



LIFE MATTERS JOURNAL

VOLUME 3
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WHY SOCIAL CONSERVATIVES SHOULD OPPOSE A HAWKISH FOREIGN POLICY

fetal pain: does it matter?

Belgium's Child Euthanasia Laws

SONDER: THE KEY TO PEACE?

**WAR GAMES:
ENDER'S GAME &
THE HUNGER GAMES**

...and more!

This journal is dedicated to the aborted, the bombed, the executed, the euthanized, the abused, the raped, and all other victims of violence, whether legal or illegal.

We have been told by our society and our culture wars, that those of us who oppose these acts of violence must be divided. We have been told to take a lukewarm, half-way attitude toward the victims of violence. We have been told to embrace some with love while endorsing the killing of others.

We reject that conventional attitude, whether it's called "Left" or "Right", and instead embrace a consistent life ethic toward *all* victims of violence.

We are Life Matters Journal, and we're here to defang the viper that is legalized homicide.

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cover art: "War's First Fruits" by Aimee Murphy

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INTRODUCTION - LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear readers, supporters, and friends,

Have you ever felt left out, unwanted, or unloved? We often say that these reasons are not license to kill (especially as regards abortion and the preborn child), yet how often do we let the categories, labels, and socioeconomic factors relegate one of our human brethren to this outcast faction?

I believe that the reason this sort of alienation occurs is because we fail to understand the complexity of the lives of others. We don't understand their upbringing, their desires, their ideology, so we turn them out at the earliest possible chance instead of taking the opportunity to learn about and get to know the other on a much deeper level.

The reason I mention all of this, of course, is because I finally saw a dream of mine come true this year at the March for Life: I saw non-religious pro-lifers and LGBT pro-lifers and liberal pro-lifers and conservative pro-lifers and pro-peace pro-lifers and devout Christian pro-lifers and feminist pro-lifers and all-sorts-of-other-religious-belief pro-lifers join together and make a beautiful witness to the diversity of the pro-life movement. It was reminiscent, as I hear it, of a group that was around when I was still roaming the halls of my elementary school, nicknamed "Left Out."

What does it say about us as a movement that we've have gay pro-lifers arrested, we bad-mouth liberals at every turn, and we berate atheist and agnostic pro-lifers as non-sensical? What does it say about us as a movement that we even had a group that nicknamed themselves "Left Out"?

So I'm glad that I saw many people from all different backgrounds join together to be a witness that being pro-life is not just for conservative Christians. The pro-life ethic is for everyone!

I am a Catholic pro-lifer, and an LGBT pro-lifer, an independent (neither liberal nor conservative) pro-lifer and a feminist pro-lifer, a pro-peace pro-lifer, a consistent pro-all-lifer. I think the last one has the most helped me to see the value of every human being's life, and therefore has helped me to see the value of so many different perspectives on the abortion issue. It's also helped me be a proverbial thorn in the side of the Pro-Life Movement as I work to hold the leaders accountable for more than just pre-born life.

Granted, in seeing this one dream come true at the For Peace & ALL Life Meetup this year, I now have higher hopes to see this diversity represented in the leadership and rally cries of the movement as a whole. I hope that the Pro-Life Movement can stop creating outcasts and start building bridges, before it's too late.

For peace and all life,



Aimee Murphy
Executive Editor

Have a letter for the editors here at Life Matters Journal? Please write us at lifemattersjournal@gmail.com to let us know what you think.

Just put in the subject line "Letter" and we will post it in our next issue along with our responses.

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CURRENT EVENTS AND CONSISTENT LIFE

BELGIUM'S CHILD EUTHANASIA LAWS *by Caroline Pilgrim*

The Jahi McMath legal battle at Children's Hospital Oakland over a brain-dead 13-year-old provides a stark contrast to a law passed across the Atlantic in Belgium that allows terminally ill minors to choose physician-assisted suicide. California judges have allowed the mother of young Ms. McMath to uphold her wish to keep her daughter on life support despite multiple pediatric neurologists declaring her dead. Meanwhile, the nation of Belgium presses forward its dismal euthanasia policies on terminally ill minors, with the bill passing parliament overwhelmingly at 86-44.

Euthanasia is certainly not new to Belgium. In 2002, it became the second country to pass sweeping legislation legalizing physician-assisted suicide. Unlike in the United States, where states such as Oregon only allow a physician to *prescribe* but not *administer* lethal drugs, Belgium both allows this passive euthanasia available to American doctors and also permits medical providers to hasten death by administering lethal drugs or otherwise actively allowing patients to die (by depriving them of food and water, for example). Since that time, Belgium and its neighbor, the Netherlands, have become the globe's case-studies for all that is wrong with legal euthanasia. Recently, a colleague of mine shared a story of his friend, a middle-aged



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Belgian man whose father had terminal cancer. The physician shared with this patient his options: to continue aggressive treatment or end his pain and suffering with life-ending drugs. The wife and daughter of the patient were adamant that their father end his life to save them pain and trouble. The son of the patient wanted his father to fight the cancer, but because the patient's wife and daughter supported expediting the end of his life, the patient chose suicide. Yes, each patient has "autonomy" when making these decisions, but the opinions of loved ones bears much weight. When it comes to children making decisions about abbreviating their lives, it is hard to imagine they could actually make an informed, autonomous decision.

Since 2002, the percentage of citizens choosing euthanasia has skyrocketed, with now up to 2 percent of Belgian deaths caused by euthanasia.¹ With roughly 75 percent of Belgium's citizens supporting the policy, the amendment extending physician-assisted suicide to children comes as no surprise, yet allowing children to choose euthanasia is tragic for several reasons.²

First, the amendment gives no stipulations about the age of a minor, stating only that the child must have the capacity of discernment in making the decision. (Proponents of the bill claim that euthanasia on minors is already taking place and that physicians need a legal framework.)

Second, supporters claim terminally ill children are psychologically more mature than their healthy peers. Minimal medical knowledge regarding the nature of metastatic, terminal cancers proves this completely untrue. Often, cancer's effects on the body cause mental regression, which results in an inability to make informed decisions.

Fourth, the law opens doors for families with children with medical complications to encourage their children to end their lives. Last, expansion of the law's scope is possible. It became clear soon after the original legislation in 2002 that the strict caveats of the law were being disregarded to allow those with unbearable psychological suffering and pain, as well as those whose mental state made them burdensome to others, to be euthanized instead of only the terminally ill. Essentially, the severely depressed have elected to die by physician-prescribed, and often physician-administered, lethal drugs. Also, those with severe dementia have been euthanized since

2002. This slippery slope of not valuing human life has only bleak outcomes ahead.

As a healthcare provider, I wondered about the actual prescribing and implementation of euthanasia on future pediatric candidates. Is the current mindset of healthcare providers open to these policies? A retrospective study asked 141 Belgian PICU nurses in 2005 to complete a questionnaire to assess the nurse's attitude toward and role in pediatric end-of-life decisions.³ Seventy-two percent said they had administered drugs to hasten death and 88 percent said laws should be adapted to allow terminally ill patients to end their lives. A 2011 study surveyed Belgian physicians with results showing only 5 percent of euthanasia requests were ever denied.⁴ The medical community of Belgium does not stand in the way of legalized death.

The world will be watching closely as Belgium implements its new policy, and with good reason. The United States already has three states, Oregon, Vermont, and Washington, with legalized physician-assisted suicide for adults and nearly gained a fourth in 2012 when Massachusetts's citizens narrowly voted down a euthanasia law. The medical community in the United States is trending towards its European counterparts in its liberal policies, and Belgium provides a chilling example of what we will inevitably become if life continues to be undervalued in the name of patient autonomy and medical cost saving. No longer do we have to look back to Nazi Germany for an example of the medical community blindly implementing life-ending practices on children. Rather, we can look to a small nation that less than a century ago was at odds with the regime that began the modern euthanasia movement.

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POPE FRANCIS TALKS ECONOMICS

by Joseph Antonello

The Argentinean pontiff has made it part of his papacy to speak out very vocally for the oppressed. He has spoken to the people about abortion, even taking it to the streets in the Italian March for Life. He has spoken about loving persons with homosexual inclinations, loving them no matter what their decisions may entail. He has spoken about seeking peace, because war does nothing but destroy human lives. This consistent theme of speaking of things in relation to the human person reveals the attitude of solidarity.

In the United States, Solidarity is a Trotskyist advocacy group. In Poland, it is a political party and market-based workers' union. "Solidarity" can be heard at political rallies throughout the world protesting on any of a variety of issues, from LGBTQ equality, abortion (from both the pro-choice and pro-life positions), and the rights of workers to a just wage. Underlying this rallying cry is a philosophy rooted in the human person, a philosophy whereby the human person is seen as fulfilling his own nature by aiding those around him.

Karol Wojtyla, later to become more widely known as John Paul II, wrote a work called *The Acting Person*. In this work, he outlined the nature of the human person, and how his nature is fully revealed in the reality of acting. This involves the human person's interiority, his self-reflection and self-determination, participating in that which belongs to him fundamentally as a person, i.e., freedom. Stemming from free action comes the responsibility for our actions, making every action we take truly our own.

