

## Today's Moral Challenges: Adoption, Surrogacy, Assisted Suicide, etc.

### The Upside of Adoption

In an interview on 'Christopher Closeup,' Christina Beahan said she always knew she was adopted, having come from a poor mother in Columbia and not looking like the rest of the family. Yet none of the Beahans ever made her feel like she wasn't family.

Instead of resenting her mother's choice, she says she is grateful for the sacrifice she made so as to provide her with a better life with a loving family. Today, Christina is a mother of three and gives talks on behalf of the Birthline Lifeline Ministry in Palm Beach, Fla. "I definitely think adoption should get more press. I was adopted and had this great life. And giving people another option instead of having an abortion is important. If they promoted adoption, more people would look into it."

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Christina also has a message for everyone who might be going through an unplanned pregnancy: "I've had friends that have gone through it. The child is a blessing, whether planned or not. It's either a blessing for you, or it's a blessing for somebody else. Open your heart for this child or open your heart enough to give the baby up for adoption." [Tony Rossi, *The Beacon*, 7/31/2014]

### Physician-Assisted Suicide?

An insurance company in Oregon told a cancer patient that it couldn't pay for another round of expensive chemo, but it would pay for assisted suicide (legal in Oregon). Insurance would pay the doctor to prescribe a lethal drug overdose to end the patient's life. Three other states allow this, and others are considering it. In the Netherlands, **children over 11 years old are allowed to kill themselves ...** for any reason.

Our Church teaches that physician-assisted suicide gravely violates the sacred value of all human life, particularly of those who are vulnerable due to illness, age or disability, and it undermines the medical profession's healing mission. The Church does not teach that life must be prolonged by every possible means. Rather, we should take reasonable steps to sustain our lives, including the use of beneficial medical treatments and effective means for providing nourishment and fluids.

"When we're talking about ending suffering, particularly in people who are nearing the end of life, we're not talking

about people dying in pain. In almost every case, pain can be controlled," said Dr. G. Kevin Donovan, director of the Center for Clinical Bioethics, Georgetown U. "With assisted suicide, how are patients going to trust their physicians to act with their best interests at heart? Patients should also be extremely afraid of a system that thinks that good care includes killing them." [*Our Sunday Visitor*, 8/3/2014]

### End-of-Life Decisions Videos Available

The Archdiocese of Philadelphia recently developed a series of video seminars that range in length from 5 to 35 minutes and cover:

- Pain Management;
- Advanced Health Directives;
- Withholding Treatment;
- Assisted Nutrition and Hydration; and
- Life Affirming Choices.

To view the videos, go to [phillycatholiclife.org/life-affirming-choices-3/](http://phillycatholiclife.org/life-affirming-choices-3/)

### Using Surrogate Mothers

In a letter to the editor, Andrea Kilfeather said: "I am currently 34 weeks into my second pregnancy. Pregnancy, even an uncomplicated, healthy one, is very physically challenging. I feel great, and our unborn baby is healthy. No amount of money can compensate a woman for the intensely laborious work that is pregnancy."

She went on: "Surrogate motherhood is exploitation of women, regardless of whether they themselves choose to acknowledge the exploitative nature of the transaction. Further, the concept of 'social surrogacy' – having someone else carry their baby so as not to damage their career, or their figure – is **ethically and morally repugnant**. The USA has become a place where money can buy literally anything, even another human being."

Diane Beeson wrote: "Many fail to consider that assisted reproductive technologies introduce increasingly **well-documented health risks** when children are produced this way. Risks of significant increases in preterm births, autism, stillbirths, low birth weights, fetal anomalies are further increased when baby and surrogate mothers are separated at birth and deprived of breast-feeding, as is typical in commercial surrogacy. There are also harmful effects from the hormonal and technological manipulation of embryos and women's bodies. [*NY Times*, 7/13/2014]

## Down Syndrome

A paper authored by Mark Bradford, president of the Jérôme Lejeune Foundation USA and released today by the Charlotte Lozier Institute, examines societal response to individuals diagnosed with Down syndrome (Trisomy 21) and makes policy recommendations to further improve their lives.

