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Dear Brother in Christ.

This year, the March for Life in Washington DC is coming 2 days after the new president of the United States takes office. With this historic event there also will be a lot of work in store for all of us who are preaching on the life issues. I wanted to take this time and come out with a special edition of the *Seminarians for Life* to go over what some of these challenges will be.

In his statement to the president elect, Cardinal George said, "The fundamental good is life itself, a gift from God and our parents. A good state protects the lives of all. Legal protection for those members of the human family waiting to be born in this country was removed when the Supreme Court decided *Roe vs. Wade* in 1973. This was a bad law.

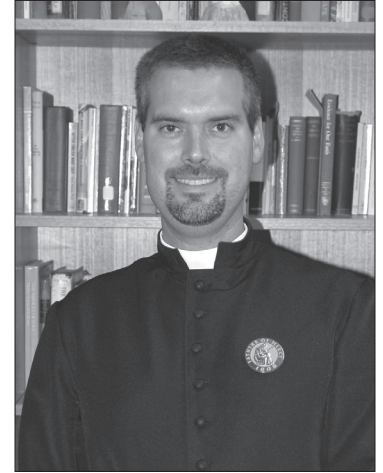
The danger the Bishops see at this moment is that a bad court decision will be enshrined in bad legislation that is more radical than the 1973 Supreme Court decision itself."

I was in Romania when the elections occurred, and many people were cheering for the results until they learned what the stance was of the new president on the abortion issues. With this in mind, I thought it would be good to go over some of the issues we will be facing if the new president goes through with what he has promised to do. We will look at only a couple of the issues that are of concern, but we will end with a short letter about healing after abortion.

This issue is one that is very important in our times. For priests and future priests, there are two things that we will always have to remember in these times: prayer and hope. We cannot take our focus off of prayer for we are battling things that would be too large on our own. We can also never give up hope. This is very important. If we do not bring hope to the people and we ourselves do not have hope, then people could easily give up and fall into despair. Christians are people of hope because we know that God will lead us to the victory, and we need to lead our people to that same victory; for when we stay with the Church, we will stay with the Holy Spirit, who always guides us in one direction, and that direction is life.

God bless all of you!

Fr. William Bellrose, CPM
Human Life International

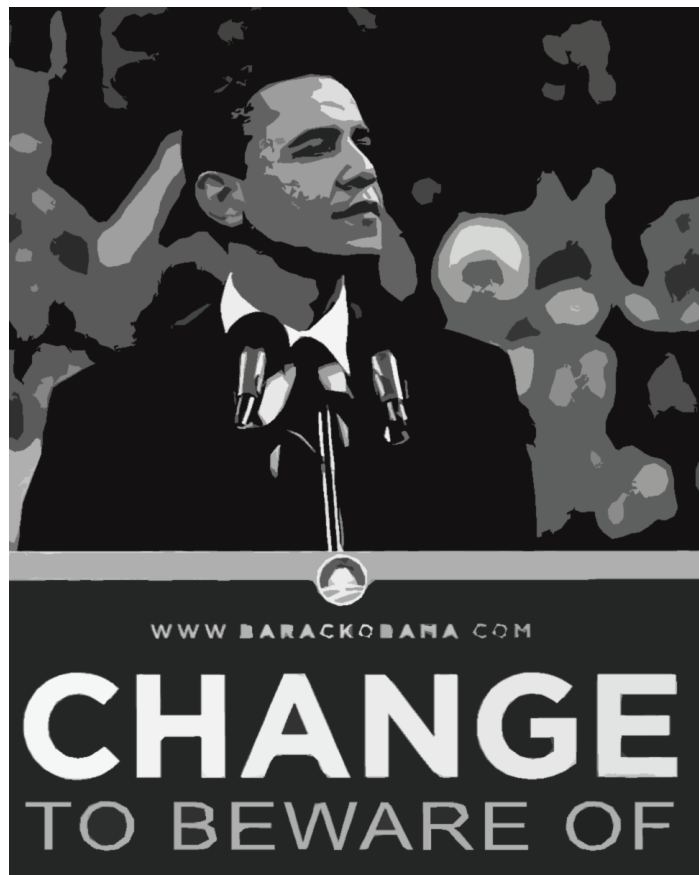


Fr. Bellrose
Director of Seminarians for Life

The Issues We'll Be Facing Over The Next 4 Years

While campaigning to become president, Mr. Obama gave Americans full notice of his virulently anti-life record and agenda.