Given this understanding of freedom, I would say there is very little that is new in Wojtyla's work. His genius is shown primarily in his methodology, rather

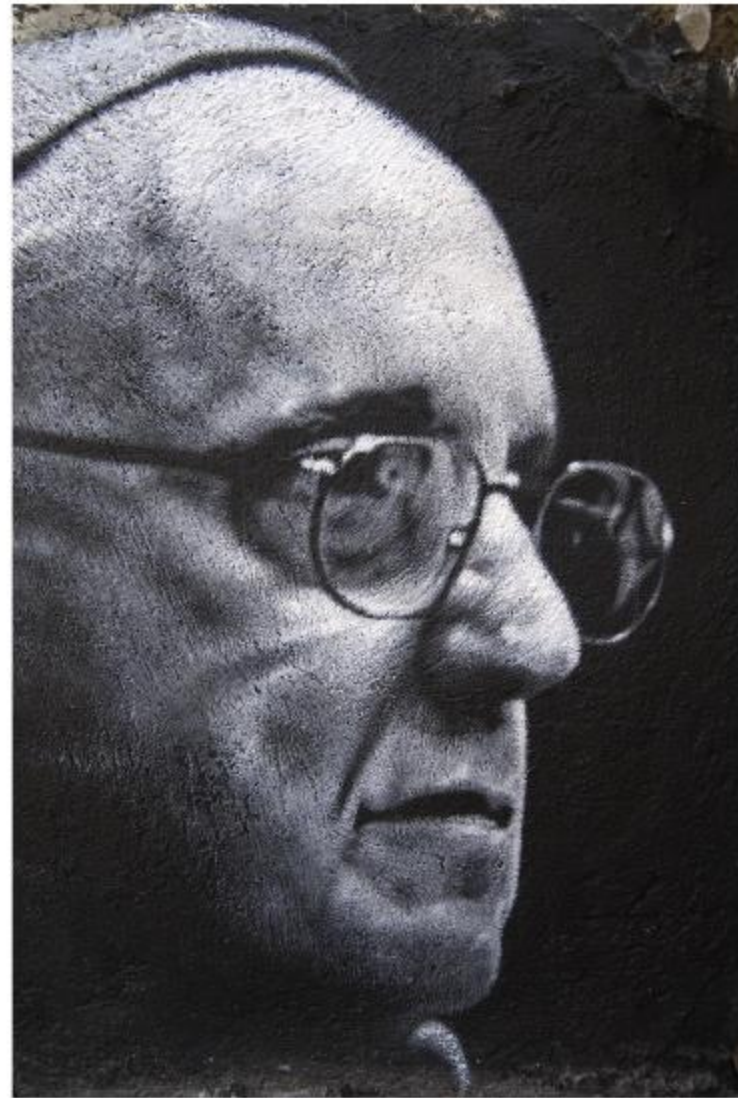


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than his conclusions. But his methodology does lead to surprising conclusions when it comes to intersubjectivity, the relation of person to person.

Wojtyla examines two different systems of participation, participation being another way of acting "together with others." Each sees the person in a different light. The first of these is individualism, which is a radical undervaluing of the community. Community is simply a defense of the individual's own freedom, and, for an individual, others are seen as a limit on oneself. Standing in opposition to individualism is totalism, which places the human person at the whims of the community: a person is good only because he is a member of society. The former is the view of philosophers like Jean-Paul Sartre and Ayn Rand, whereas the latter is a direct commentary on Marx's understanding of the human being. In personalism, the system in which the person is seen in both his individuality and communality, there is an attitude of participation—one which Wojtyla calls the only authentic attitude that respects the total human

person—called solidarity. Solidarity, as it is taught in *The Acting Person*, is a person's readiness to accept his responsibility in and for a group by virtue of his membership in that group; he does this because he has the benefit of the whole in his mind and values it because it is a benefit, not simply because the community demands it or because it will benefit him.

Each of these world views—the individualist, the totalist, and the solidarist—implies a different moral weight. Depending on your own moral understanding, you might agree with them in a significantly different way. It appears that a humanist would tend to agree with the latter two positions—that of the totalist and that of the solidarist. Utilitarians would often tend toward the individualist position, though it should also be noted that utilitarianism looks toward the maximum pleasure for the maximum amount of people, an idea that can be heard from both sides of the political spectrum but with special emphases on the individual or the community at large, thereby still negating the person.

In the eighteenth century, there was published a work entitled *The Wealth of Nations* by Adam Smith. With this work—though not without antecedents—economics was established as a science, one which was subject to the same laws as any other science and had some laws which belonged uniquely to it. The market moved in its own way, not subject to the persons who assumed its control. “The invisible hand” is the workings of the market, left to its own devices. The laissez-faire ideals that have emerged from this idea have led to two important developments, the first being great expansions in wealth. The second, more significant, development has been the plight of the poor increasing in prominence. Pope Francis speaks about the second development nearly every chance he gets.

By speaking to the people about the poor, Pope Francis has adopted a specific type of solidarity, one which is aimed at seeing the problems of the community as my own problems. This solidarist response ignores the development of economics as a science

and sees first the moral implications of the science. When Pope Francis speaks of the lie of trickle-down economics, he sees how that has affected the poor. He does not speak in scientific terms, as Paul Ryan does. He doesn't speak by redefinition of capital and labor, as Karl Marx did. He speaks in terms of morality, how economics as a science might affect the human person's life.

The confusion with Pope Francis's approach to economics arises from the fact that he never speaks of ends separated from means: the existential quality of economics in the now is inseparable from a genuinely personalist morality. Market economics refuses to regard the most important variable, i.e., the human person and his actions within the system and thereby fails the test of a personalist approach. Pope Francis speaks in terms of solidarity when approaching economics because he sees the role the human person plays in the market systems and refuses to participate in a crapshoot played with an invisible hand. The market is a non-person affecting persons, and the latter deserves greater attention and love than anything the market has to offer.



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PRO-LIFE & PRO-CHOICE CAMPAIGN FINANCE

by Feminists for Nonviolent Choices

Rochester, NY – Federally-focused Political Action Committees (PACs) and 527s with a pro-choice mission contribute a total of 25 times more than those with a pro-life mission, according to a report released this week by Feminists Choosing Life of New York (FCLNY). The sources for the compiled financial data are the Federal Elections Bureau and The Center for Responsive Politics for the 2010 and 2012 election cycles.

Despite a nearly even pro-life/pro-choice split in recent opinion polls on abortion (<http://www.gallup.com/poll/1576/abortion.aspx>), pro-choice organizations funnel significantly more money into elections.

In the 2012 Election Cycle, pro-choice EMILY's List ranks 6 in expenditures out of 5,927 non-party PACs. No pro-life PAC is ranked.

The highest-spending pro-choice 527 contributed almost \$10 million, compared to \$521,443 by the highest-spending pro-life 527.

The highest-spending pro-choice political action organization spent seven times more than the highest-spending pro-life equivalent in 2012.

By filing under separate sectors, creating several affiliated entities, and channeling funds through related organizations under the same leadership, special interest groups focused on abortion rights attempt to conceal the extent of their funding. The financial asymmetry of pro-choice and pro-life contributions comes as a concern to FCLNY, particularly in light



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of the recent donor-disclosure exemption awarded to NARAL Pro-Choice NY (<http://washingtonexaminer.com/abortion-champion-naral-exempted-from-andrew-cuomos-lobby-disclosure-laws/article/2532477>)

“Campaign finance is already a complicated system with loopholes available to those savvy enough to navigate and manipulate it,” says Rachel Peller, graduate in Women and Gender Studies and researcher at FCLNY. “The recent NARAL exemption further obscures the extent of special interest funding.”

Read the full report: <http://www.ffnvc.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Campaign-Contributions-Report.pdf>

Feminists for Nonviolent Choice (formerly Feminists Choosing Life of New York) is a nonpartisan, nonsectarian organization that seeks to return to the grassroots of pro-life feminism, operating from the core ideals of justice, nondiscrimination and nonviolence.



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ESSAYS

WAR ON MARRIAGE: WHY SOCIAL CONSERVATIVES SHOULD OPPOSE A HAWKISH FOREIGN POLICY

by John Whitehead

Americans who favor traditional marriage and family life—sometimes referred to as “social conservatives”—tend to be lumped together politically with those who favor hawkish foreign policies. In many cases, this categorization is no doubt accurate: many social conservatives do favor American military interventions. The association between concern for marriage and the family and a hawkish foreign policy is a misguided one, however: war threatens marriage and those who wish to preserve traditional married life should be cautious about endorsing it.

War threatens marriage most directly by killing husbands and wives who serve in the armed forces, leaving spouses bereaved. War can also threaten marriage in more subtle ways by increasing the likelihood of divorce or marital strife. Guides for military personnel and their families on how to handle deployments and homecomings show an awareness of how relationship problems can arise. One book warns “Restoring trust and closeness with partners can take time. Family members need to be aware of how difficult homecoming can be for a service member.”¹ Another contains testimony from one



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combat veteran who says “Even when I’m happy, I’m sad. That war is like a permanent dent in my heart and mind... I have a wonderful wife, who has stood by me through all my depressions and explosions (not to mention my ten years of drinking) and a beautiful sixteen-year-old daughter, too. But am I happy? Hardly ever.” The same book quotes a veteran’s wife: “He loves you, but he doesn’t trust you and he wants to run away from you—that’s the double message you get from a combat vet.”²

A guide for military personnel contains a chapter titled “It Looks Like I’m Going to Be Single Again” and opens “You’ve heard about sailors who are served divorce papers after stepping onto the pier after a 6-month deployment. You’ve heard about service members who came home to find their spouse living with another person. You probably know someone who came home to find a spouse pregnant with someone else’s baby.”³

The ominous tone of these books for troops and their families is consistent with the history of American wars over the past century: widespread marital breakdown has tended to follow many of these wars.⁴ The American divorce rate, which stood at 1.2 divorces per 1,000 people in 1917, the year the United States entered the First World War, had risen to 1.6 by 1921, the year the United States signed its separate peace in that conflict. The increase seems modest in isolation but is striking given that the increase during 5 wartime years was equivalent to the divorce rate increase during the previous 16 peacetime years.⁵ Moreover, the divorce rate never returned to its pre-war levels but generally stayed around 1.5 for the following decade.