“Ninety nine percent of individuals diagnosed with Down syndrome report being happy with their lives. Studies also show that their **joy has a ripple effect in their families and communities**. The impact of these unique men and women has recently been spotlighted in the media – everywhere from the King’s ice rink in Los Angeles to the Reds’ on-deck circle in Cincinnati,” said Chuck Donovan, president of the Charlotte Lozier Institute.

Bradford continues: “Those living with Down syndrome have mild to moderate intellectual disability. Scientific developments indicate that it may soon be possible to improve their cognition enough to ensure employment and independence for many. It may also soon be possible to restore neurological development before birth, radically changing even the best story that can now be given to women who receive an unexpected prenatal diagnosis of Down syndrome.” [Mallory Quigley, *LifeNews.com*, 7/1/14]

## EWTN to Open California Studio

EWTN Global Catholic Network has begun construction on a television studio on the campus of the Diocese of Orange’s Christ Cathedral. Bishop Kevin Vann said the West Coast location “gives EWTN a presence in an area of the country where the network will be able to execute programs that would be difficult to produce elsewhere, particularly for our Spanish-language channels.”

In February 2012, the Diocese purchased the 3,000-seat **evangelical Crystal Cathedral**, a modern glass structure designed by architect Philip Johnson. Sitting on a 34-acre campus, it was renamed Christ Cathedral and will serve as the seat of the bishop of Orange.

EWTN was established 33 years ago and is the largest media network in the world, reaching over 230 million television households in more than 140 countries. The network includes television, radio and a publishing arm, along with a website and both electronic and print news services. [National Catholic Register, 8/10/2014]

Programs of interest: **EWTN Cinema**: Sat. nights at 8 pm.

**Defending Life**: Thursdays, 11 pm

Fr. Pacholczyk: “The purpose of an acorn is to become an oak tree; the purpose of human sexuality is to draw man & woman together to procreate and raise children in a family unit ....” [Beacon, 8/7/2014]

## The Church Honors the Dignity of Women

... and celebrates their irreplaceable role in the world,” says Arina Grossu, director of the Center for Human Dignity at the Family Research Council. The Catechism states “Man and woman have been willed by God ‘**in perfect equality as human persons**,’ and they ‘possess an inalienable dignity. In their being man and being woman, they reflect the Creator’s wisdom and goodness.’

The Church continues to be zealous in honoring women for their virtuous womanhood and has declared at least 783 female saints. Some were wives and mothers (Sts. Gianna, Elizabeth of Hungary, Margaret of Scotland, the latter two queens), some consecrated laywomen (Catherine of Siena), either having been widowed or never marrying. Many were consecrated religious and some became foundresses of various convents (St. Clare of Assisi).

Pope Paul VI, in his 1968 encyclical *Humane Vitae* (The Regulation of Birth) expressed his concern about the **negative consequences of artificial birth control on women**: “A man who grows accustomed to the use of contraceptive methods may forget the reverence due to a woman and, disregarding her physical and emotional equilibrium, reduce her to being a mere instrument for his satisfaction, no longer considering her as his partner whom he should surround with care and affection.” (17)

Above all, the Catholic Church honors and celebrates Mary’s singular role (Catechism 968) with special devotion. We do not worship Mary but we honor her. God brought salvation to us through this special woman who said “yes.” [National Catholic Register, 8/10/14]

### Groups to Google:

**Susan B. Anthony List**: [www.sba-list.org](http://www.sba-list.org)

**Population Research Institute**: [www.pop.org](http://www.pop.org)

## College Student: The HHS Contraceptive Mandate is Demeaning to Women

“Promoted as supporting women’s equality in the workplace, the government’s insurance mandate to cover contraception and abortifacients subtly says that if a woman wants to be successful or equal in the workplace, she must suppress her fertility, which is viewed as a hindrance to her fulfillment. So if we choose to pursue motherhood, we are clearly not pursuing success by the government’s definition.”

“Without HHS support for more home leave and other family-supportive policies, the mandate effectively redefines fertility as a hindrance, a kind of disease.” [Erin Stoyell-Mulholland, senior at University of Notre Dame, *The Beacon*, 7/3/2014]