Although Catholic voters seemed to ignore (or be ignorant of) these deadly realities, Mr. Obama consistently made catastrophic promises, which should have made America's traditional "values voters" quake



in their boots—promises that were often bypassed and unreported by the mainstream media. Pro-lifers are daunted in the face of Obama's frightening proclamation to Planned Parenthood on the 35th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* when he said: "Throughout my

career, I've been a consistent and strong supporter of reproductive justice, and have consistently had a 100% pro-choice rating with Planned Parenthood, NARAL and Pro-Choice America."

We are on the verge of a cultural tsunami, and the war is against man, God and His Church. Every traditional family value will be called into question, as Mr. Obama's touted "change" starts to unfold before us.

Unfortunately, as president, Mr. Obama will have literally unlimited opportunity to inflict extensive damage and death both here in the United States and throughout the world as he proceeds to carry out all of his stated, and seemingly little known, intentions. The pro-abortion leaders are salivating in expectation that Mr. Obama will push for their full death agenda, that includes such measures as (among other) the following tragedies: the passage of the *Freedom of Choice Act*; the revocation of the *Mexico City Policy*; resumed funding the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)—that brings death and destruction globally through forced abortions and sterilizations; comprehensive and values-free "sex education" in public schools (possibly all schools); tax payer funding for immoral embryonic stem cell research; tax payer funding for the full range of so-called "reproductive rights" that include "affordable" birth control; elimination of funding for abstinence-only education programs that are currently part of the Title V Maternal-Child Health Block Grant and the Community-Based Abstinence-Education programs; the appointment of federal judges committed to supporting "reproductive rights" and "freedom of choice;" the appointment of representatives to the

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U.N. who will promote abortion and “reproductive rights” globally (Mr. Obama has already picked die-hard pro-abort Susan Rice as the next United Nations ambassador); the altering of the FDA’s policy restricting over-the-counter access to so-called “emergency contraception;” and, lastly here, the removal of all parental notification laws for under-aged girls seeking abortions.

While this list is far from comprehensive, the ramifications of all of these cited actions is still way beyond the scope of this publication.

Looking at the list of all the things that the new administration is planning to unleash upon us, it is easy to be discouraged or to give up and say, what can we do? But the fact is, there is very much that we can do—and we must do.

Educate yourself—and others about the issues and what specifically this new administration initiates or changes, as the plans begin to become realities. We are already on alert for a calculated undermining and even destruction of whatever morally sound structures remain to us today (no doubt, the promised “change”) and it is very important that our eyes are open to “know our enemy.”

Research answers—Take advantage of resources like www.semsforlife.org, www.hli.org and other authentically pro-life websites to learn answers to the challenges that will increasingly confront us. We must make the effort to be armed with the truth. Inactivity and/or ignorance will allow evil’s prevalence to increase. Keep informed and be in readiness to help and educate others in the expected confusion ahead.

Recruit – Get other people involved. Form study groups and prayer groups. We must speak with im-

mediacy in defense of all truth and encourage others to do the same. We must not let the enemy think he has overcome all Christian thought. Our silence would imply acceptance of evil.

Prayer – is of highest importance. As Pope Benedict XVI exhorted in *Deus Caritas Est* “Prayer as a means of drawing ever new strength from Christ is concretely and urgently needed. ...It is time to reaffirm the importance of prayer.”