The spike in divorce following the Second World War was more dramatic, as might be expected given the millions of men who served in the military and the millions more men and women affected by wartime mobilization. The divorce rate, which stood at 2.2 in 1941, rose during the war years until it reached 4.3 by 1946—almost double what it had been the year the United States entered the war. One judge estimated that 1,000 divorce cases were being heard every

month in New York State in 1947, despite that state’s famously restrictive divorce laws.⁶ Other combatant nations, such as Britain and France, also experienced a post-war spike in their divorce rates, while Sweden, which was neutral during the war, did not.⁷ The American divorce rate would not return to pre-World War II levels until the late 1950s. When the increased numbers of divorces are combined with those of marriages ended by a spouse’s death in the war, the Second World War is shown to have had, as historian Roderick Phillips put it, “a ravaging effect on marriage in Western society.”⁸

The divorce rate would rise again during and after the Vietnam War, although that rise was part of a larger pattern of legal and social changes and the war’s role is less clear. Since Vietnam and the end of the draft, war and military service has affected a much smaller portion of the American people. Nevertheless, among those who do serve in America’s wars, the experience might still come at a cost of marital stability. Between 2001 and 2004, during the early years of the Afghanistan and Iraq Wars, the number of divorces among active-duty army officers and enlisted personnel almost doubled—from 5,658 to 10,477—even as total troop strength remained the same. Among Army officers, the divorce rate tripled between 2002 and 2004, from 1.9 percent (1,060 divorces out of 54,542 marriages) to 6 percent (3,325 divorces out of 55,550 marriages).⁹

Various theories about why wartime service makes divorce more likely have been proposed: wartime conditions might make couples marry impulsively and unwisely; long separations could have a negative effect on marital stability and encourage infidelity; and wartime traumas might create relationship problems after the war.¹⁰ Academic studies of World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam veterans have produced contradictory results that support different theories and in some cases even call into question war’s negative effect on marital stability.¹¹ One theory that multiple studies support, however, is that combat experience is associated with marital instability.



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Cynthia Gimbel and Alan Booth of Pennsylvania State University conclude “combat exposure has a statistically significant moderate relationship with marital adversity” (marital adversity as they measure it includes divorce, non-divorce separation, domestic violence, and infidelity).¹² William Ruger, Sven Wilson, and Shawn Waddoups of Wesleyan University, Brigham Young University, and the U.S. Foreign Service, respectively, conclude that “combat significantly raises the probability of marital dissolution.”¹³ Even two researchers who found that Vietnam veterans did not suffer from marital instability made an exception in the case of “soldiers who experienced the most intense combat situations.”¹⁴ Combat experiences might lead to later marital problems because veterans suffer trauma from their exposure to violence or are more likely to engage in anti-social behavior in peacetime.

The toll military service can take on married life has led to the creation of resources to aid military personnel and their spouses in coping with these experiences. The guides cited above are examples of such resources; another notable example is the Department of Defense-funded website Military OneSource, which features information for troops and their families on “deployment, reunion, relationship, grief, spouse employment and education, [and] parenting and child care.”¹⁵

Such resources are valuable and show a welcome

awareness of the marital problems wartime deployment can cause. An even more valuable response to these problems is to prevent them from ever arising by keeping American military personnel at home and out of wars or other conflicts. Social conservatives who wish to protect marriage should be among those leading such a response.

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DOES FETAL PAIN MATTER?

by Kristine Kruszelnicki

When Gabby Gingras was a baby, she nearly scratched out both of her eyes with her fingers. As a toddler she chewed her tongue, gnawed at her fingers until they bled, and snapped many teeth out of her gums by chewing too hard on her toys. Over the years, she has badly bumped, bruised and broken many parts of her body, including her jaw—which remained broken for weeks before a doctor noticed the injury. Gabby Gingras has a rare neurological condition called Congenital Insensitivity to pain with anhidrosis. She and the few others with this condition have the unique distinction of being unable to feel pain—a distinction she shares with countless embryos and early fetuses.

The 18th century British philosopher Jeremy Bentham proposed a moral ideal that has become the foundation of modern utilitarianism: “The question is not, Can they reason? nor, Can they talk? but, Can they suffer?” With this reasoning, ethicists like Peter Singer have argued that animals, who can suffer, are worthy of rights and legal protections, whereas fetuses, who arguably feel no pain, demand no such concern. And indeed, where there is opposition to late-term abortion, much of the discussion revolves around the possibility of fetal pain, as demonstrated

in the recent debate over the United States’ Pain-Capable Unborn Child Act (PCUCA), which passed in the House and was introduced to the Senate in November 2013. Few people want to be in a position of causing suffering, even if they are otherwise in favor of abortion.

Unfortunately, the exact gestational point at which fetuses can feel pain is still being debated by scientists and medical professionals. The PCUCA has been backed by physicians and scientists who make a persuasive case that the capacity for pain exists in the fetus by at least 20 weeks’ gestation. Some have argued that pain can be felt even in the absence of the cerebral cortex, as evidenced by the recoil reflex to painful stimuli, and by the response to tickling that can be demonstrated in fetuses as early as 8 to 13 weeks’ gestation. [See documents and affidavits at www.doctorsonfetalpain.com] On the other hand, scientists from the UK’s Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists have argued that the fetus is in a state of sedation throughout most of pregnancy, and is unable to feel pain until at least 24 weeks (Coghlan). As the average lay person attempts to navigate through the “he said/she said” of the medical journals and scientific papers, the question remains: how is the



abortion debate impacted if the fetus cannot feel the pain of abortion? Is it less wrong to kill a younger fetus—or any fetus—if he or she cannot feel pain?

Remember that Gabby Gingras can't feel pain either. If her parents decided they could no longer take on the challenges of her health condition and opted to cut her throat or dismember Gabby in her sleep, the little girl would likely never feel a thing. Would it be morally acceptable to dismember and kill her, simply on account of the fact that she would not suffer as her life was extinguished? If the answer is that no, denying Gabby her future would still be an injustice against her even if she were to die blissfully without ever having been aware of the future she was denied, it follows that one's capacity or incapacity to experience pain and suffering can likewise not be the deciding factor on the morality of abortion.

Gabby Gingras' right to not be dismembered is not based on what she can or cannot feel, but on the concept of an equal society, where those of us with better vision, better hearing, or a more acute pain threshold do not get to determine that those with less of these physical capacities have less value as human beings. If they are biological members of the human species, fetuses should enjoy the same access to equality, and should see their futures just as protected, regardless of what they can or cannot currently feel.

The truth of the matter is that pain and suffering don't exist in a vacuum. One never says to his friend "Whoah! Look out for that pain on the sidewalk!" or "Hey! A suffering just bumped into me!" Pain and suffering (along with their cousin "consciousness") are merely states of being, and ones that fluctuate greatly, even within one's own lifetime. Even when a human function or attribute is not currently active (for example fertility), to ask whether that capacity is present yet is to nonetheless acknowledge the inherent capacity for that human function. Human functions, active or inactive, can only exist where a being capable of that human function exists. In other words, sensations of pain and suffering are simply capacities within something—or in this case, within someone—a developing member of the human family.

So when it comes to abortion and fetal pain, fans of Philosopher Bentham are guilty of asking the wrong question. The question is not, "Can they reason?" nor, "Can they talk?" and it's not even "Can they suffer?" A more fundamental question must first be answered: "What are they?"

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HYPOCRISY ON HUMAN LIFE: PRO-LIFERS & THE DEATH PENALTY

by Roger McCormack

Wendy Davis, a confirmed supporter of late-term abortion, has come in for severe criticism from Texas Republicans, who argue that late-term abortion presents a menace to women and the unborn. The measure, stipulating that doctors performing abortions have admitting privileges at nearby hospitals, is being hotly debated by the Supreme Court. This measure calls into question Texas Republicans' self-proclaimed benevolent humanism, which is unmistakably redolent of hypocrisy. The continued practice of the death penalty (Texas Governor Rick Perry has ordered 234 executions), and its barbarous perpetuation of a death-centered society offers an incisive look into the double standards of the left and right on the American political spectrum.

Governor Perry, in discussing his tenure as governor vis-à-vis the death penalty, said that he has "never struggled with that at all," a callous admission that, like many pro-choice arguments, concedes that some lives are more valued than others. Indeed, while the pro-life movement is diverse and variegated (some uphold life at conception, others after a certain period of gestation), most would say that aborting a five-month-old fetus is more deplorable than a first-trimester abortion. What then, accounts for the support in the pro-life movement of the death penalty, a practice allowing a fully sentient, innocent (the death penalty

is inherently flawed, being based on fallible claims of human justice) individual to be put to death?

