

From Personal Decisions to National Court Rulings

“A Real Possibility They Were Targeted

Because of Their Beliefs” Those were the words Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy used in the important case decision, *National Institute of Family and Life Advocates v. Becerra*.

The California Law that the justices struck down required licensed clinics that offered pregnancy services as an alternative to abortion to notify clients about state abortion services and to provide phone numbers of providers. That law, said Justice Clarence Thomas, compelled the clinics to provide a “government-drafted script” that **violates basic First Amendment rights**.

Justice Kennedy said California legislators should read “the First Amendment as ratified in 1791 to understand the history of authoritarian government Freedom of speech secures freedom of thought and belief. This law imperils those liberties.”

In an editorial, *The Wall Street Journal* (6/27/18) noted: “One of the more compelling issues of our time is the assault on traditional speech protection, a right currently under pressure on many university campuses.” The paper concluded: “Anyone aware today of the **pressure being brought on disfavored speech** or ideas, whether on campuses or in state legislatures, should welcome the *Becerra* ruling.” And those of us who believe in protecting the lives of the most innocent, pre-born humans, have won a battle. But the culture war at large continues.

Another battle was won, at least tentatively. *Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission* was decided by the Supreme Court in favor of a **baker who refused to custom-bake a cake for a same-sex wedding**. Justice Thomas explained that custom-baking would have made Mr. Phillips an active participant in the wedding celebration. “States cannot punish protected speech because some group finds it offensive, hurtful, stigmatic, unreasonable, or undignified.”

However, due to the careful court wording, the fundamental constitutional issue may yet have to be settled. On a case by case basis, lower courts will have to decide whether governments can **compel religious people** to endorse conduct with which they disagree. [*Wall Street Jnl.*, 6/5/18] Pope Francis [6/16/18]: “Children should be welcomed the way they come, the way God sends them to us, the way God allows, **even if sometimes they are ill**. I’ve heard that it’s habitual to perform certain exams in the early months of pregnancy, to see if he baby is unwell or comes with a certain problem,” he said. “And to have an easy life, **one does away with an innocent**.”

“Increased Risk of Breast Cancer? Perforated Uterus? Decreased Libido? No Thanks”

We were married just two years ago. I have Type 1 Diabetes and getting pregnant before my blood sugars were totally in control would mean serious complications. As faithful young Catholics we were looking for a system that respects the dignity of women and marriage. So we took a leap of faith and began charting with the **Creighton Model FertilityCare System**, a completely safe, all natural and effective method of managing pregnancy, and reaped lots of benefits we were not expecting.

I am not loading my body with artificial pill hormones, so when we are able to start our family I know I will be **the healthiest I can be**.

Creighton is the first method of NFP to be fully integrated with a new women’s health science, Natural Procreation Technology. It is affordable and has **zero side effects**. Nothing bad is going in, and I feel pretty great. It is morally acceptable, unlike artificial birth control methods. Another benefit is increased communication. Natural methods involve attentive communication about charting signs of fertility and also our intentions in using the system. And if you can talk about “biological markers,” you can talk about anything. Checking for biological markers (cervical mucus) is as **quick and easy** as going to the bathroom. (**No internal exams, no thermometers, no monitors**. Just you and your toilet tissue). Effective? 99.6% perfect use and 96.8% typical use are numbers we could really stand behind. (Sorry, oral contraceptives, 91% typical use is not gonna do it (Trussel 2011).) Creighton has changed our lives and it’s a privilege to share the good news about natural methods with other young couples.

[Michele Boda, FCPI, www.CarrotsforMichaelmas.com]

800# ‘Hotline for Help’ Gets Lots of Calls

About 200 to 250 calls come in each month, and over 40% are from men. Some are frightened of fatherhood, many seek confidential counseling to help the mother. Fathers have a great influence on a pregnant mother’s decision regarding abortion. That’s why ‘Real Men Love Babies’ billboards are being launched nationwide. More info may be found at www.prolifeacrossamerica.org.

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Everyday Activities Can Be Pro-Life

Jesus mentions things we are to do that are called corporal works of mercy.