Thus, with prayer as the firm foundation of our lives, we can go forward confidently in the days ahead. As St. Padre Pio always said, “Pray, hope and don’t worry”. Let us place all our confidence in God, through Our Lady, and commit ourselves to work together and do our best to further truth and life in all circumstances, “in season and out of season.”

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The “Freedom of Choice Act”: Most Radical Abortion Legislation in U.S. History

Myth: The Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA) basically codifies the Supreme Court’s 1973 decision in *Roe v. Wade*.

Fact: In allowing and promoting abortion, FOCA goes far beyond even *Roe*.

Some say FOCA (S. 1173, H.R. 1964) would simply codify *Roe v. Wade*, 410 U.S. 113 (1973), the U.S. Supreme Court decision that declared a constitutional “right” to abortion and invalidated anti-abortion laws in all 50 states. But FOCA is even worse.

FOCA states that every woman has a “fundamental right” to have an abortion, and no government (federal, state, or local) may “deny” or “interfere with” this right. Moreover, no government may “discriminate” against the exercise of this right when regulating or providing “benefits, facilities, services, or information” to the public. In other words, abortion may not be treated differently from live birth -- if a public program supports motherhood it must equally support abortion. FOCA endangers a wide range of laws enacted by the people and their elected representatives over 35 years -- laws upheld under *Roe* and cases applying it. These include laws on informed consent, parental involvement, physician licensure, clinic safety, and taxpayer funding. FOCA’s far-reaching rule on abortion is more radical than anything wrought by *Roe*.¹ For example:

1. FOCA will invalidate laws to protect a woman from unsafe abortion clinics and to ensure that she is informed about abortion.

Roe permitted regulation of the “facility in which the [abortion] procedure is to be performed” to protect women’s health, and permitted other regulation after the first trimester (first three months) of pregnancy when “reasonably related to maternal health.” 410 U.S., at 163, 164. Later Supreme Court cases clarified that laws protecting maternal health are permissible throughout pregnancy,² and that nothing in *Roe* prevents a law requiring that a woman’s consent to an abortion be informed.³ The current version of FOCA actually removes language found in previous versions of the bill to permit regulations that are “medically necessary to protect the life or health of women.” Because informing women about abortion and alternatives involves some delay, and may lead some women to change their decision, laws ensuring informed consent would likely be seen as “interfering” with the abortion right.

2. FOCA will require taxpayers to pay for abortions.

Roe said nothing about abortion funding. Later Supreme Court cases held that *Roe* “implies no limitation on the authority of a State to make a value judgment favoring childbirth over

1 For a more detailed analysis, see www.usccb.org/prolifefOCAanalysis.pdf.

2 *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, 505 U.S. 833, 872, 878 (1992).

3 *E.g.*, *Casey*, *supra* note 2, 505 U.S., at 881-87.2

abortion, and to implement that judgment by the allocation of public funds.⁴ The current version of FOCA removes language found in previous versions of the bill ensuring that taxpayers will not be forced to pay for abortions, declaring instead that government may *not* “discriminate” against abortion in publicly funded programs.

3. FOCA will require states to allow “partial-birth” and other late-term abortions.

Roe allowed states to ban abortions after viability (when a child can survive outside the womb) if they included an exception for the mother’s “health.” Later decisions have upheld laws placing various limits on late-term abortions, and upheld a federal law banning “partial-birth” abortions even before viability and without a health exception.⁵ FOCA’s insistence on a “fundamental” right to abortion throughout pregnancy would set the clock back on these gains, and its sponsors say it is specifically intended to invalidate the partial-birth abortion ban that was upheld this year within the bounds of *Roe*.

4. FOCA will require states to allow abortions by non-physicians.

Roe permitted a state to “proscribe any abortion by a person who is not a physician.” 410 U.S., at 165. FOCA does not authorize such laws and would likely result in their invalidation.