To be charitable, support for the death-penalty is not limited to pro-lifers. Bill Clinton, of "safe, legal and rare" fame, amidst GOP criticism for being soft on crime, ordered the execution of a mentally disabled black man, Ricky Ray Rector. This lends weight to the failure of political power, among liberals and conservatives, to place life and death outside of the purview of the judiciary (and the corresponding abuse and degradation of the sanctity of life this entails).

Furthermore, the United States, in retaining the death penalty, shares the warm company of many Muslim-majority countries. The connection between religious zealotry and the precipitant snuffing out of human life vocally condemns the widely held view that the religious are the sole defenders of sacrosanctity and further strengthens the case that secular values provide an imperishable foundation for moral judgments. A moral position whose main political defenders audaciously carve out exceptions and immunities has little to recommend it and leaves much to be desired.

THE KINDNESS OF STRANGERS

by Rose Evans

People from all kinds of pro-life, consistent life, peace and justice groups have taken up the task of moving more people to a position of respect for life, peace, and justice.

This is good.

But we also need to remember the vast amount of kindness and respect for life that already exists in our communities.

I have become increasingly aware of this as I walk through the streets of my lovely native city, San Francisco.

Now that I am 85, and have become very obviously disabled—walking very shakily, with the support of a walker—I constantly encounter the kindness of strangers. They open heavy glass doors for me, help me up the corner curb cuts, and ask if I'm OK or need help. A typical example: I was crossing Geary Boulevard, a busy four-lane street, on my way to the post office. I had just started crossing when a tall athletic young Black man appeared at my left side, between me and the oncoming traffic. I thought to myself, "That man looks young and strong. He could walk faster than that! He doesn't need to walk at my slow pace. I bet he's just there to protect me from the cars." When we got to the middle divider, I stopped to wait

for a new green light. (I can't get across Geary on just one green light.) The young man, however, walked out in the middle of the street, held both hands up high, stopped two lanes of cars, turned and said to me, "You can go ahead and cross! They HAVE to stop for YOU!" I proceeded happily across, thanked my kind helper, and went on my way, thinking about the kindness of strangers.

An attitude of kindness and respect for life is pervasive in our community and other communities, in spite of the many outrages and forces against it. A recent book on deserters from U.S. and British forces in World War Two notes that: "... another type of deserter left the armed forces out of pure disgust. [The book] *Psychology for the Fighting Man* acknowledged that war and killing were not normal activities for boys raised in peacetime: 'American men have no particular love of killing. For the most part they hate killing – they think it is wrong, sinful...' This view of life was not unique to Americans."¹

A similar idea was expressed by Harry Patch in the book, *The Last Fighting Tommy*. This is a biography of the last British veteran of World War I to die (at age 111). He said, "I didn't want to join up... I had no inclination to fight anybody. I mean, why should I go out and kill somebody I never knew, and for what reason?"²

This attitude is a great asset in the struggle for peace, life, and justice, but it is not magic, not a guarantee of success and not a reason to relax the struggle. It is an asset to work with. It is an ethic to point to, as we work against all the violence against human life: the poverty that traps many people, including many children; the millions without health care, which has caused needless deaths and suffering; the wars; the drone attacks; the abortions; the executions.

A recent book by Steven Pinker, *The Better Angels of Our Nature, Why Violence Has Declined*, is an account of how the killing of human beings has declined (if violent deaths are measured as a proportion of deaths among the world population) since World War II.³ It is important to be aware of this, not only because it is encouraging to everyone who is working for respect for life, but also because a gloomy view of the state of society is often used to support policies of injustice and violence. That gloomy view may be a result of an actual disaster, or a result of propaganda. When people are aware of progress toward peace and justice, they are encouraged to carry it on. When there is real or imagined disaster, it can be an opportunity for reversing that progress. We have seen it often. One example is the horrific predictions of coming overpopulation and mass starvation that have been used to recommend draconian policies of limits on children and forced abortions.

Other examples spring to mind. There is a well-funded and widespread movement that claims that American public education is in crisis. One of America's leading historians of education, Diane Ravitch, disputes this.⁴ She presents evidence that in spite of problems, including underfunding and the need to educate many non-English speaking students, our schools are performing rather well as measured by the National Assessment of Educational Progress. She claims that the proposed reforms are like bringing a blowtorch to put out a fire. The proposed reform measures, such as No Child Left Behind, constant testing, teaching to tests, school vouchers, charter schools, and for-profit schools do not produce the improvements they promise but the opposite.



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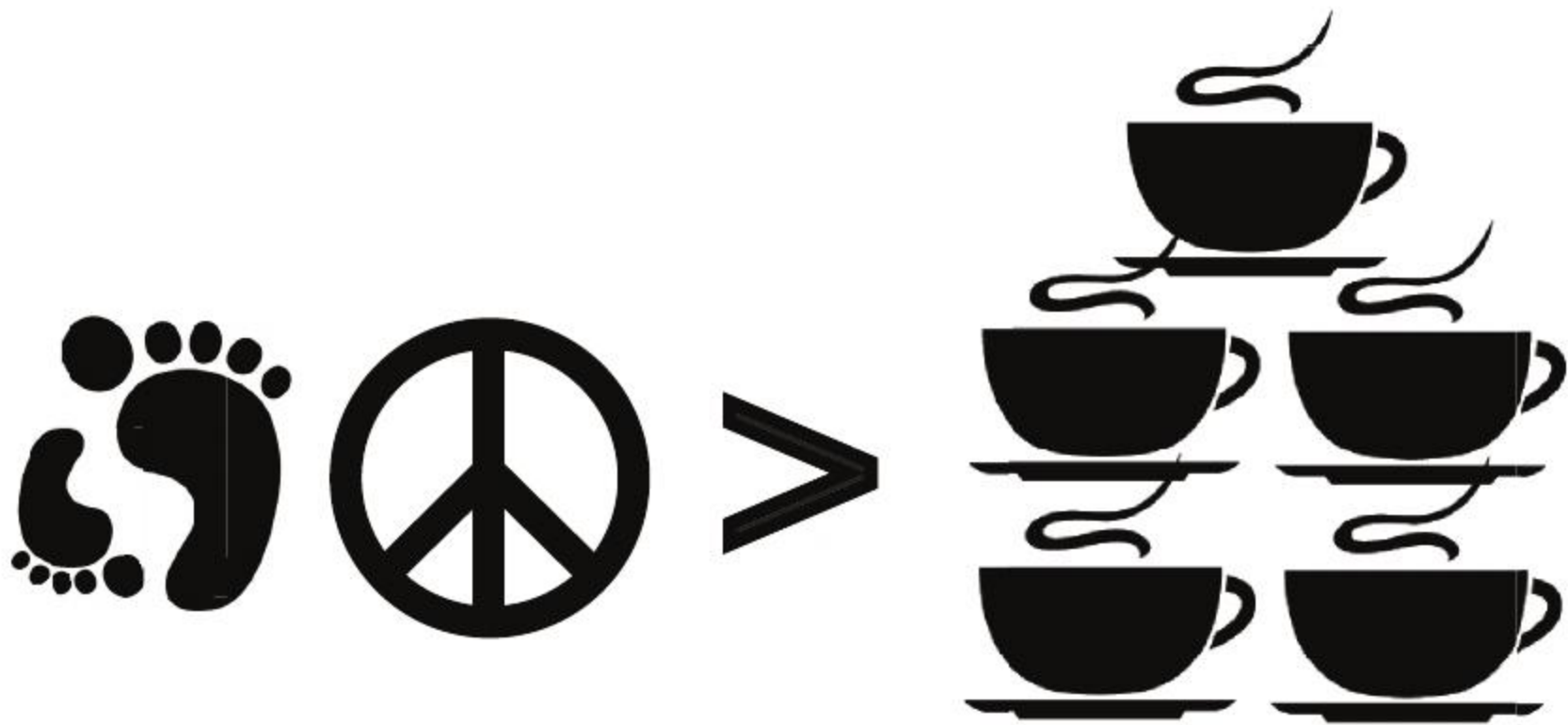
Further cases of the use of disaster scenarios abound in Naomi Klein's book, *The Shock Doctrine*.ⁱⁱⁱ One example out of many happened in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. Residents who had lived in public housing discovered that when they tried to return to their intact and desired public housing, it was simply shut down after the hurricane and never opened again. There are many examples of this process.

So, it is important, as we work for peace, justice and life, that we are aware of the progress that has been made to reduce the killing of human beings and of the many good attitudes and values in our communities. These are our assets that help us progress. We get considerable help from the kindness of strangers.

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TRUE LIFE

ADOPTION ROCKS!

by Mary Clare



“He’s so dark.” That is something that always brings a smile to my face. A lot of people are too shy to ask if my brother is adopted. After beating around the bush for a while, they finally come out with a question about why he is darker than his seven obviously Irish siblings, and it always brings a smile to my face, not because I am laughing at them but because I love the opportunity this opens up. I can brag about my brother! Yes, he is adopted! Yes, he has Down syndrome! Yes, I adore him! And yes, he has me wrapped around his little finger!