- Feeding the hungry: this also includes helping to support **pregnant moms at shelters** and homes for them
- Giving drink to the thirsty: pass out water at a nursing home for the **elderly**
- Clothing the naked: provide blankets, baby clothes, diapers to expectant moms
- Sheltering the homeless: how about helping aged folks from foreclosure? Or giving someone a room
- Visiting the sick: too many are abandoned in nursing homes and **assisted living homes**; families don't visit and the sick find it difficult to go out
- Comforting the imprisoned: men and women in prison are often **cut off from their families**; help them make family connections
- Burying the dead: help pay funeral or burial costs for the poor or elderly.

Pro-life means advocating and supporting a **culture of life** from conception to natural death. Jesus said what we do to others we do to him. [G. DeMoras, letter to editor, *Our Sunday Visitor*, 6/24/18]

Sad But True: Over 44,000 Suicides Per Year

Shocking as that number seems, the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention reports that for every suicide, 25 other people in the U.S. attempt suicide but don't succeed.

Risk factors include mental illness, substance abuse, incarceration, poor job security, a history of abuse, and a family history of suicide. Each cause speaks in its own way to the burden that suicide should place on our conscience. Even those seemingly successful in the world such as designer **Kate Spade** and chef **Anthony Bourdain** fall victim to suicide.

So many people committing suicide does not speak well of a society's respect for human life. We are more interconnected yet more isolated than ever before. Catholic author Walker Percy said: "Despite great scientific and technological advances, man has not the faintest idea of who he is or what he is doing." Percy says he did not follow in the steps of his father who committed suicide because he converted to Catholicism and holds life precious. God cares for the world. **We have tremendous worth and dignity.**

Often those struggling the most find it hardest to reach out for help. The responsibility falls to those who see someone struggling to reach out in support. The human connection alone can make a great difference. Our responsibility to those who struggle flows straight out of our Gospel call. [Editorial, *Our Sunday Visitor*, 6/24/18]

Catholic Colleges Should Lead Charge Against Sexual Assault

The numbers are disputed, but it's appalling that even one young woman would suffer violation during what should be happy years of growth in college. Some of America's most faithful Catholic colleges have important lessons to teach the rest of higher education, including most other Catholic colleges.

By preserving traditional norms for student access and behavior in campus dorms, these colleges effectively combat on-campus sexual assault. Insisting upon a culture of chastity and sobriety in campus residences helps protect students while upholding Catholic beliefs and identity. If only the rest of the nearly 200 Catholic residential colleges would do the same.

The Justice Department's 2014 report, *Rape and Sexual Assault Victimization*, found that 47% of college victims perceived their attacker was **drinking or using drugs**. And a study in *Psychological Trauma* (2016) found that 78% of on-campus sexual assaults took place during casual sexual encounters. Isn't it common sense that colleges should strive to reduce opportunities for sexual activity in student residences?

Sadly, few secular colleges would attempt any **restriction on sexual activity**, deeming casual sex a rite of passage. But Catholic colleges that take their identity and mission seriously should actively and enthusiastically embrace preventative policies. Here's what can be done.

First, **designate all dorms single-sex**. Studies indicate that students in co-ed housing are more than twice as likely as students in gender-specific housing to indicate that they had multiple sexual partners in a year. Binge drinking was higher in coed dorms. The Newman Society has identified about 10% of Catholic colleges with single-sex residence halls.

Second, colleges need to adopt and enforce policies **restricting opposite-sex guests in dorm rooms**. Catholic parents know that there is good reason for never letting their teenager have a boyfriend or girlfriend alone in a bedroom. Don't the high rates of abortions, STDs and sexual assaults teach Catholic colleges something about the limits of self-control? Yet, 82% of U.S. Catholic colleges allow closed-door visitation until well past midnight. Statistics indicate that most sexual assaults took place between midnight and 6 a.m. Some colleges forbid opposite-sex guests like many evangelical Christian colleges and a few Catholic ones. For more information on these truly Catholic colleges, visit www.NewmanSociety.org. [Cardinal Newman Society, *The Renewal Report*, June 2018]