5. FOCA will bar laws protecting a right of conscientious objection to abortion.

Roe cited with approval an A:rvIA resolution that no “physician, hospital, nor hospital personnel” shall be required to violate “personally-held moral principles.” 410 U.S., at 143 & n.38. The current version of FOCA removes language found in previous versions of the bill to permit regulations to protect conscience.

6. FOCA will deny parents an opportunity to be involved in their minor daughter’s abortion decision.

Roe expressly declined to rule on laws ensuring that parents may be involved (410 U.S., at 165 n.67), and later Supreme Court cases held that nothing in *Roe* prevents such laws.⁶ The current version of FOCA removes language found in previous versions of the bill permitting such laws; instead it states absolutely that any law which would “interfere” with the individual’s decision making is invalid.

A vote *for* FOCA is a vote *against* modest, reasonable, widely supported laws that promote and protect women’s health, ensure informed consent, protect minors and ensure parental involvement, safeguard rights of conscience, and respect the desire of most citizens not to pay for abortions with their tax dollars. It is the most radical and extreme abortion legislation ever considered in the United States.

9/30/08

⁴ *Maier v. Roe*, 432 U.S. 464, 474 (1977). See also *Harris v. McRae*, 448 U.S. 297, 314-318 (1980).

⁵ *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services*, 492 U.S. 490, 513-20 (1989); *Casey*, *supra* note 2, 505 U.S., at 879-80; *Gonzales v. Carhart*, 550 U.S. 124 (2007).

⁶ *E.g.*, *H.I. v. Matheson*, 450 U.S. 398 (1981).

A HEALING VISION

By Vicki Thorn, Foundress of Project Rachel

Roe vs. Wade radically changed the culture, not only of America but of the world. Roe vs. Wade was the sapling of the tree of the culture of death that had slowly been germinating below the consciousness of most Americans. The sapling of death masquerading as compassion had already emerged in Japan back in the 1950s. The advent of readily available chemical contraception had softened the soil and made it ready for the sapling to emerge. Since



Vicki Thorn

then, the country has argued over the right of the mother versus the right of the unborn child; and by the way, basically ignored the rights of that father of the child. Whose right takes precedence? Is it really a child or is it a choice? It is really growing and human or is it a blob of cells whose humanity is yet undetermined? When does the

soul appear? And the list goes on and on. We have debated and demonstrated. We have picketed and prayed. We have wrestled with the proper language for a Human Life Amendment. And in spite of all those wonderful efforts, abortion continues. We may be facing a time when it becomes even more enshrined in the fabric of society. Please God, don't let that be so.

The reality is that as seminarians and the priests of tomorrow, you have a critical role to play. The opposition has worked hard to silence the prophetic voice of the Church, especially when it is near an election. However, what can be accomplished in pulpits and bulletins, in sacramental preparation courses and marriage preparation classes, and in the confessional cannot be measured. The consistent prophetic voice of the Church, which says abortion is not good for men, women, or children, is coupled with our strong pastoral stance that says we believe this so much, that we offer those who have experienced abortion

the best care we have to help them heal. It is this healing which is the foundation of the cornerstone of life.

It is critical for you as seminarians and future priests to understand the power of the Sacrament of Reconciliation to truly set people free and to lead them to the full truth. It is critical that you understand the power of the Eucharist to heal not just souls, but family systems. It is in the wisdom of God's mercy that He is changing the heart of the culture from the inside out. Every time someone is



National Office of Post-Abortion Reconciliation & Healing can be found at <http://www.hopeafterabortion.com>.

healed following abortion loss, another stone is added to the foundation of the Culture of Life. This is not a culture built on sand, but on stone—the stones of the truth, the stone of forgiveness and mercy. This is a foundation that will never waver.