Gabriel was born in Bahrain, a tiny island in the Persian Gulf. He is five years old and is the youngest in our family of eight kids. I am seventeen, the second oldest, and would say that I am the one, out of all of my siblings, who loves him the most. But then, that might not be true; I think we all love him so much

that it sometimes feels like your heart could just burst right out of your chest.

Our family has been blessed to have Gabriel with us for five years. He is the pride and joy of our lives and I know that none of us would be the same without him. My brother’s adoption was no small coincidence. As my friend would say, it was a “God-incidence”.

My family had been hoping to adopt for a couple of years. Even though we had seven kids, our family was inspired by Mother Teresa of Calcutta’s work and had decided to look specifically into the adoption of a baby with Down syndrome. We submitted our application to the Down Syndrome Association of Greater Cincinnati and then just patiently waited and trusted in God’s plan for our family. Our prayer was that God’s will be done, not ours, but I often

TRUE LIFE - ADOPTION ROCKS!

put a little “p.s.” at the end, telling God how much I would really love another sibling. I can remember many times sitting down with my family and hearing my parents talk about the possibility of a certain child coming to live with us. All of us kids would get really excited but nothing would ever happen, and so we would still have to wait.

After ten months, we were told that our family’s application had been given to a birth family looking to place their baby boy with Down syndrome for adoption. We also learned that the birthfather wanted to come visit us. Everyone was so excited and spent the next week preparing to meet him. The experience was very positive for our whole family and also for Gabriel’s birthfather. During the next few weeks, we waited for their final decision, and when we heard that they had chosen us to be Gabriel’s forever family, we were so thrilled! It was very hard to wait the two months before he would come to live with us; we spent the time praying, preparing the house, and showing pictures of Gabriel to all our friends.

Finally, the time came for my parents to drive the eight hours to receive our new baby. It was December 19th, snowing throughout the Northeast, and everyone was hoping to have Gabriel home before Christmas. The day before my parents were supposed to receive custody of him was a Friday. They had been waiting for some paperwork to come to the office but it still wasn’t there. Everyone at Bethany pitched in to make sure that my parents got it before the end of the workweek. What a relief it was for our whole family! My parents brought Gabriel home between lots of snowstorms, the day they received him, and just in time for Christmas. I must say our Christmas that year was the best ever! Meditating on Joseph and Mary traveling to Bethlehem to give birth to Jesus seemed quiet similar to my parents traveling a long way to receive a new baby into the family. We were so thankful that Christmas to have our whole family, especially our new brother, safely together and we were so thankful to Bethany for making it possible.



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Gabriel’s transition into our family was smoother than any of us could have hoped for. He had extraordinary eye contact and this was his primary means of bonding with his new family. To our great surprise he slept through the night from the first day he was with us. Although we were prepared for a few bumps in the road, there really weren’t any. Gabriel has been relaxed and happy in our family from the very start.

I must say that having an adopted sibling is not very much different from a birth sibling as it may seem. A child is a child, and while every one is different, all kids have one thing in common: they are all so darn cute and so fun to be around!

Being born with Down syndrome hasn’t stopped Gabriel from reaching for high goals and for living his life to its fullest potential, and it certainly hasn’t stopped me from loving him! A lot of people worry that kids with Down syndrome aren’t perfect, but guess what? No one is! In my opinion, individuals with Down syndrome are more perfect than the rest of us. You see, they are not only innocent and joyful but they also love unconditionally! They are always quick to have a smile on their face and they appreciate the small things in life. Gabriel has helped me to stop and treasure the

small and seemingly unimportant things in life because they are there for a reason. Instead of looking at the glass half empty, I see it as half full. Instead of seeing a weed, I see a beautiful flower. Instead of seeing roses that have thorns, I see thorns that have roses. Instead of seeing a disabled child, I see a beautiful child of God. Gabriel's adoption has been an awesome experience for our whole family. None of the kids have had a problem adjusting to an adopted brother. As a matter of fact, he is usually the source of arguments because everyone wants to hold him in church, be his car buddy, or take care of him during meals. Having a baby with Down syndrome has had no downs at all. We prefer to call it "Up syndrome" because Gabriel is truly the most perfect one of all of us.

Our family is always open to adopting another child, and every time it comes up in conversation, all the kids think of numerous reasons why we should adopt again. My dad and mom tell us to take it to prayer, which I do, but always with a little "p.s."!



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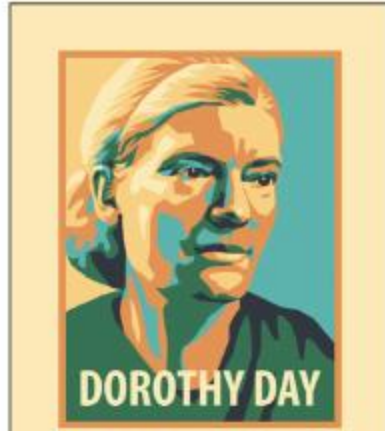
Father Daniel Berrigan, Consistent.

"One is called to live consistently, even if the change one wants for seems impossible."

Born in Virginia, Alexandria on May 9, 1921, Daniel Berrigan has been a poet, a novelist, an activist. Along with his brother Philip, Berrigan was an outspoken opponent to American militarism, founding the national peace groups, Clergy and Laymen Concerned about Vietnam.

Ordained in 1952, Father Berrigan marched with his brother during the civil rights movement at Selma in 1965. Together they led numerous protests against the war in Vietnam, and during the destruction of draft board files in 1968. For his various acts of civil disobedience, Father Berrigan has spent more than six years of his life in prison.

"We spoke out, we were killed or imprisoned, and went to jail because the peace hangs over us and personally upon weapons creating billions to be killed and billions to improve—weapons which become more vicious."



Dorothy Day, Consistent.

"The greatest challenge of the day is to have to bring about a revolution of the heart, a revolution which has to start with each one of us."

Born in Brooklyn, New York in 1897, Dorothy Day was an American journalist, a journalist, social activist and a devoted Catholic. With fellow activist Peter Maurin, Day helped establish the Catholic Worker, a pacifist movement that continues to combine direct aid to the poor and resistance.



Dr. Catherine Meeks, Consistent.

Catherine Meeks is a storyteller with a purpose.

Born in 1946 in segregated Arkansas, Ms. Meeks has spent a lifetime working on issues of social justice and the protection of life. The daughter of a sharecropper and a teacher, Catherine grew up hearing her father talk about a 12-year-old brother who died from a heart appendix before she was born—reburied secretly at a white hospital. "I grew up in that kind of atmosphere. The world is really hostile toward us because we're black and poor."

For more than 30 years, Catherine has advocated wellness and social justice, giving voice to those living on the margins of society and promoting a healthy social change worldwide.



Gandhi, Consistent.

Mahatma Karamchand Gandhi was born on October 2, 1869, and became the international symbol of the power of nonviolence. Gandhi was the most revered political and ideological leader in India during that nation's difficult transition to independence. His leadership of national civil disobedience led ultimately to India's separation from Great Britain, and



Reverend Johnny Hunter, Consistent.

Dr. Johnny M. Hunter nearly died at birth. After others had given up on the newborn, an elderly midwife refused to let him die. She later told him that he was born for a reason.

Reverend Hunter believes he knows the reason—pro-life life. With more than 32 years in the ministry, Dr. Hunter is the President of Global Life & Family Mission (GLFM), a ministry dedicated to promoting traditional family values, racial harmony, and the survival of children around the world.

Dr. Hunter is an ordained minister, a co-founder of the National Community Church on Capitol Hill, Washington, DC, and the Pastor Emeritus of Church of the Living Water, Buffalo, NY. He is a nationally respected pro-life and civil rights advocate, and founded the Education and Resource Network (LEARN, Inc.), a broad coalition of Christian pro-life, pro-family advocates. LEARN is a prominent African-American evangelical pro-life ministry in the United States.



Rose Evans, Consistent.

Rose Evans was born in San Francisco in 1938, when she still lives, and far from the Pacific Ocean. Rose grew up in a loving family, with a Scottish father and a Canadian mother. She grew up without any particular religion, but in college was drawn to a relationship with Jesus, and with several friends was baptized in the Episcopal Church.

Rose Evans has been an activist for peace and life for more than 40 years. She is the oldest member of the Board of Consistent Life.

Rose was happily married to Matthew Evans, a university professor—and they raised four children together. When her youngest child was ten, Rose went back to college and got an M.A. in Education of Exceptional Children. Her work in special education helped to inspire her activism in the issues.



Reverend Patrick Mahoney, Consistent.

Patrick J. Mahoney is a nationally known Christian social and political activist, and an ordained minister in the Reformed Presbyterian Church. He is director of the Christian Defense Coalition, a "national ministry committed to challenging the body of Christ to live out their faith in the public square."

Born in New Jersey, Rev. Mahoney attended the University of Dayton and the Faith School of Theology in Maine. His early ministerial experiences in New York City led him to embrace a commitment to expanding the role of the church in addressing society's wrongs. He began to develop and nurture social programs, and has worked tirelessly on pro-life causes, human-leasons, hunger, racism and other pressing issues of social justice from a Christ-centered biblical perspective.

In 1992, Mahoney brought his family to Washington, DC, where he



Fannie Lou Hamer, Consistent.

Fannie Lou Hamer was a courageous civil rights leader and a passionate activist for voting rights in America. Her legacy remains today.

Born in 1917, Hamer played a major role in organizing the Mississippi Freedom Movement for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC).

