



Life Matters Journal

V. 7, ISSUE 1 — FEBRUARY 2019

THIS ISSUE'S THEME:

Why We March Consistently

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Reader,

At the end of December, I attended a funeral, or rather, a celebration of life for a distant family member who had been terminally ill for most of her life. She was not supposed to live past the age of five, but instead lived a lovely and full life full of laughter and joy until age 30. From infancy until death, she and her family dealt with medical and accessibility issues. It was not an easy life for any of them, but it was a tremendously rewarding one. Hearing their fond memories and closeness to one another reminded me of what we are truly fighting for, a world where every individual is given the chance of a full life no matter the circumstances that surround them in the womb. In order to build a culture of life, we must continue to fight for the abolition of arbitrary measures for personhood, as well as continue to educate and rehumanize individuals who may think otherwise.



“Why We March Consistently” is the theme our writers and myself dove into, attempting to unpack the many intricate issues surrounding what it means to be anti-abortion. Writing intern Stephanie Hauer evaluated scientific advancements since *Roe v. Wade*, and Christy Yao looked at crisis pregnancies and what we can do to support women who may be facing them. Meanwhile, Maria Horan shared Ireland’s traditions while marching for life, and John Whitehead analyzed social movements and highlighted political actions for CLE activists.

These articles and more produce a wide range of elements to consider when speaking with others about pro-life causes, performing actions of demonstration or protest, and continuing to act consistently pro-life the rest of the year.

Lastly, this year we are starting our new bimonthly publication calendar with longer issues covering more information surrounding our theme. Hope you enjoy!

With peace and love for every human life,

Maria Pane

This journal is dedicated to the aborted, the bombed, the executed, the euthanized, the abused, the raped, and all other victims of violence, whether that violence is 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, halfway 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 ethic of life toward all victims of violence. We are *Life Matters Journal*, and we are here because politics kills.

Disclaimer

The views presented in this journal do not necessarily represent the views of all members, contributors, or donors. We exist to present a forum for discussion within the Consistent Life Ethic, to promote discourse and present an opportunity for peer-review and dialogue.

CONTENTS

INSIGHT

CURRENT EVENTS: What You Need to Know About Late-Term Abortion

TOPIC: ABORTION LEGISLATION

WORLD: The All Ireland Rally for Life

TOPIC: ABORTION IN IRELAND

ESSAY: A Look Into Scientific Advancements Since *Roe*

TOPIC: PRO-SCIENCE, PRO-LIFE

EXPRESSION

MEDIA REVIEW: Plan to See *Unplanned* this Spring

TOPIC: ABORTION CONVERSION BIOPIC

POEM: *January Maybe*

TOPIC: MARCHING IN SOLIDARITY

MEDIA REVIEW: Still Walking Away from Omelas

TOPIC: DEHUMANIZATION IN FICTION

PERSPECTIVE

ESSAY: *Post-Roe*

TOPIC: HELPING WOMEN IN CRISIS

OPPOSING VIEWS: On Marches and Protests

TOPIC: STRATEGY

ESSAY: Political Action's Opportunities and Dangers

TOPIC: COMPARING SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

FINAL WORDS: Passing the Mic

TOPIC: ACTION AND ALLYSHIP

Life Matters Journal

FEBRUARY 2019

Executive Editor Maria Pane

Deputy Editors John Whitehead, Paige Kubenka

Layout Editor Maria Oswald

Managing Editor Herb Geraghty

Staff Writer Christy Yao

Contributors

Maria Horan, Stephanie Hauer, Maria Oswald,
Sarah Hinlicky Wilson, Aimee Murphy, Stevie Lark,
John Whitehead, Herb Geraghty

Executive Director of Rehumanize International Aimee Murphy

REHUMANIZEINTL.ORG



What You Need to Know About Late-Term Abortion

By Christy Yao

The Reproductive Health Act was signed into law on January 22 of this year by New York governor Andrew Cuomo.¹ This law comes at a time when pro-choice Americans are preparing for the overturn of *Roe v. Wade*. Prior to the Reproductive Health Act (RHA), New York had not amended its abortion law since 1970, when it was declared that abortion is legal up to twenty-four weeks. The previous law only allowed abortions after twenty-four weeks when the mother's life was in danger. What then is the drive and controversy behind the RHA of 2019?²

The new law removes certain restrictions on later abortions. Women can now terminate their pregnancies if it benefits their health or if the fetus cannot survive outside the womb.² It is up to the abortion provider's judgement to determine if an abortion is necessary for the mother's health ("health" is left undefined), and whether the fetus can survive outside the mother's womb.³ The RHA also moves abortion regulations from New York's criminal code to the health code. This means there is no threat of criminal prosecution if an abortion regulation is broken. Furthermore, the RHA allows nurses, physician assistants, and midwives to perform abortions.²

One reason the RHA is getting so much attention is that many see it as a potential indicator of the legislative agenda other states may pursue. Signed on the anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, the bill was celebrated as a safeguard against a conservative Supreme Court.²

Gov. Cuomo of New York instructed that the Freedom Tower be lit pink in celebration of the RHA, celebrating late-term abortion.³ Missouri, Louisiana, as well as North and South Dakota have moved in the other direction, passing laws that would ban abortion if *Roe v. Wade* were overturned. In 2018, a total of fifteen states placed restrictions on abortion.²

There is similar legislation to the RHA within the Virginia state congress, where abortion would be allowed past the age a fetus can survive outside the womb. Virginia delegate Kathy Tran introduced a bill reducing restrictions on third trimester abortions. Currently in Virginia, third trimester abortions are only allowed if three doctors agree that a woman's health would be "substantially" or "irremediably" impaired. Tran's bill reduces the number to a single doctor's approval — the doctor performing the abortion. The bill also allows third trimester abortions for any impairment on the mother's physical or mental health. In addition, the bill is left

intentionally vague, lessening restrictions on when a third trimester abortion can be obtained. Tran said the bill would allow women to even receive abortions while they are in labor.³

The New York and Virginia state laws both stress the supposed need for late-term abortions for the health of the mother or fetal abnormalities, but the Guttmacher Institute reports that most women who obtain late-term abortions do not have them for medical reasons. Some physicians argue that, in instances where

...the Guttmacher Institute reports that most women who obtain late-term abortions do not have them for medical reasons.

the life of the mother is endangered, it is never better to have a late-term abortion. They say that an emergency C-section is faster and safer for the mother, and it does not involve killing the fetus. Abortion can also never cure a fetal abnormality — instead, it ends the life of a fetus with an illness or disability.³

New York's RHA shook pro-lifers and other individuals across the nation. Some see this as an opportunity for pro-lifers to make a statement about the ethics of any abortion, not just late-term ones. Part of this contingent was a group of pro-life advocates inorton, Virginia who came together on Saturday, February 2 to protest the introduced RHA legislation in Virginia. Delegate Tran was scheduled to have a meeting to discuss her bill at South Bend high school that morning, and various pro-life groups collaborated to organize a protest. The meeting was first arranged elsewhere then rescheduled, but the protest went on. A large group gathered outside the high school and listened to speakers' call them to action. This group was a good representation of the pro-life movement and its many branches: a pregnancy center had a table asking for volunteers, the Susan B. Anthony List gave out free donuts and coffee while discussing the need for pro-life politicians, and volunteers passed out flyers advertising the first ever Virginia March for Life in April. Young people, families, and seniors gathered to stand up for life.

One notable conversation I had while in attendance was with a woman who appeared to be very different than me. While I've lived in Maryland my whole life, she lived close by, in Virginia. In addition, she looked to be about fifty and was wearing a Trump hat, while I am twenty-four and just ordered "Impeach" stickers. During our conversation, she said this was her first pro-life rally ever, and I've missed more school for protests and rallies than I care to admit. But we were both there for the same reason: because we felt like we had to stand up and do *something*. We couldn't just sit by while someone called for such a human rights abuse.

I smiled at the woman and said "Don't let this be your last rally!" She replied that she definitely would be back to stand up against injustice. There will be more events coming up to protest late-term abortion, such as both the Virginia and New York Marches for Life. Additionally, Maryland's March for Life is in just a few weeks, and I look forward to attending. I also plan to participate with my local 40 Days for Life, which is in front of a late-term abortion clinic. In these seemingly small ways, hopefully pro-lifers can get their voices heard and stand up against the injustice of late-term abortion, as well as make it clear that all abortion is violence.

Notes

¹ "Senate Bill S240". The New York State Senate. 2019. <https://www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2019/s240>.

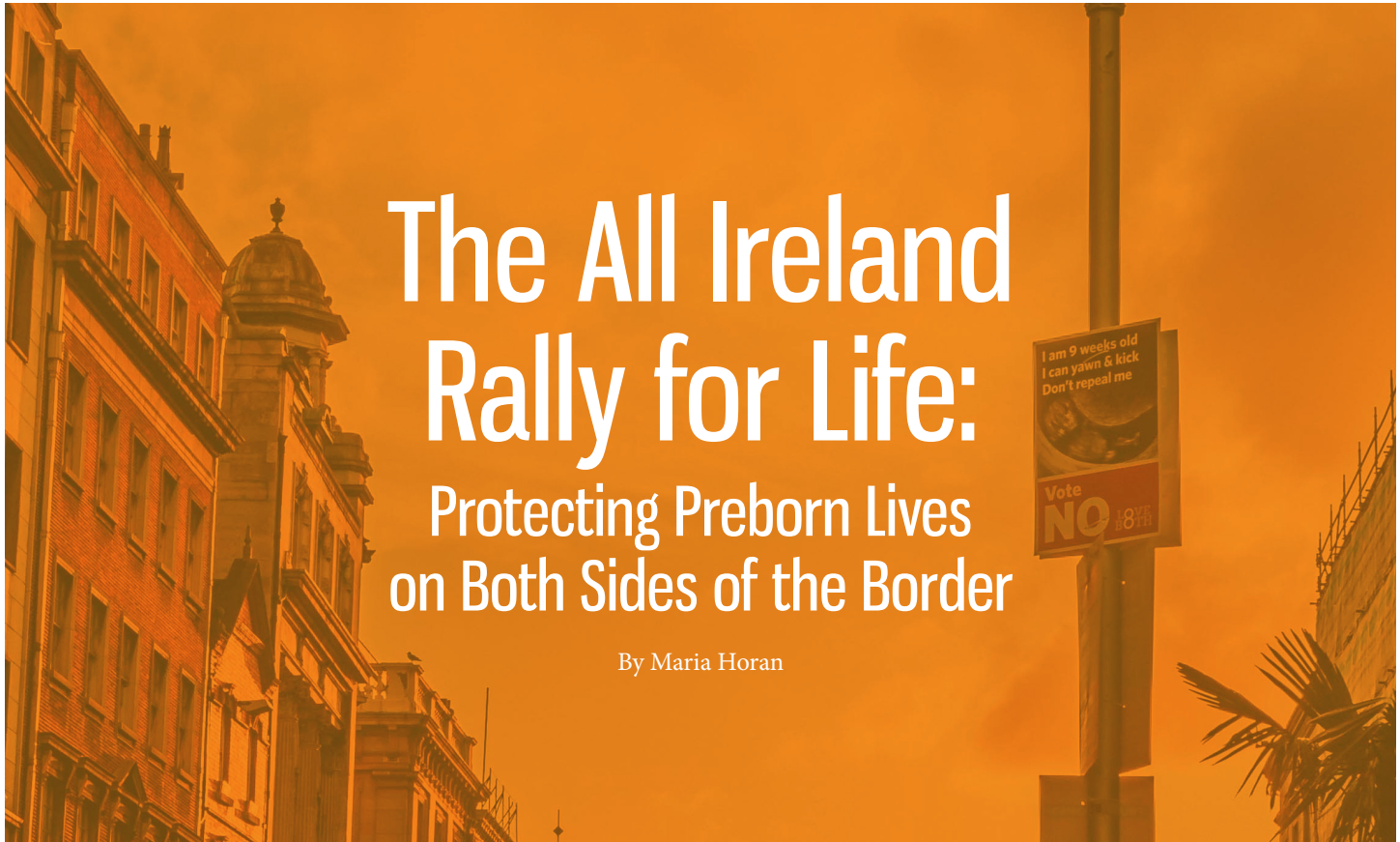
² Reilly, Katie. "A New York Law Has Catapulted Later Abortion Back Into the Political Spotlight. Here's What the Legislation Actually Does", Feb. 1 2019, *Time*, <http://time.com/5514644/later-abortion-new-york-law/>.

³ DeSanctis, Alexandra. "Democrats Overplay Their Hand on Abortion". Feb 4, 2019, *The Atlantic*, <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2019/02/new-york-and-virginia-push-expand-abortion-rights/581959/>.

I smiled at the woman and said, "Don't let this be your last rally!"



Image source: Christy Yao



The All Ireland Rally for Life: Protecting Preborn Lives on Both Sides of the Border

By Maria Horan

The longest running pro-life march in Ireland is the All Ireland Rally for Life,

which is a collaboration of The Life Institute in the Republic of Ireland and Precious Life, the largest pro-life group in Northern Ireland. The idea for the rally was inspired by the huge success of marches in the United States and other nations. It began on the 7th of July, 2007, in the Republic of Ireland’s capital city of Dublin, and the plan was to march on the first Saturday of every July, alternating between Dublin and Northern Ireland’s capital city, Belfast.

THE LOCATIONS

The marches begin in historically important locations in both cities. In Dublin, the crowds have met outside the city’s General Post Office, where Patrick Pearse read out the Proclamation on Easter Monday, 1916, declaring Ireland to be an independent nation from Britain. The Garden of Remembrance has also been used, a location that commemorates various Irish freedom fighters over the centuries and where several Irish 1916 Easter Rising leaders were held before being taken to Kilmainham Gaol to be executed by the British. In Northern Ireland, the Belfast rally usually starts at the Custom House, the steps of which have long been used as a speakers’ corner, where protest speeches have been delivered to ordinary Belfast workers, inciting them to take action against injustices. These historical places demonstrate the fight for justice that continues in Ireland, no longer for nationalism and independence but now for voiceless and defenseless preborn Irish children.

INSPIRATIONAL SPEAKERS

Once again taking inspiration from the American model, various Irish and international speakers have addressed the rally crowds, including former singer and member of the European Parliament Dana Rosemary Scallon; politicians such as Independent Mattie McGrath, one of only twelve who voted against the horrific Abortion Bill passed in the Republic of Ireland before Christmas; and Dr Judy Ceannt, a relative of 1916 Irish revolutionary leader Eamonn Ceannt. In 2009, the *Roe v Wade* plaintiff, the late Norma McCorvey, addressed the Rally in Dublin, discussing her conversion to the pro-life side. Surprise visitors have also attended, such as when in 2007 the Catholic bishop of Phoenix, Arizona, the Rev. Thomas J. Olmstead, saw a flyer for the rally and changed his flight home to the United States so he could attend. He addressed the crowd, comparing the number of American preborn children who are killed annually through abortion to the million Irish who died in the 1845 Famine.

THEMED “CARNIVAL ATMOSPHERE”

Each year has focused on a specific theme. In 2007, the first year of the march, the theme was “Celebrate Life.” While the emphasis has been on keeping Ireland abortion-free, marches have also focused on opposing embryo research in University College Cork. Other themes have included: “Every Life Matters” and “Keep Ireland Abortion-free.” Face-painting, music, balloons, and banners complement the themes, ensuring that the atmosphere is upbeat and positive. Even the vehemently pro-abortion newspaper *The Irish Times* has described the Rally for Life atmosphere as

“carnival-like.”¹ This is in stark contrast to the abortion advocates’ rallies that took place in the lead-up to the Referendum, with displays of monochrome “Repeal” t-shirts and even placards and banners supplied by Amnesty International, featuring images of barbed wire and prison sentence references.²

THE FINAL “SAVE THE 8TH” RALLY

The Save the 8th campaign, meant to preserve the 8th amendment to the Irish constitution that protects preborn life, ramped up their presence in March 2018 and organized an incredible rally in Dublin, garnering attention from abroad as well as reluctant praise from the biased and pro-Repeal Irish and British media.³ Though reported figures have varied, approximately 100,000 people attended — an incredible number for a nation with fewer than 5 million citizens. Various international speakers spoke to the throngs, including American Down Syndrome activist and UN addressee Charlie Fien, who gave an inspirational speech on how abortion targets people such as herself. New Wave Feminists’ Destiny Haddon-De La Rosa was also present and delivered a strong pro-life feminist message, stating that: “Abortion is the ultimate exploitation of women and is a symptom of women’s oppression. Ireland should lead the way by saving the 8th.”⁴

The Republic may have legalized abortion, but the marchers from the Republic of Ireland were declaring their support for the now-isolated and vulnerable Northern Ireland.



Image source: [All Ireland Rally for Life](#)

“THE NORTH PROTECTS”

After the tragic landslide vote to repeal the 8th Amendment in the South of Ireland, politicians rapidly turned their attention to the North. On the 26th of May, during the shameful celebrations of the Repealers at Dublin Castle when the “yes” side was declared to have won, Sinn Féin’s Republic of Ireland Leader Mary Lou Mc-

Donald and Northern Ireland Deputy Leader, Michelle O’Neill waved a piece of cardboard for the cameras which ominously read: “The North is Next.”⁵ This referred to the fact that Northern Ireland is not regulated by the UK Abortion Act 1967 and so preborn children continue to be protected there. However, as an ingenious subversion of this image, in July’s Belfast “Rally for Life,” Precious Life’s Bernie Smyth and The Life Institute’s Niamh Uí Bhrian held up a sign which read: “The North Protects.”⁶ Many people in the crowds carried placards with the same message. The Republic may have legalized abortion, but the marchers from the Republic of Ireland were declaring their support for the now-isolated and vulnerable Northern Ireland.

AND THE FUTURE?

In the lead-up to the Irish abortion referendum, the Save the 8th pro-lifers had been up against deeply unjust odds: the Irish and international media lock-out of pro-life coverage and openly blatant support for Repeal; the vast majority of Irish politicians being in favor of Repeal; Amnesty International’s relentless and biased targeting of Ireland’s pro-life laws, with millions of pounds of overseas monies⁷ being funneled into overturning Ireland’s laws (some of which was illegally acquired and still hasn’t been returned).⁸ However, pro-life alliances were formed and bonds were created among thousands of volunteers who had generously given so much time and energy in the months and even years before the Irish Referendum.

Ireland can be motivated by the incredible energy and drive that fuels the United States’ Marches for Life. Even though the Republic of Ireland has fallen prey to abortion, this cruel, despicable, and unjust law will be overturned. And with the ongoing and relentless attacks from members of the British parliament such as Diana Johnson and Stella Creasy on Northern Ireland’s pro-life laws, this is no time for complacency.⁹ Pro-lifers on both sides of the Irish border need to stay strong and support each other. The fight will continue until the whole island of Ireland is pro-life again, protecting the lives of both mother and child and once more serving as an inspiration to the rest of the world.

Notes

¹ Account from *Solas* magazine, 2007; see <https://bit.ly/2Sc3nqO>.

² Elaine Edwards and Rachel Flaherty, “Thousands March against the Eighth Amendment in Dublin,” *Irish Times*, March 8, 2017, <https://bit.ly/2sW8nle>.

³ See, for example, BBC, “Anti-abortion March Ahead of Irish Referendum,” March 10, 2018, <https://bbc.in/2UyTyh>, though it is erroneously claimed here that Savita Halappanavar died from lack of abortion access, as opposed to misdiagnosed sepsis.

⁴ “Record-Breaking Crowds as 100,000 Rally to Say ‘Vote No to Abortion,’” Rally for Life, accessed January 29, 2019, <https://bit.ly/2sT6PYX>.

⁵ Seanin Graham, “Mary Lou McDonald: We Won’t Let Women in North Be Marooned,” *Irish News*, May 28, 2018, <https://bit.ly/2WsZUU5>.

⁶ SPUC (Society for the Protection of Unborn Children), “The North Protects: Thousands Rally for Life in Belfast,” July 9, 2018, <https://bit.ly/2UpzS24>.

⁷ Bhriain, Niamh Uí. “The US billionaires funding the push for abortion in Ireland.” Life Institute. March 11, 2012. accessed February 3, 2019, <https://bit.ly/2BmurKa>.

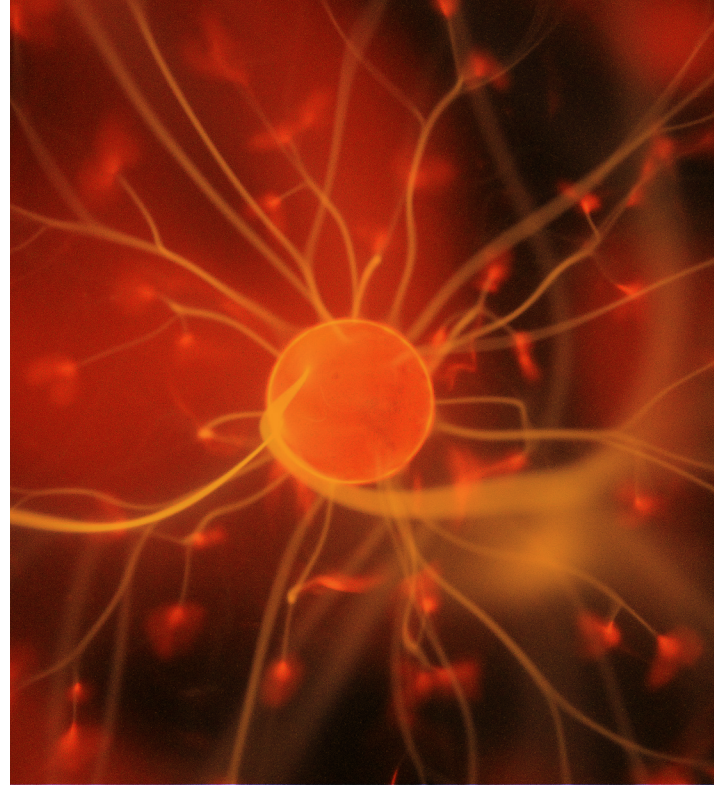
⁸ Sarah Bardon, “Amnesty International Ordered to Return Donation from Billionaire George Soros,” *Irish Times*, December 8, 2017, <https://bit.ly/2DkRVyw>.

⁹ Dan Sabbagh, “Labour MPs in Fresh Bid to Legalise Abortion in Northern Ireland,” *Guardian*, October 23, 2018, <https://bit.ly/2HNYRdU>.



A Look Into Scientific Advancements Since *Roe*

By Stephanie Hauer



CHIEF JUSTICE BURGER: Do you make any distinction between the first month, and ninth month of gestation?
MRS. WEDDINGTON: Our statute does not.¹

In 1973, when *Roe v. Wade* was decided by the Supreme Court, some knowledge about fetal development was readily available. Sarah Weddington, representative of Jane Roe, chose to ignore this science in her advocacy for legal abortion protection.² In the forty-five years since, however, science has made progress that we cannot ignore. With each study, individuals learn more about the miraculous process of human development that begins at conception. Medical developments and scientific advancements continue to reaffirm that life begins at conception.

When *Roe v. Wade* was settled by the Supreme Court, it established that the fetus was considered viable during the third trimester, or week twenty-eight.³ This was the commonly held medical belief at that time. The Supreme Court decided that states could have the most freedom to regulate abortion during this stage, though abortion still could not be outlawed completely.⁴ In recent years, the threshold for viability has been demonstrated to be significantly earlier than the beginning of the third trimester. In fact, most scientists now agree that viability is achieved at twenty-four weeks, though some premature babies can survive when born as early as twenty-two weeks.⁵

A joint workshop by the *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists released a summary document in 2014. It stated that babies

should be considered viable outside the womb once they reach twenty-three weeks, because a quarter of premature babies born at this age survive when given intense medical intervention and treatment.⁶ Some babies born at twenty-two weeks also survived, with or without lasting impairments.⁷

Studies have shown that at twenty weeks, babies can feel pain.⁸ That is why an anesthesia clinical review book published in 2015 highlighted the importance of fetal anesthesia for babies going through in-utero surgery. “The fetus is able to mount a psychosocial stress response to pain starting around eighteen weeks of gestation.”⁹ Administering anesthesia for babies of twenty weeks who are undergoing in-utero surgery is common and standard practice in the medical field, because babies have developed all of the nerve endings, brain segments, neurotransmitters, hormones, and signals necessary to feel pain.¹⁰

Nineteen states ban abortion after eighteen weeks, except to save the life of the mother.¹¹ If abortion at this stage is permitted, the procedure is extensive. The first step is to inject the baby with a drug that will stop their heart. The baby will panic in the womb and move any way they can in a desperate attempt to avoid the incoming needle. Such movements have been captured through ultrasounds.¹²

Ultrasounds have also led to positive moments of watching babies, like when Jen Cardinal and her husband watched their fourteen-week old clap along to music.¹³ Babies are usually able to hear their first sounds somewhere between sixteen and eighteen weeks.¹⁴ It seems that what they hear in the womb can influence them later in life. Researchers in Finland found that babies had more advanced language recognition skills if they listened to made up words before birth.¹⁵

By eighteen weeks of development, a baby has made many

advancements.¹⁶ They can suck their own thumb and yawn. They have been able to open and close their fists since the third month. At six weeks, their heartbeat was first detectable, marking another significant point of development for the fetus — but perhaps the most exciting point of development is the moment of conception.

At conception, studies have shown that when the sperm and the egg meet, a "zinc spark" can be observed.¹⁷ In a specific experiment using fluorescent dye reactive to zinc, a flash of light could be observed when the sperm triggered a surge of calcium that caused the egg to release some zinc. This zinc would bind with small molecules and gave off light under the microscope. "All of biology starts at the time of fertilization, yet we know next to nothing about the events that occur in the human," said Professor Teresa Woodruff of Northwestern University.¹⁸ She was very excited about the groundbreaking nature of this observation: "It was remarkable... to see the zinc radiate out in a burst from each human egg was breathtaking."

This flash can only be observed in a lab setting with this specific chemical medium, but it still illustrates an important moment in the development of a human.¹⁹ We know that life begins at the moment of sperm-egg fusion at fertilization: this creates a unique organism with distinct DNA from both parents that grows and develops as its own entity.²⁰ That delicate human being grows in symbiosis with their mother, but they are a separate organism from their mother. They are unique, they are alive, and as a human being, they deserve protection.

Even the courtroom of *Roe v. Wade* knew that the preborn child, if a living human being, would deserve right to life:

Justice Stewart: "If it were established that an unborn fetus is a person, with the protection of the Fourteenth Amendment, you would have an almost impossible case here, would you not?"

Mrs. Weddington: "I would have a very difficult case."²¹

And later,

Justice White: "Well, if you're correct that the fetus is a person, then I don't suppose you'd have — the State would have great trouble permitting an abortion, would it?"

Mr. Flowers [representative of Henry Wade] : "Yes, sir."²²

At the time of this conversation, scientific evidence showed that a baby could survive outside of the womb at twenty-eight weeks. However, they chose to ignore this threshold, and ignore the personhood that is inherent to a human being regardless of age. This idea that a person only becomes valuable and protectable when they are born is discriminatory exclusion not based in scientific reasoning. Instead, it is an arbitrary distinction set by outdated notions of understanding.

Since January 22, 1973, science has made constant progress. We know more now about the development of babies in the womb, and we have learned more about how to care for their health. Babies born as early as twenty-two weeks have a fighting chance at life when given the proper medical attention. In addition, the moment of conception is a dramatic miracle, and it sets in motion an exciting process full of developmental milestones and growth for the

preborn. Science agrees that the fetus is a living, distinct, whole, and unique human being, and that fact is reaffirmed with each new study. With this ever-growing body of knowledge on our side, we can continue to advocate for our siblings in the womb with clarity and confidence.

Notes

¹ *Roe v. Wade*, 410 U.S. 113 (1973). <https://www.scribd.com/document/68497271/Transcript-Roe-v-Wade-Re-Argument-Oct-1972>.

² Ibid.

³ "Roe v. Wade (1973)," Legal Information Institute, August 19, 2010, https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/roe_v_wade_%281973%29.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Pam Belluck, "Premature Babies May Survive at 22 Weeks If Treated, Study Finds," *New York Times*, May 6, 2015. <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/07/health/premature-babies-22-weeks-viability-study.html>.

⁶ Matthew A. Rysavy, et al., "Between-Hospital Variation in Treatment and Outcomes in Extremely Preterm Infants," *New England Journal of Medicine* 372, 1801-181 (2015): 10.1056

⁷ TNK Rajo, et al., "Periviable Birth: Executive Summary of a Joint Workshop by the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine, American Academy of Pediatrics, and American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists." *Journal of Perinatology* 34 (2014): 333-342, 10.1038/jp.2014.70.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Linda S. Aglio, Robert W. Lekowski, and Richard D. Urman, eds., *Essential Clinical Anesthesia Review: Keywords, Questions and Answers for the Boards* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ "An Overview of Abortion Laws," Guttmacher Institute, Mar. 9, 2016, <https://www.guttmacher.org/state-policy/explore/overview-abortion-laws>.

¹² *The Silent Scream*, directed by Jack Duane Dabner (1984; United States: American Portrait Films).

¹³ Pro-Life Wisconsin, "4D Ultrasounds," Life Issues Institute, Aug. 7, 2015, <https://www.lifeissues.org/4d-ultrasounds/>.

¹⁴ Jessica Timmons, "When Can a Fetus Hear?" *Healthline*, Sep. 22, 2015, <https://www.healthline.com/health/pregnancy/when-can-a-fetus-hear>.

¹⁵ Meghan Holohan, "Unborn babies are hearing you, loud and clear," *Today*, Oct. 14, 2016, <http://www.today.com/parents/unborn-babies-are-hearing-you-loud-clear-8C11005474>.

¹⁶ Timmons, "When Can a Fetus Hear?"

¹⁷ Sarah Knapton, "Bright flash of light marks incredible moment life begins when sperm meets egg," *Daily Telegraph*, Apr. 26, 2016, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/science/2016/04/26/bright-flash-of-light-marks-incredible-moment-life-begins-when-s/>.

¹⁸ Knapton, "Bright flash of light"

¹⁹ Stacy Trasancos, "Contrary to Reports, There Is No Flash of Light at Conception," *National Catholic Register*, May 22, 2016, <http://www.ncregister.com/blog/trasancos/pro-lifers-there-is-no-flash-of-light-at-conception>.

²⁰ "Pregnancy: Ovulation, Conception & Getting Pregnant," Cleveland Clinic, Sep. 2, 2014. <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/11585-pregnancy-ovulation-conception--getting-pregnant>.

²¹ *Roe v. Wade*.

²² Ibid.





Plan to see *Unplanned* this Spring

By Maria Oswalt

There are many times I feel discouraged as a pro-life activist. Sometimes the weight of what we're up against seems like it's just too much — I remember that babies are killed by the thousands each day, I see once-pro-life friends defending legal abortion online, I hear about the Supreme Court shooting down common-sense regulations for abortion clinics in Louisiana — and it can be easy to slip into a sort of despair. I want to cry for those children. I want to rage against the system that allows this violence to continue. I want to wallow in my emotions. While this is certainly a reasonable response to large-scale violence, my despair isn't going to change any hearts and minds. Connecting with other pro-life activists and knowing that I'm not alone when I feel this way is helpful, but sometimes the only cure for a discouraged heart is to witness an authentic success story. A win.

Enter *Unplanned*, the soon-to-be-released (on March 29) film depiction of Abby Johnson's journey.

Many may already be familiar with Johnson's work, but here is a synopsis of her story for the unacquainted: she became involved with Planned Parenthood while in college at Texas A&M University. After meeting an employee at the student fair, she was convinced that Planned Parenthood cared for women in need, so she signed up to be a clinic volunteer. Johnson rose through the ranks over the years, becoming increasingly convinced of the necessity of abortion and Planned Parenthood, and she eventually became the director of her local clinic. Planned Parenthood named her employee of the year in 2008.

Throughout this journey, Johnson developed a complicated friendship with the sidewalk counselors from 40 Days for Life who would often pray outside of her clinic. Their peaceful, prayerful presence — in contrast with more aggressive activists, who would use graphic imagery and yell at women going inside the clinic — had built a trust between them. This trust became crucial when Johnson's eyes were opened to the violence of abortion; on a September day in 2009, she walked out of Planned Parenthood and headed straight for the 40 Days for Life office. They gave her the

encouragement she needed to leave her job and to face the many legal attacks thrown at her by Planned Parenthood. She's been a pro-life activist ever since. With her ministry, *And Then There Were None*, Johnson now assists other abortion workers as they leave the industry.

I was lucky enough to view the director's cut of *Unplanned* in Washington, DC, the weekend of the national March for Life. It is one of the most frank and realistic pro-life movies I've ever seen. It spares no details in its truthful retelling of Johnson's journey, and in my opinion, it fairly represents the motivations that lead people to work in the abortion industry — which is extremely important for pro-life activists to understand if they hope to convince pro-choicers to switch sides. It's an intense, poignant, must-see for anyone involved in the pro-life movement.

Outside the pro-life movement, this film could be hugely beneficial as a discussion-starter. While I can't say how many pro-choicers will choose to view the film independently (of course, I hope that many will, but let's be honest, with "FROM THE PRODUCERS OF *GOD'S NOT DEAD*" on much of the film's marketing, pro-choicers uninterested in challenging their worldview will steer clear of it), I think that providing ample opportunities for them to do so, through mainstream theaters and student groups hosting campus viewings, could lead to many conversions. The film gets to the root of the abortion issue. It doesn't shy away from honestly depicting what drew Abby Johnson into the abortion industry, as well as what convinced her to break free from it. At its core, it's just the story of a woman seeking truth and goodness, which pro-choicers and pro-lifers alike can relate to.

As I mentioned earlier, this film is also the perfect success story for activists in need of encouragement. *Unplanned* doesn't bother with feel-good fluff, which would make it feel shallow or corny; it sticks to the facts, and the facts alone are motivation enough. Abby Johnson's conversion is proof that patient, persistent love is what changes hearts.



January Maybe

By Christy Yao

A sea of red baseball caps
With white letters.
Words about,
Making the country better?

A forest of pink
Hats with ears on top.
A feline image,
Will it make oppression stop?

Not much crossover,
Though there is some.
Both groups swear they are right,
That the other's just dumb.

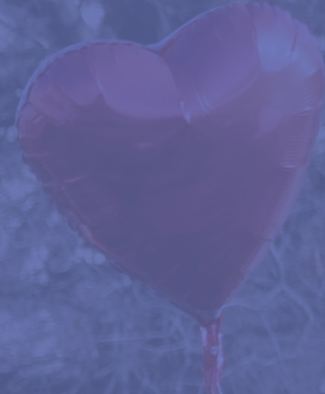
Both want freedom,
But what does freedom mean?
The freedom to oppress,
Or just to be obscene?

Both want justice,
But what is justice about?
Is it given by divine right,
Is it the right to shout?

And what divides us?
Our ideas are the same,
We all want to live in a world,
Full of love,
Free from shame.

Maybe it's not about,
An elephant or a donkey,
Maybe it's about,
The fight for equality.

Maybe there's a middle way,
It's not women *or* babies,
Maybe we can love both,
Maybe, just maybe.





Still Walking Away From Omelas

By Sarah Hinlicky Wilson

For three decades now I have been reading and re-reading, mulling over and arguing with Ursula K. Le Guin's extraordinary corpus: the superlative Earthsea quintet and the lesser-known *Annals of the Western Shore*, the humane science fiction of the Hainish cycle, the retelling of the Aeneid from the perspective of the minor female character Lavinia, and the deliberately post-plot ethnology of *Always Coming Home* — but nothing has ever hit me quite as hard as her short story from the 1970s entitled “The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas.”¹

It's not much of a story, actually. There's no plot to speak of. It's a variation on the theme of suffering children, which is offered as a reason in *The Brothers Karamazov* to disbelieve in God, and more explicitly is a response to William James's rumination about the “hideous... bargain” of making millions happy at the cost of one lost soul.²

The tale begins with a depiction of a place so bright and beautiful it is hard to not to fall in love with it: “the city of Omelas, bright towered by the sea.” There are “old moss-grown gardens” and “avenues of trees,” “merry women carrying their babies” while “the music beat faster, a shimmering of gong and tambourine” during a festival involving horses whose “manes were braided with streamers of silver, gold, and green.”

The anonymous narrator — perhaps the author herself — knows you won't and can't believe it. Joy is unconvincing. Happy people are inferred to be simple people. Our bias is to believe that “only pain is intellectual, only evil interesting.” But she wants you to know that these are “mature, intelligent, passionate” folk. They have no kings, no slaves, no clergy, and they manage quite fine without “the stock exchange, the advertisement, the secret police, and the bomb.” It is the ideal of human community:

A boundless and generous contentment, a magnanimous triumph felt not against some outer enemy but in communion with the finest and fairest in the souls of all men everywhere and the splendor of the world's summer: this is what

swells in the hearts of the people of Omelas, and the victory they celebrate is that of life.

Omelas may have no bombs, but now the narrator drops one of her own. There is another facet to Omelas that needs to be told.