Project Rachel, the post-abortion healing ministry of the Catholic Church, has been in existence since 1984. In most dioceses in the U.S. and many abroad, there is a network of specially trained priests who hear confessions and bring the wounded to healing. Also within the network are mental health professionals, medical profes-

It is the awareness of the truth of abortion that will set us all free, and those who have encountered the Merciful Lord know that truth, and they are changing the heart of our country.

sionals, spiritual directors, and others who work with the priests to accompany the wounded on the journey of deep healing that sets them free.

It is not only in the confessional that priests make a difference. It is in preaching, when they sometimes directly address abortion and speak not only of the lost child, but the waves of pain experienced by the mothers, fathers, grandparents, siblings, and friends. It is when abortion is inserted into other homilies, saying nothing is too big for God. It is in marriage preparation when the priest says to the couple, "there can be things from the past that come into the present and can interfere with your growth as a couple, like abuse and abortion." And then he meets with them separately to provide them the privacy to discuss what is on their heart and perhaps to go to confession. It is in sacramental preparation for children that the priest suggests that preparing our children for a sacrament may bring up old unresolved issues from our own pasts. He has the opportunity to speak about the mercy of God and the power of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and he makes sure that there is material about how to contact the local Project Rachel. It is when he is called to someone who is dying and very agitated that he brings his stole and assures the dying person that there is nothing God can't forgive, names some common sins and includes abortion, that he helps someone to resolve an abortion from 50 years ago.

Finally, it needs to be said that Project Rachel is not just for those who have experienced abortion. It is for you, the confessor, because it is here that you encounter

Jesus as well. This is what you will be ordained to do: to set the captives free and give sight to the blind. There are priests today who remain priests because in a moment of



crisis, when they were ready to leave the priesthood, their priestly hearts responded to the call of the wounded one more time. And in being present and assisting the one who came, he rediscovered his call!

It is my prayer for you that you will become involved in this ministry of healing! You will be blessed! And many will be set free through your care. It is the awareness of the truth of abortion that will set us all free, and those who have encountered the Merciful Lord know that truth, and they are changing the heart of our country.

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Web site: hopeafterabortion.org noparh.org menandabortion.info

Recommended Resources

Written Materials

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. *Dignitas Personae*, 2008. http://semsforlife.org/Other%20Resources/Dignitas_Personae.pdf

Paul VI. *Humanae Vitae*, 1968. www.ewtn.com/library/ENCYC/P6HUMANA.HTM

John Paul II. *Evangelium Vitae*, 1995. www.ewtn.com/library/ENCYC/JP2EVANG.HTM

Clowes, Brian. *The Facts of Life*. Human Life International.

Websites

hopeafterabortion.com The Project Rachel site.

www.hli.org Human Life International's website.

www.semsforlife.org Seminarians for Life website.

semsforlife.blogspot.com Seminarians for life blog.

www.all.org American Life League

<http://otrans.3cdn.net/3b21d35e246c18a427d7m6bw2o1.pdf> Submitted to Obama for his first 100 days.

<http://www.abortioninblackamerica.com/statistics.html> Statistics on threat to black Americans.

<http://www.afterabortion.org/PAR/V8/n2/finland.html> The risk of pregnancy vs. abortion

www.priestsforlife.org Priests for Life. Good material on contraception.

Bishops Pastoral Letters and Articles

Cardinal George Voices hope of Obama Administration, Points to Possible Obstacles to our Desired Unity, by the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops (USCCB): <http://www.usccb.org/comm/archives/2008/08-174.shtml>

Marriage: A communion of Life and Love, Bishop Victor Galeone (Bishop of St. Augustine, Florida USA). The pastoral letter can be found at the following sites: www.ewtn.com/library/prolife/zbodtrut.htm and at www.staugcatholic.org/archives/july-aug2003.pdf.

Electronic Resources

Human Life International Pro-Life CD Library The world's first pro-life library on CD. A comprehensive and unparalleled resource for proliferers. Produced and distributed by Human Life International (HLI) and available at www.hli.org. Most of the above cited materials are available through Human Life International. Go to www.hli.org or call 540-635-7884.