Growing up poor in segregated Mississippi, Hamer developed her passion for social justice—and was known for her outspoken rhetoric. In the early 1960s she joined the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and began work on registering voters in the deep south. Despite arrests and beatings, she sustained her vigilance, eventually helping to force the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party.



Sister Helen Prejean, Consistent.

In 1982 a friend asked Sister Helen Prejean if she would correspond with convicted murderer Drew Patrick Sonnier, located in the Louisiana State Penitentiary. This began a journey recounted in her book *Dead Man Walking*—that continues today in her prison work to abolish the death penalty.

A Catholic nun since 1957, Sister Helen believes the consistent ethic of life. She works toward the recognition that every life has dignity—not only the innocent, but also the guilty—and she rejects all violence, from conception to natural death.

"I stand morally opposed to killing war, executions, killing of the old and diseased, the killing of children, unborn and born... I believe that all of life is sacred and must be protected, especially in the vulnerable stages at the beginning of life and its end."



Martin Sheen, Consistent.

Martin Sheen is an actor. He is best known for his performances as Captain Willard in the film *Apocalypse Now*, Confederate General Robert E. Lee in *Gettysburg*, and President Josiah Bartlet in the popular television series *The West Wing*. Mr. Sheen has worked with some of the world's most noted directors, including Martin Scorsese, Steven Spielberg, Oliver Stone, Francis Ford Coppola, Richard Attenborough, Ivan Reitman and Akira Kurosawa.

Martin Sheen also follows in the consistent life ethic. He rejects all violence, from abortion to war.

Inspired by a deep Catholic faith, Sheen has put his beliefs in action for almost 50 years. He supported Cesar Chavez during the early days of the farm worker movement in California, and has worked tirelessly on behalf of a variety of peace and justice causes. He has spoken out about political repression in Central America, marched on immigration reform, fought against the Salvadoran death squads, and supported the closing of nuclear test sites. He has been arrested on a number of occasions for nonviolent civil disobedience.



Joseph Cardinal Bernardin, Consistent.

Joseph Cardinal Bernardin (1928-1996) has been widely credited with advancing the Consistent Life Ethic. Originally called the Sorensen-Germent, Bernardin drew from New Testament principles in rejecting all forms of violence as inconsistent with Catholic teaching.

Bernardin was an outspoken critic of nuclear war and abortion, but he soon expanded his vision to include all kinds of violence. "The spectrum of life cuts across the issues of genetics, abortion, capital punishment, modern warfare and the care of the terminally ill," wrote Bernardin in a famous speech at Fordham University. He began to define a new moral theology for Catholics that respected all life, from conception to natural death.

Cardinal Bernardin told an audience in Portland, Oregon: "When human life is considered 'cheap' or easily replaceable in one area, eventually nothing is held as sacred and all lives are in jeopardy."



Aimee Beddy Murphy, Consistent.

Aimee Murphy was born in 1988. She's young. She is also a leader and the Executive Director of Life Matters Journal, the leading consistent life ethic magazine.

Aimee was a teenager when a personal conviction led her to the cause against abortion, and she came to support and defend the consistent life ethic during her time in university.

During her university studies, Aimee worked to successfully change the pro-life organization on her college campus to one that centered on equal respect for the dignity of human life. She helped to facilitate change in the pro-life dialogue on many college campuses. As someone whose efforts began in journalistic work, Aimee believes that "making the pro-life movement more accessible correlates directly to the level of consistency in the ethic of its members."

Through her work at Life Matters Journal, Aimee intends to reach people all over the globe with the consistent message of human worth. The journal's mission statement includes her words: "We must realize that the most important issue of



Shane Claiborne, Consistent.

Was World Shane Claiborne on the streets of Philadelphia, bringing his radical Christianity to the poor and disenfranchised, ministering to people in need and serving as a radical voice in the church.

Born in Tennessee, Claiborne is one of the founding members of the Simple Way in Philadelphia, "a web of subversive strands, conspiring to spread the vision of 'Loving God, Loving People, and Following Jesus' in our neighborhoods and in our world." This community was featured on the cover of *Christianity Today* magazine as a pioneer of the New Monasticism movement.

Shane studied at Eastern University, Wheaton College and Princeton Theological Seminary. He is now a part of The Alternative Seminary. Claiborne has founded of White Creek Community Church and spent time with Mother Teresa in Calcutta, India. Shane has been a part of peace dialogues.

Why not a consistent voice?

These are just a few of the individuals who have spoken out with a clear, unwavering voice for peace and life—rejecting all violence. **Consistent Life** is a network of 200 groups and many individuals which furthers the consistent life ethic through exhibits at conferences, advertisements, a weekly e-newsletter, a presence on social media and community speakers. We need both a network such as Consistent Life and a quality journal like Life Matters Journal to spread the idea of respecting the dignity and worth of each human life.

What can you do to make the world a less violent place? Will you help us?

We are committed to the protection of life, which is threatened in today's world by war, a bortion, poverty, racism, capital punishment and euthanasia. We believe that these issues are linked under a 'consistent ethic of life'. We challenge those working on all or some of these issues to maintain a cooperative spirit of peace, reconciliation, and respect in protecting the unprotected.



<http://www.consistent-life.org/join.html>

MEDIA REVIEWS AND CONSISTENT LIFE

CATCHING FIRE & THE METAPHYSICS OF HOPE *by Joseph Antonello*

I must admit, I very much enjoyed *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire*. The film improved over its predecessor in almost every way, and the addition of Philip Seymour-Hoffman to the cast seems to have improved the acting of everyone around him, though their progress might just be due to aging. Jennifer Lawrence as Katniss Everdeen is as much a treat now as in 2012, and though not a few of her colleagues still have a wooden disposition when it comes to their trade, it is easy enough to ignore. The direction of the film, overseen by Francis Lawrence (of *I Am Legend* fame), is a distinct leap forward compared to Gary Ross' direction of the previous film, though Lawrence often falls into many of the same clichéd shots that plagued the original (he does so without making you feel as if you are being shaken to death, however).

There is so much that can be said about this film—commentary on violence involving children, the Marxist undertones, or how unbelievable Jennifer Lawrence is playing a 17-year-old girl—but the theme that has carried itself over most clearly from the first film to this one is the idea that hope has a power over the world around us. President Snow—played by the typically wonderful Donald Sutherland—admits that



the tried and true methods of The Capitol to subdue the citizens of Panem will not work because “fear does not work as long as there is hope.” The idea of hope, then, becomes more than the catalyst of revolution; it is a metaphysical reality that enacts a positive change on the people of Panem. The districts, empowered by the dissident act of Katniss at the end of the first film, have begun to see their world in a new light. The power of their uprising is not in a person, but in something which that person has revealed to them. Savior metaphors notwithstanding, Katniss is more of a symbol than a prophet. She is their “Mockingjay,” a creature never meant to exist within The Capitol’s design for the perfect world.¹

The interesting thing about hope in *Catching Fire* is the idea that it informs and shapes the future, moving the people forward to a goal, but simultaneously takes on an existential reality. The hope of the people isn’t just about the future, about where they are going; hope is informing their reality in the present. President Snow’s assertion that fear has no power if there is hope speaks to this reality. The power of fear is never in the future, never in the reality-to-come; fear is only in the now informing the future. Hope exists in two different ways, distinct from the idea of fear. It exists like fear—in the now, informing the future—but also exists in the future, because the hope is always in something that does not yet exist. Hope proposes a new world and informs the present on how to get there; fear simply imposes itself to blind us to a future to come.

The *Hunger Games* speaks of hope, speaks of a world to come. Though this hope proposes violence as a “necessary evil,” thereby still embracing the violence that plagues the present Panem, it must be understood as a beautiful reminder that oppression has no power over us so long as we look toward our future. *Catching Fire* expounds this theme perfectly, and the whole world ought to be whistling the Mockingjay’s song.

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CHILD MESSIAH: A LOOK AT *ENDER’S GAME* by Anthony Bedoy



Recently, a film titled *Ender’s Game* (a film adaptation of the science fiction best-seller with the same name) was released at the box office to a myriad of reviewers and fans alike arguing about the importance of the story’s focus on war, aggression, and passivism. Now there are many parallels one could make regarding the modern wars the USA has engaged in and the pre-emptive strike tactics used in the film, but I wanted to take a much more thematic look at the main character that so apparently seems to have religious connotations. Ender himself, in the film and novel, appears to embody many religious themes regarding war, nonviolence, and the Christian understanding of an all-loving, all-powerful God. I want to delve into the meaning behind Ender’s character and ultimately argue whether Ender is a symbol of Christian doctrine of just-war or a symbol of a more wrathful messiah similar to pre-Christian sentiments regarding the foretold Davidic-messiah.

In Catholic teaching, Christ comes in the form of an entirely different messiah than the ancient Jewish people had expected. Christ came in the form of a vulnerable child, what many would consider abnormal or unexpected. According to Catholic teachings, Christ

is the messiah that the Old Testament speaks of. In the space-fiction novel *Ender's Game* by Orson Scott Card, a young child is built up to be a war-machine to help defend the human race. Card does a wonderful job entering into moral conversation regarding war and humanity, but under the surface there is a constant theme that drives the novel's compelling tale. We are immersed into a tale where a child messiah is abused by humanity for waging war. The thematic elements that show us that Ender is the messiah also hint that Ender's true nature is the Christ figure. In *Ender's Game*, the human race, especially the military, puts an emphasis on Ender being the Davidic-warrior. He should be this commander who will fight for goodness and lead the nations. What is so important in the story is how the unexpected reality of Christ the messiah shines through in Ender, although he still becomes the Davidic-warrior. Ender is the Christ figure, but humanity abuses the power Ender has to wage war. Ender's own journey as the false messiah leads him to become the true messiah by recognizing the "lies" that humanity has purported. In this symbolism, the reader finds Christ's message buried beneath the ethical conversation. Here we find

the message that will unite the nations and conquer all foes; it comes in the most strange and unexpected package of a child-soldier, one who embodies the love and compassion of Christ.

To begin this journey through Davidic history and the parallels to Ender's story, we must understand the expectations of the messiah and God in Jewish culture. Looking back on the Old Testament, there is evidence that the people of Israel were promised a king that would lead them and free them from all their oppressors. In Numbers 27:15-17 "Moses spoke to the Lord, Saying 'Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint someone over the congregation who shall go out before them and come in before them, who shall lead them out and bring them in'" (*The HarperCollins Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version*). The Jewish people of Jesus' time expected to be redeemed according to the scriptures. In Isaiah 59:20, the text reads, "The Redeemer will come to Zion". Considering all that has happened to the Israelites in their oppression from the Egypt, the Babylonian captivity and exile, and then the Roman rule at the time



of Jesus, it is not unusual for the Jewish people to consider their need for a military leader (a King even) that would redeem them.

According to the Jewish people of Jesus' time, when the messiah comes to the world, he should conquer the nations. How then does it look when Christ arrives in his vulnerability and weakness? In Luke's Gospel, the story begins with a comparison between the kings of the era and the new king—Christ the King. In Luke 1:5, it reads, "In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah . . ." and then later in Luke 2:1-2 there is mention of more powerful individuals of the time: "In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus. . . . This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria". All of this seems to be unimportant though, as the story does not begin to talk of the most important leaders of the world, but of this tiny, vulnerable God-baby. Later the Gospels seem to contradict what the Jewish people expected. Christ does not go about using the sword to make his message known, but rather he heals the sick, stands with the oppressed, and loves the poor. In Psalm 72, the scriptures read, "Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to a king's son. . . . May he have dominion from sea to sea. . . . May his foes bow down before him. . . . May the kings of Tarshish and of the isles render him tribute. . . . May all kings fall down before him, all nations give him service". Essentially what is being communicated is that there will be a new king that will bring forth righteousness. What the Jewish people misunderstood was that the king might not come in a way that dominates the world with the sword, but with peace and love. Thus when the messiah came in such an inglorious way it was unexpected to many of the Jewish people of the time; it caused doubt and disbelief.

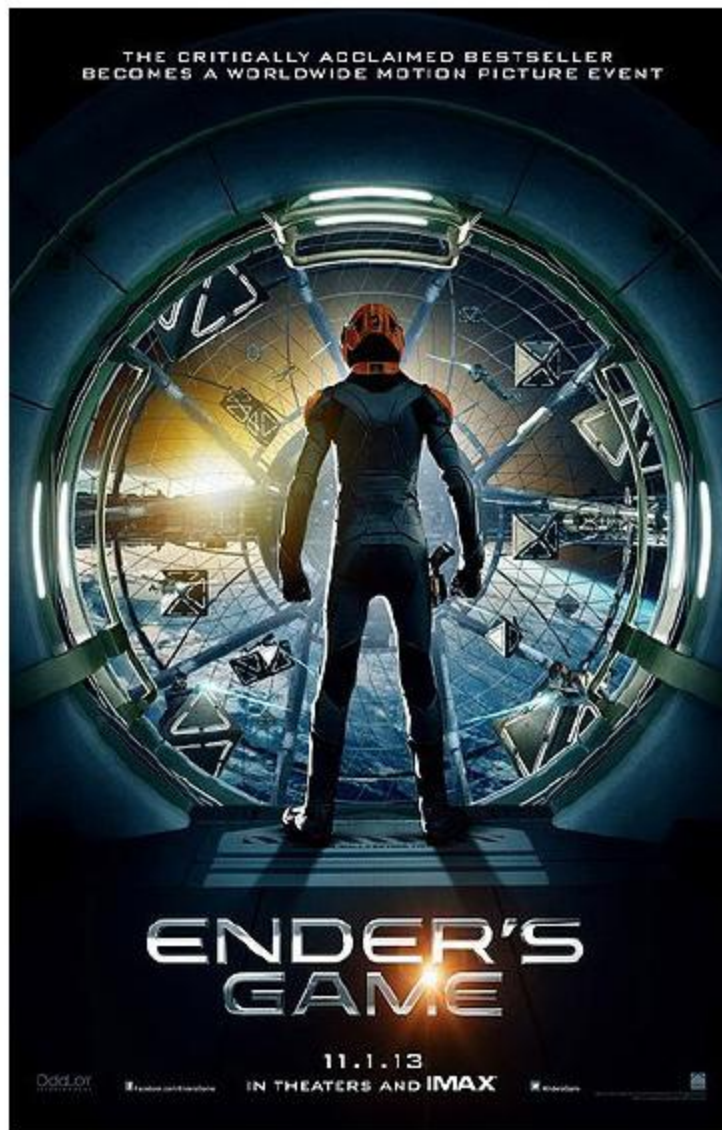
In regards to this talk of the Davidic-warrior versus Chris the King, we must now analyze the story of *Ender's Game* to see the clues that reveal Ender is symbolic of the modern Davidic-warrior. Let us parallel the people of Israel with the people of the entire world in the novel. To an extent, the people of the world in *Ender's game* are defeated; they have been

attacked by the dangerous alien race, the buggers, and are struggling to rebuild society. The struggle has even caused a destruction of most religion and a restriction on birth numbers in order to keep the government and economy stable. Some could argue that, to an extent, the loss of religion in the society is harkening back to the subtle loss of faith that the Pharisees show in the Gospels. The Pharisees and Sadducees seem to forget why they have faith in religion, and the people of Earth have also lost the faith. The humans of Earth also hold a deep hope in their hearts for a new commander to save them from the looming threat of the buggers. They seek a messiah to lead them out of despair from the threat of the bugger invaders.

Colonel Graff, in the book, is the embodiment of the human race's desire for a Davidic-warrior messiah. Early on, it is clear that he hopes to have Ender save humanity. He seems to recognize Ender as a pseudo-religious figure, and Ender's parents do likewise: But your father and mother are a special case. They both renounced their religions—your mother was a Mormon—but in fact their feelings are still ambiguous. . . . Your father still named you with legitimate saints' names. In fact, he baptized all three of you himself as soon as he got you home after you were born. . . . They haven't really given up their religion. They look at you and see you as a badge of pride, because they were able to circumvent the law and have a Third. (Card 22)

The badge of pride that Graff speaks of could be Ender's parents' steadfast religious conviction. In a world where religion is looked down upon, somehow Ender is still seen as a semi-religious figure for Graff and definitely for his parents.

While Ender is with the other students in Battle School, where the children learn to fight before going on to Command School, he meets many individuals who seem to recognize him as a more than just a leader. Some seem to step outside their restriction from religion in order to acknowledge Ender as the messiah. "On impulse Ender hugged him, tight, almost as if he were Valentine. . . . [Alai] grinned. 'Go slice up the buggers.' . . . Alai suddenly kissed Ender on the



cheek and whispered in his ear, ‘Salaam.’ Ender guessed that the kiss and the word were somehow forbidden. A suppressed religion, perhaps” (69). The word Salaam comes from the Arabic word meaning peace. The kiss on the cheek and the word peace are evident of an individual honoring a religious figure. In the Catholic tradition, this reference can be linked to the sign of peace during the Eucharistic part of the mass. In the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, section 1301 reads, “The sign of peace that concludes the rite of the sacrament signifies and demonstrates ecclesial communion with the bishop and with all the faithful”. At this point in Ender’s journey, some are attempting to make him into the messiah similar to who the Jewish people wanted before Christ—a warrior king who would conquer the nations—and others are recognizing Ender as a loving and caring leader. This is a crucial step in seeing Card’s parallel to Ender, the Davidic-warrior, and the true messiah: Christ.

Another instance where Ender is referred to as a pseudo-messiah is after he has prepared for Command School and is beginning to simulate battles with the

buggers. Graff and Admiral Chamrajnagar are discussing the leadership of Ender and his importance in leading the fleets to battle. We should remember first that Graff is hoping to make Ender into a warrior leader who can command humanity to a new age out of fear from the buggers. This is a clear example of Card’s use of religious symbolism to communicate how Ender’s leaders want him to be the Davidic-warrior messiah. In a conversation between Chamrajnagar and Graff, the two are talking about the importance of the commander children and the fleets that were created to demolish the buggers: “‘And now they are all mine. They are entering into the mysteries of the fleet’ . . . ‘You make it sound like a priesthood.’ ‘And a god. And a religion. Even those of us who command by ansible [?] know the majesty of flight among the stars’” (Card 256). Here, Chamrajnagar is equating the fleet and the people Ender is commanding to a religion, as if Ender has the authority to be a religious leader. What Graff hopes to do is to use Ender’s “divine authority” to command his fleet (or as Chamrajnagar stated, his religion) to take down the oppressors. Ender is seen as a Christ-surrogate, a child different from other children, whose abilities and talents enable him to encompass the salvation of the human race. The only issue is that Graff and all the other adults hoping to force Ender’s hand at destruction misunderstand what the truth regarding the Christian messiah really is.

Evidence supports that Ender’s own relationship with his sister and brother, aptly named Valentine (who has taught him how to love) and Peter (who has taught him violence) are symbolic of Ender’s own relationship to his Christ-like image or his Davidic-warrior image. All throughout the book, Ender imagines Valentine in instances where he recalls love, peace, and respect. When Alai first gives him the kiss of peace, he recalls Valentine. A valuable means of entering into symbolic imagery are dreams. Ender has many dreams through his time with a computer game that links with his subconscious thoughts. The story begins

with Ender as a mouse who kills a giant. As Ender begins to play more, he enters into a fight with a giant snake. At first Ender kills the snake: "The snake began to unweave itself from the rug again, only this time Ender did not hesitate. He stepped on the head of the snake and crushed it under his foot" (Card 117). The snake is symbolic of Peter's violent presence in Ender. Later in the novel, after many attempts at Ender to win the game by killing the snake, Ender kisses the snake instead of killing it. "And the snake in his hands thickened and bent into another shape. A human shape. It was Valentine" (Card 152). Then Ender walked with Valentine down a stairway with tears in his eyes and he saw a multitude of people who all had Peter's face applauding him. The dream ends with Ender knowing, "wherever he went in this world, he went with Valentine" (Card 152).

This dream is cryptic, but it is telling of Ender's own relationship to violence and love. I would dare to say that Valentine is a symbol Ender's tendency towards his Christological symbolism, and Peter is a symbol of Ender's Davidic-warrior path. Throughout the novel, Ender is forced to exercise his violent side, just like he kills the snake over and over again in his dreams. When he finally chooses to kiss the snake and love, he realizes that all along Valentine has been the true path to the "End of the World" as he calls it (Card 152). Later in the novel we learn the dreams were psychic messages from the alien race, calling for Ender to protect them in peace from the human aggressors. This sheds much needed light on the symbolic nature of the dreams as it informs how we see Ender at the end of the novel. Unlike his dreams, Ender chooses to violently defeat the buggers. In doing so he follows the Davidic-warrior path that all of humanity hoped for him. In doing so though, he also awakens his loving side of himself. The Christ-like qualities rush back to Ender and he breaks down, contemplating all that he has done. In the end he chooses to right the wrongs he has done and atone for his sins. He finds an egg of a queen bugger and chooses to take this egg to begin the race of buggers again somewhere where humanity cannot touch them.

Arguably, Ender fulfills his role as the warrior messiah when he defeats the buggers and slaughters their entire species from existence. But his innocence is important to the symbolism regarding his Christ-like qualities. For the story to play out the way it does, all of the adults running the Command School must lie to the children. They tell them that the practices and simulations they run are solely tests to determine their own ability to go to war. When Ender and his squadron destroy the buggers, Ender takes the all the sins of humanity on his shoulders in the one act of xenocide, the killing of an entire species. While some could argue that Ender is a one to one symbol of Christ in the novel, I would argue that Ender is more a symbol of a Christian than of Christ. He has Christ-like qualities that hint at the importance of his love and compassion, but is still tainted by humanity's wishes for a warrior messiah. Ender becomes the warrior messiah for the people of Earth, but in doing so also recognizes his loving nature. Here we find a tension within the character of Ender. He is not solely the Davidic-warrior messiah, but he is also not solely the Christian messiah. Ender embodies the love and compassion of Christ, but is human. He is not the Christ figure of the novel, but the message of Christ penetrates through Ender. The novel itself presents Ender as a character in which inner turmoil mirrors the tensions many religious and secular individuals face with regards to just war.

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POETRY & PROSE

MBALE'S SAD EYES
by Caroline Pilgrim

"Your eyes are an extension of your brain, so when I look into your eyes, I can see your brain"

*—Dr. Bonny, Ugandan resident at Mbale
Regional Hospital*

The concrete floor, the metal beds, the putrid smells,
Mbale is not a place the well present,
With 36 beds in ward 8 & 9 all waiting for death,
No cost to die in this barrack,
The medicine, the fluids, the food costs,
But a discharge to no earthly dwelling comes at no price.

All brown eyes, yellowed with jaundice,
Weak with fever, hunger, no smiles,
All the eyes are sad, hopeless, betraying despair.
The pen light shows a pupil—equal, round, reactive to light
But unreactive to joy, unresponsive to hope
Can your eyes smile when the virus is eating
Your lungs, your love,
Your income, your children?

Sad eyes are the incurable complaint
And cohere the victims of Wards 8 and 9
And they all become one.

And where there is one despair,
Then there you find one panacea
A Savior who can make sad eyes smile

I hear a muttering, a humming,
I am told the one humming is a pastor,
I feel him making a prayer to God,
As he stands next to bed 19 in Wards 8 and 9.

She will die, cease her labored breathing,
But she will die with her eyes shut,
Until Jesus' light is let in
No more dark, putrid stench to fight
No more long walks on dirt highways,
No more carrying daily dirty water,

She hears him, no, she can see,
With Glad eyes, tearless
Bed 19 is home.



SONDER: THE KEY TO PEACE?

by Aimee Murphy



still from Sonder video on Vimeo



Sonder | The Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows

from John Koenig PLUS 2 months ago ALL AUDIENCES

A post came across my dashboard on Tumblr back in December and it gave me more than a moment of pause. It was an entry from the Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows, a project by John Koenig that involves making up words for phenomena that we as human beings might experience over the course of our lifetime. The word was “sonder” – and I am convinced that this idea of sonder is something that can revolutionize the way we see our fellow man, change the world, and it could very well be the key to peace in the world.

So what is this amazingly obscure sorrow that has the power to alter the world so wonderfully?

“sonder /SAHN-der/
n. the realization that each random passerby is living a life as vivid and complex as your

own—populated with their own ambitions, friends, routines, worries and inherited craziness—an epic story that continues invisibly around you like an anthill sprawling deep underground, with elaborate passageways to thousands of other lives that you’ll never know existed, in which you might appear only once, as an extra sipping coffee in the background, as a blur of traffic passing on the highway, as a lighted window at dusk.”

I firmly believe that if each and every human being took a moment to stop, realize, and respect the humanity of each person with whom they interacted, there would be no more violence: no more wars, no more euthanasia, no more abortion, no more torture, no more capital punishment, no more abuse, no more slavery. Because if we realized that the human being

in front of us has hopes, dreams, fears, ambitions, love and remorse, a future and a past – if we relate to the human being in front of us as someone so complex as to be just like us in most ways but the minute particulars – then we would be struck by an immense sense of awe and near-reverence.

Our culture is one so comfortable with throwing away human beings: whether it be in the case of abortion, where doctors neglect the truth of science for some mixed up hierarchy of “rights” and a sizable paycheck, or in the case of the death penalty where we right off the problematic prisoner with an unsavory past instead of working for reconciliation and an opportunity to contribute to society (even in the little ways). If the mother choosing abortion rehumanized the preborn child within her and recalled the intricacies of the little body, the little mind, the future and the past of this tiny human being and all of the hopes, dreams, fears, and more that the child has in store in his or her future, we would be well on the way to bringing about a culture of life. But it also means that we all see the complexity in the life of the mother, too, and value her life and respect her concerns as valid and do our utmost to ensure that she sees the life of her child as just as valuable as her own, as well as giving her the support that she needs so she may carry her child with confidence. Likewise, rehumanizing the prisoner on death row means that our media stop calling people “monsters” and rage in calling for an eye for an eye; it means looking at the prisoner as one failed by those people in their life who could have helped, looking at them as they were as a child, perhaps troubled and alone, bullied and out-of-touch. And it also means that we see all the complexity of the child growing up who one day becomes a killer: did they need mental healthcare that just wasn’t provided? What resources could we have provided to prevent violence from hitting our streets? How can we see the complex human being beneath the title of “murderer” now that the crime is over and our society is safe from any possible harm from the convicted? And finally, what can we do to bridge the gap and offer them and the victim’s family an friends an opportunity at reconciliation?

If we have this sonder for our fellow human beings, the people we sit next to on the bus, the people we pass on the highway, the family in the car next to us at the stoplight, the couple drinking coffee and speaking low over a diner table, the old man slouching on a park bench, just think of how we would approach them. It brings the “Golden Rule” to a much more intense, personal level. It transfers the magnitude of our own life to the passing lives of others. It brings us out of the “matrix” in our own head that sees others as only figments of imagination (because, let’s be honest, it’s rather difficult and somewhat exhausting to respect the complexity of each individual’s life), and into the reality that is true for each and every human being.

To sonder is to rehumanize – to transfer our own understanding of how difficult and beautiful and awful and awesome it is to be human – for every single human being. We could no more ask for a bomb to be dropped on our fellow man nor propose they die by scalpel, vacuum, and forceps before birth if we took sonder at their existence. If we understood them as like ourselves, we would not wish them ill; we could only work for peace.

For more information on Sonder and the Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows, see:

~ <http://www.dictionaryofobscuresorrows.com/post/23536922667/sonder>

~ <http://vimeo.com/80318195>

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