In a basement under one of the beautiful public buildings of Omelas, or perhaps in the cellar of one of its spacious private homes, there is a room. It has one locked door, and no window... The room is about three paces long and two wide: a mere broom closet or disused tool room. In the room a child is sitting. It could be a boy or a girl. It looks about six, but actually is nearly ten. It is feeble-minded. Perhaps it was born defective, or perhaps it has become imbecile through fear, malnutrition, and neglect. It picks its nose and occasionally fumbles vaguely with its toes or genitals, as it sits hunched in the corner ... The door is always locked; and nobody ever comes, except that sometimes — the child has no understanding of time or interval — sometimes the door rattles terribly and opens, and a person, or several people, are there. One of them may come in and kick the child to make it stand up. The others never come close, but peer in at it with frightened, disgusted eyes. The food bowl and the water jug are hastily filled, the door is locked, the eyes disappear. The people at the door never say anything but the child, who has not always lived in the tool room, and can remember sunlight and its mother's voice, sometimes speaks. “I will be good,” it says. “Please let me out. I will be good!” They never answer. The child used to scream for help at night, and cry a good deal, but now it only makes a kind of whining, “eh-haa, eh-haa,” and it speaks less and less often. It is so thin there are no calves to its legs; its belly protrudes; it lives on a half-bowl of corn meal and grease a day. It is naked. Its buttocks and thighs are a mass of festered sores, as it sits in its own excrement continually.

The dirty secret of Omelas provokes the horror of recognition. Human happiness, and human wealth even more so, seeks to avoid direct confrontation with all those at whose expense it lives. Perhaps, as human societies go, Omelas is virtuous: after all, it is only *one* single child who lives in such wretchedness — the greatest good for the greatest number!

The narrator goes on to tell us that everyone in Omelas knows about the child in the dark. Young people are inducted into the secret at the right time. Good people and the progeny of good people that they are, “these young spectators are always shocked and sickened at the sight.” Disgust, anger, and outrage follow. They want to help — but soon realize they can't. “If the child were brought up into the sunlight out of that vile place, if it were cleaned and fed and comforted, that would be a good thing, indeed; but if it were done, in that day and hour all the prosperity and beauty and delight of Omelas would wither and be destroyed. Those are the terms.” Who would risk “to throw away the happiness of thousands for the chance of the happiness of one”?

So, in time, the children and adults alike of Omelas accommodate their consciences to the terrible bargain. They are very sensible about the matter. It's too late for the child, after all: even if

it were released, it would never regain its lost mind, would never trust, would live forever beyond the humanizing touch of others — so the bargain is not just a matter of preserving their own personal comfort but realistically assessing the prospects for the one suffering child.

Their tears at the bitter injustice dry when they begin to perceive the terrible justice of reality, and to accept it. Yet it is their tears and anger, the trying of their generosity and the acceptance of their helplessness, which are perhaps the true source of the splendor of their lives. Theirs is no vapid, irresponsible happiness. They know that they, like the child, are not free. They know compassion. It is the existence of the child, and the knowledge of its existence, that makes possible the nobility of their architecture, the poignancy of their music, the profundity of their science. It is because of the child that they are so gentle with children.

It's almost enough to lure you in. We are mature, intelligent, compassionate adults too, after all. We know how vast and complex the problems of the world are, how little we can change despite our best intentions, how often our best intentions go awry and generate worse problems yet. Shed the tears, acknowledge the injustice, and carry on as best you can.

"But," the narrator informs us, "there is one more thing to tell."

Some of the youth who are confronted with the suffering child do not return home. "Sometimes also a man or woman much older falls silent for a day or two, and then leaves home." Such people walk through the city of Omelas, out its beautiful gates, through the surrounding villages, and head toward the mountains, toward the unknown. "They leave Omelas, they walk ahead into the darkness, and they do not come back. The place they go towards is a place even less imaginable to most of us than the city of happiness. I cannot describe it at all. It is possible that it does not exist. But they seem to know where they are going, the ones who walk away from Omelas."

And so the story ends.

When I first read it as a teenager, Le Guin's story struck me as a clarion call to life — a commitment to what I would not have known then, but since have come to identify as the consistent ethic of life. The ethic of life does not admit of selectivity. The punishment of innocent children is bound up with questions of poverty; peace is not peace when it is at someone else's expense; war and wealth are more intertwined than we like to believe. Ultimately, any ethic that allows someone else to be the scapegoat — the fetus, the poor, the foreigner, take your pick of any other favored scapegoat of history — is a false ethic, a deadly one. It is against life, whosoever's life it may valorously preserve.

Needless to say, I assumed that the author of this stirring story must see it the same way and apply her own insight consistently. Then, many years later, I started reading her essays.

To say I was shocked to discover that Le Guin was a pro-choice activist is an understatement. It was more like a blow to the gut. How could the woman who wrote "Omelas" turn around and endorse the elimination of the powerless children?

The inconsistency is stunning. In her essay "Moral and Ethical Implications of Family Planning," for example, Le Guin approv-

ingly quoted author Irene Clarement de Castillejo's words: "Woman, who is so intimately and profoundly concerned with life, takes death in her stride. For her, to rid herself of an unwanted fetus is as much in accord with nature as for a cat to refuse milk to a weakling kitten. It is man who has evolved principles about the sacredness of life... and women have passionately adopted them as their own. But principles are abstract... Woman's basic instinct is not concerned with the *idea* of life, but with the *fact* of life. The ruthlessness of nature which discards unwanted life is deeply ingrained in her."³ Le Guin concluded that "woman's desire to have children" can be turned into "ethical coercion... bondage, a hideous sentimental trap."⁴ But "if we can get feminine and human morality out from under the yoke of a dead ethic, then maybe we'll begin to get somewhere on the road that leads to survival."⁵ I wonder whose "survival" she had in mind?

This frank acknowledgement of the elimination of unwanted life didn't sit well with her once she saw it on paper, or so I suspect. She retreated from that kind of moral justification of abortion in her later essays, though not from the justification of abortion itself. Perhaps not surprisingly, there was a personal reason for her position. What is surprising, however, is that her contorted rationale in favor of abortion was, in fact, an argument for life.

Thus, in another essay she recounted — in the genre of a fairy tale, before revealing that she herself was "the princess" — getting pregnant by a "weak, selfish man"⁶ in college well before *Roe v. Wade*, and her parents' determination to get their daughter the best abortion money could buy. Upon expressing her worry that she was being cowardly and evading the consequences of her actions, her father replied: "That's right. You are. That cowardice, dishonesty, evasion, is a lesser sin than the crass irresponsibility of sacrificing your training, your talent, and the children you will want to have, in order to have one nobody wants to have."⁷ Some years afterwards, she married and "had three desired and beloved children, none of whom would have been born if her first pregnancy had gone to term."⁸ Her conclusion: "If any birth is better than no birth, and more births are better than fewer births, as the 'Right-to-Life' people insist, then they should approve of my abortion, which resulted in three babies instead of one."⁹ The unwanted child had to be sacrificed — scapegoated — to make room for the other three.

Years later she was still telling the story this way. Had she not had the abortion, she wrote, "...I would have borne a child for them, for the anti-abortion people, the authorities, the theorists, the fundamentalists; I would have borne a child for them, their child. But I would not have borne my own first child, or second child, or third child. My children. The life of that fetus would have prevented, would have aborted, three other fetuses, or children, or lives, or whatever your choose to call them... If I had not broken the law and aborted that life nobody wanted, [my three children] would have been aborted by a cruel, bigoted, and senseless law."¹⁰ I can't help but see the first aborted child on the floor of that dank basement in Omelas. Why didn't she?

It isn't the simple fact that Le Guin supported abortion rights that astounds me. It's that her entire body of work is devoted to critically reimagining human society in alternate ways — from the anarchic, ambiguous utopia in *The Dispossessed* depicting a society in which all things are held in common, to tales of Orsinian revolution, to the alternately-gendered *Left Hand of Darkness*, to the

powerful critiques of the handling of power in her fantasy novels, to the anti-war tirade of *The Word for World Is Forest*. Why in this case could she not, would she not, imagine another way? Why did her unborn child retain its unalterable position as the enemy of its mother's education and the lives of its younger siblings? Why were no alternate social arrangements on Le Guin's horizon — adoption, social and financial support for mothers, husbands wise and compassionate enough to raise the children of other men?

I don't know, in her case, and since her death at the age of eighty-eight in early 2018, it's too late to ask. I wish I had. She alludes not infrequently to the apparent desire of "Right-to-Lifers" to control women's bodies and sexuality: she evidently could not fathom any other reason for their ethical stance, and I'm afraid that in some cases, at least, she had reason for her suspicion.

But all this reveals to me why we remain so stuck, culturally and legally, over this issue. It's because none of us is consistently pro-life.¹¹ Instead we self-select into mutually hostile groups. Thus, for example, we oppose abortion but defend semi-automatic weapons. We defend unwanted minorities but send unwanted fetuses to the knife. We decry the holocaust of girl babies in sex-selective abortion but refuse to address the crisis of sexual assault and the feminization of poverty. We talk tolerance and then systematically shame and silence those who think differently. We refuse to recognize that capital punishment and abortion, matters of war and matters of undocumented immigrants, sexual assault and endemic poverty, crises of race and crises of family are all at root the same thing — a deep-seated contempt for whatever form of life inconveniences us. Whether we stand at the left, right, or center, we are all contented dwellers in Omelas, pretending that we don't live at the expense of other lives. Even those who see as penetratingly into human souls and societies as Le Guin fall prey to this self-delusion.

Whether we stand at the left,
right, or center, we are all
contented dwellers in Omelas,
pretending that we don't live at
the expense of other lives.

What great fiction like Le Guin's does — counter-intuitively — is to present to our imaginations real persons in all their particularity, complexity, and contradictions. And yet the more I observe our contemporary culture, the more I suspect that what it fears above all is real persons. It wants anything but that face-to-face encounter, that entanglement with the infinite complexity of an actual human soul animating a particular human body. No dependent, inconvenient fetuses; no struggling, nonproductive sufferers of mental illness; no costly old age; no wounds from a hard life; no unresolved hungers; no complicated emotions; no migrants from troubled societies; no elderly taking their time toward death, just cyborg duplicates that fit better on an assembly line and curated

social media profiles that can be better summarized in 140 characters than in a poem or a play.

But if we took a hard look at our person-avoidant habits, and if we invited even those with whom we most disagree to look with us, we might start to see clearly how deeply entailed in one another are positions usually thought to be opposed. There is no separating the issue of abortion from poverty, and yet somehow our two political parties and their adherents claim one end of the spectrum or the other and refuse to see the connection between the two. One can signal *noblesse oblige* enlightenment on immigrants and race without noticing how one's open-mindedness is premised on the comforts of financial security built on unjust zoning laws and non-transparency in industrial production. One can defend American military intervention for the sake of freedom while remaining strangely oblivious to the wholesale destruction it has wrought on our own Americans in the form of moral and physical injury and debilitating PTSD, to say nothing of what it has done to destroy lives and freedoms in occupied territory. One can speak eloquently of neurodiversity and advocate for more sensitive educational practices, yet in the same breath condone the abortion of Down Syndrome fetuses. And on it goes.

Ursula Le Guin did not intend to make a pro-life advocate out of me. She did not articulate or advance a consistent life ethic in any public or formal way. But I ascribe credit to her all the same for prodding me to the outskirts of Omelas. I like to think that, in her own way, she spent her many productive decades as a writer gazing at the mountains beyond the city gates of Omelas, hoping eventually to find her way there. May we all find our way someday to that place of life that even so great a soul as Le Guin could not imagine.

Sarah Hinlicky Wilson is a writer, a theologian, and a pastor at Tokyo Lutheran Church. Read more of her work at www.sarahhinlickywilson.com.

Notes

¹ Ursula Le Guin, "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas," in *The Wind's Twelve Quarters*, vol. 2 (London: Granada, 1978), 112–120. All uncited quotations come from this story.

² So says Le Guin in her introduction to the story, *ibid.*

³ Ursula K. Le Guin, "Moral and Ethical Implications of Family Planning," in *Dancing at the Edge of the World: Thoughts on Words, Women, Places* (New York: Grove, 1989), 19.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁶ Ursula K. Le Guin, "The Princess," in *Dancing at the Edge of the World*, 78. The essay was first presented to the Portland, Oregon, branch of the National Abortion Rights Action League.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 76.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 77.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Ursula K. Le Guin, "What It Was Like," in *Words Are My Matter: Writing about Life and Books 2000–2016* (Easthampton: Small Beer, 2016), 7–8.

¹¹ See Ryan P. Burge, "Almost No One in the U.S. Believes in a 'Consistent Ethic of Life,'" *Christianity Today* online, September 12, 2017, <https://bit.ly/2RZltwI>.



Post-Roe: Eliminating the Crisis, Not the Pregnancy

By Christy Yao

A common pro-choice argument

is that women will always need abortions. This argument claims that we cannot end crisis pregnancies, so we cannot end the solution to these pregnancies: abortion. However, pro-life advocates seek a different solution to crisis pregnancies. The pro-life response to this argument is that the woman's crisis is what should be eliminated, not the child the woman is carrying.

Jeannie French of Democrats for Life of America recently gave a talk at the Rehumanize Conference titled "The Answer to Crisis Pregnancy: Eliminate the Crisis, not the Child."¹ French described two types of abortions: The "OMG! Abortions" — otherwise known as a "crisis pregnancy," where the mother feels she cannot support a child — and the "fetal defects" abortions, where the pregnancy is wanted, but the child has been diagnosed with a condition where the doctors recommend terminating. French then went into the history of the *Roe v. Wade* decision of 1973, where at the time, there was much less information on fetal life. Since 1973, the science of fetology has improved; for example, doctors can now perform surgery on fetuses.

In her talk, French revealed the deeply personal story that she carried an unborn child with an fatal condition to term. She was pregnant with twins, and her doctor could see that one of the twins was not going to survive long past birth due to a severe case of spina bifida. The doctors recommended a selective abortion, but she refused. She did not know if doctors would be able to perform surgery on her

daughter and was told that her daughter would not be able to survive without being intubated. Her daughter lived for three hours after being born at full-term.

Now, French uses her heartbreaking experience for good by testifying for a ban on partial-birth abortion. French was determined to make as much good as possible come out of her daughter's short life, so she arranged for her daughter's organs to be donated to save other babies. Additionally, in her advocacy, she is able to see the pain of the mothers who abort their children. French stressed our duty to help children as they pass through this life.

In addition, the pro-life movement needs to stress helping mothers in crisis pregnancies, such as "OMG! Abortions." French explained that the pregnancy is not the crisis, but the woman's situation may

Women need
someone to say
"I'll be there."

be. She then explained what a woman may need in order to not have an abortion. French found that what women in crisis often need is not material goods. After all, women frequently have abortions to please or protect someone else; they cannot see a way out of their situation, and what they need is someone who will be with them and encourage them to have their children. Women need someone to say "I'll be there." That being said, French explained, we cannot forget about the impact of

job discrimination, low wages, etc. on women feeling compelled to abort.

French's talk is coherent with advice given from Lamaze International and research done by the Charlotte Lozier Institute. Lamaze reports that, according to the CDC, nearly half of US pregnancies

are unplanned. Lamaze reminds those who usually view pregnancy as a joyful event that those facing unplanned pregnancies can be shocked, upset, or devastated at the news that they are expecting. This can be especially hard when combined with the physical toll that the first trimester can take on a woman's body.²

Lamaze recommends that women first take care of their physical needs and focus on maintaining a healthy pregnancy, which can take the focus away from negative emotions. It is especially beneficial for the woman to confide in someone she trusts for comfort and support, similar to French's advice. Lamaze reminds women not to feel guilty about what they are feeling and to remember that feelings are not actions. A woman being upset about a crisis pregnancy does not make her a bad mother. Conversely, a woman who is excited or happy at a crisis pregnancy does not make her irresponsible or make her joy any less real. Lastly, Lamaze recommends a mother facing an unplanned pregnancy finds comfort and support from other women who have been in their shoes, as well as consult with a counselor, psychiatrist, or other health professional about any concerns she might have.¹

In 2018, the Lozier Institute published a report called, "A Half Century of Hope, a Legacy of Life and Love" based on data collected from pregnancy center networks Carenet, Heartbeat International, and the National Institute of Family and Life Advocates, as well as many smaller networks. The key findings from this report included that in 2017, 2,752 pregnancy centers provided almost 2,000,000 people with approximately \$161 million of free services. This includes 679,600 free pregnancy tests, classes for 679,600 parents, and support for 24,100 post-abortive people. 70% of these centers provide free ultrasounds — a 24% increase from 2010. This includes 100 mobile units with ultrasounds. 400,100 hours of free services were provided by nurse and diagnostic sonographers in pregnancy centers. Pregnancy centers have a total of 67,400 volunteers including 7,500 medical professionals. The report also found that the majority of Americans, whether pro-life or pro-choice, considers crisis pregnancy centers a valuable resource. The report also stated that pregnancy centers received extremely high rates of satisfaction from the people who used their services.³

There are many solutions to a crisis pregnancy that do not involve abortion. Whether the woman is in a bad situation or the child has a disability, it is crucial as pro-life people that we give support and resources to mothers facing difficult pregnancies. We must care for the woman and her child, making sure that each can thrive no matter what the situation may be. Women facing a crisis pregnancy should know that it is okay to reach out to others for help. Children in the womb are saved when mothers get the support they need.

Notes

¹ Jeannie French, "The Answer to Crisis Pregnancy: Eliminate the Crisis, not the Child." (presentation, Rehumanize Conference, Duquesne University, October 14, 2018).

² "Coping with the Emotions of an Unplanned Pregnancy", 2014, Lamaze International, <https://www.lamaze.org/p/bl/et/blogid=16&blogaid=1148>.

³ "Pro-life Pregnancy Centers Served 2 Million People, Saved Communities \$161M in 2017", 2018, The Charlotte Lozier Institute, <https://lozierinstitute.org/pro-life-pregnancy-centers-served-2-million-people-saved-communities-161m-in-2017/>.





On Marches and Protests

Rehumanize International (and by extension, *Life Matters Journal*) is dedicated to ending aggressive violence against human beings. There are myriad acts of aggressive violence that are addressed in this magazine because of that central principle. However, there are also issues which fall in the periphery of the causes for peace and life; on these topics, Rehumanize International doesn't take an official stance, but we still find them important and worthy of discussion. "Opposing Views," a brand new section of *Life Matters Journal*, aims to highlight varying perspectives on such issues.

By Steve Larkin

Behind any successful protest is a subtext that goes something like this: we are here, and you cannot ignore us, and, if you try, we will make sure that there are consequences for you. That subtext is missing from most major protests today, and that explains why, as a whole, they have turned out to be politically ineffective.

A protest whose message boils down to "do what we want, or we'll continue voting for the same party we have been for the past forty years, but now we'll be really angry about it" is not a threat to the powerful: it is not a threat to anyone. And so it gets ignored. This goes double for protests on behalf of well-known movements that content themselves with "raising awareness," as if there were a great number of people unaware of the pro-life movement, or the gay rights movement, or some other such thing. Neither political party has a reason to care about such a protest — in fact, they might even like that it gets the base riled up against the other guys — and so no one in government will take it all that seriously. Lacking an urgent message and, more importantly, a reason to be taken seriously reduces the protest from a powerful political tool to another leisurely way to spend a Saturday, one far more effective at making its participants feel good about themselves than at producing some real impact on the political world.

Lacking an urgent message and, more importantly, a reason to be taken seriously reduces the protest...

By Aimee Murphy

I march.

In fact, I march often.

But even though I march I can see that, in our polarized nation, non-disruptive protest serves as little else other than partisan political theater. So it is easy to criticize these large, national protests (like the Women's March, the March for Life, and the Science March) as expensive, superfluous events that serve as nothing more than virtue signaling. That criticism is fair if the march is the single thing that you do for a given cause each year. That criticism is fair if the adolescents who attend see it only as an opportunity to post protest selfies on Instagram and get out of class with an excused absence. That criticism is fair if people don't follow up with local action, if the march isn't inclusive, if folks don't hold their legislators accountable for ending violence and discrimination. We must be good stewards of our resources, so the collective millions spent every year by groups attending marches around the nation is wasteful if it doesn't spur us to action.

However, I also know that my trip at 17 to the Walk for Life West Coast was crucial. Before attending, I'd felt isolated among my peers — I struggled with the thought that my individual impact was useless. But at that march, I suddenly felt courage: I was not alone. I gained resources, I was energized, and I went home to begin the hard work of building a culture of life. Five years later, after being invigorated by the connections I made at many protests and surrounding events, I founded this organization that works every day to end violence: Rehumanize International. I don't know if I'd be as engaged as I am today had I not attended that protest at seventeen, so I can say that these marches, these protests — inasmuch as they give people hope and encourage us to do something practical to upend the status quo of violence — they are absolutely priceless.

Political Action's Opportunities and Dangers:

Some Lessons from Bayard Rustin

By John Whitehead

Social movements learn from one another: strategies and tactics that work on behalf of one cause may also work for another. Learning from other activists requires discernment, though: times and circumstances differ, so what worked for one movement at one historical point may require adaptation and selectivity to be effective for a different movement. The Consistent Life Ethic (CLE) movement is no exception to these principles. Being dedicated to connecting several distinct causes — such as the pro-life and peace causes — CLE activists should be especially attentive to how other movements connected or failed to connect issues.

A product of another social movement that can guide CLE activists is the famous essay “From Protest to Politics: The Future of the Civil Rights Movement,” written by Bayard Rustin for *Commentary* magazine in February 1965. Rustin, a longtime peace and civil rights activists who organized the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, proposed the next steps black Americans should take in pursuing equality. Up to that point, the civil rights movement had focused on defeating the very explicitly racist system of discrimination and segregation found in certain American states, especially in the south. This phase of civil rights activism, which included protests and civil disobedience aimed at segregated restaurants, busing, and other racist institutions, had culminated in the passage of the previous year’s federal Civil Rights Act that banned racial discrimination in public accommodations and employment. Now, Rustin argued, black Americans had to adopt a different focus and strategy.

The pressing concern now was the subtler but no less devastating evil of poverty and lack of jobs and economic opportunity — which affected blacks not merely in southern states but nationwide. Civil rights activists now had to focus on economic justice. Using the racial terminology of the time, Rustin wrote

The Negro struggle has hardly run its course...But I fail to see how the movement can be victorious in the absence

of radical programs for full employment, the abolition of slums, the reconstruction of our educational system, new definitions of work and leisure. Adding up the cost of such programs, we can only conclude that we are talking about a refashioning of our political economy. It has been estimated, for example, that the price of replacing New York City’s slums with public housing would be \$17 billion. Again, a multi-billion dollar federal public-works program, dwarfing the currently proposed \$2 billion program, is required to reabsorb unskilled and semi-skilled workers into the labor market — and this must be done if Negro workers in these categories are to be employed.¹

Such public policies to address economic injustice could not be achieved through civil disobedience and direct action, