by abortion. This Court is less willing to tolerate a privileged status for the "right to abortion." This opens the door to more aggressive regulation of abortion by state and federal legislatures.

2. *Gonzales* encourages pro-life legislation based on abortion's negative impact on women.

3. *Gonzales* demonstrates that the Court will be less likely to create a new "right to human cloning" or a new "right to destructive embryo research." Such legislative decisions, in light of this decision, will most likely be left to the states.

In conclusion, *Gonzales v. Carhart* stops the momentum of the abortion movement, calls American society to reconsider the matter of abortion with a new urgency and intensity, and motivates all witnesses for life in all the churches to rededicate themselves to works of mercy, education, and justice that will defend and advance the dignity of the unborn child and mother.

Rev. Pavone is the national director of Priests for Life and the president of the National Pro-Life Religious Council, and Rev. Stallsworth is the president of the Taskforce of United Methodists on Abortion and Sexuality/Lifewatch.

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.

Contact Person _____

Church or Group _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Denomination _____

Phone (h)() _____ (w)() _____

E-mail _____

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

NPRC Leaders Welcome Supreme Court's PBA Decision

Rev. Paul T. Stallsworth, President, Taskforce of United Methodists on Abortion and Sexuality/Lifewatch

The Social Principles of The United Methodist Church state: "We oppose the use of late-term abortion known as dilation and extraction (partial-birth abortion) and call for the end of this practice except when the physical life of the mother is in danger and no other medical procedure is available, or in the case of severe fetal anomalies incompatible with life." (Paragraph 161J, *The Book of Discipline*) The recent decision on partial-birth abortion allows the U.S. Congress to bring federal law, more or less, into line with this United Methodist social principle. Many United Methodists thank God for this development. At the same time, we recognize much remains to be done.



Dennis DiMauro, Lutherans for Life (LFL)

Lutherans for Life (LFL) is very pleased that the Supreme Court has upheld the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban. For the first time since *Roe v. Wade*, a line has finally been drawn to prohibit an abortion procedure. LFL finds hope in the language of Justice Kennedy's opinion, as quoted in the *New York Times* (April 18), that "the government may use its voice and its regulatory authority to show its profound respect for life within the woman."

LFL will continue to help Lutherans see abortion as a spiritual issue and equip them to teach others about the God-given value of human life from the moment of conception. That's where the line needs to be drawn. When "profound respect for life within the woman" is boldly and lovingly taught in our churches, and God's people make their voice known in society, perhaps then the day will come when unborn children will be safe in their mother's womb.



Fr. Frank Pavone, National Director, Priests for Life

"The pro-life movement has taken a key step forward – For the first time since *Roe v. Wade*, we have banned an abortion procedure."



Marie Bowen, Executive Director, Presbyterians Pro-Life

The Supreme Court decision to uphold the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act is a welcome sign of a shift in the attitude of the court. Of itself, it is not likely to reduce the incidence of abortions, nor does it address the moral and spiritual poverty of the decision to abort a child. It does ban one particularly gruesome procedure often used on viable babies and for that we are grateful. As pro-life Presbyterians in a pro-abortion denomination (PCUSA), Presbyterians Pro-Life is accustomed to incremental victories. Always undergirding our celebration of those successes is the sadness that we are yet far from a pro-life view that accords with Scripture in viewing all life as created by God in His image and to be cherished, nurtured and protected until natural death. This decision of the Supreme Court holds a similar tension for the pro-life community in the public poll arena.



Rev. J. Kirk van der Swaagh, NPRC Vice-president, Conservative Congregational Christian Conference

The Conservative Congregational Christian Conference, (CCCC) believes that "it is the responsibility of the Church to insist that society not adopt a policy that would deny the sanctity of human life and lead people to take life lightly." Additionally, the Church "must advocate the protection of the freedom of those who cannot protect themselves." In this light, we give praise to God for this concrete expression of sanity and compassion.



Common Good Foundation
 Randolph Sly, President
 Keith A. Fournier,
 Founder and Chairman

We are grateful to the Lord of Life for this long overdue Supreme Court decision which has at least recognized that the States have a true right to curtail the shedding of innocent human life in the birth canal. May this decision signal the beginning of the end of *Roe v. Wade* and the horror of the "legalized" killing of children in the first home of the human race, their mothers womb.

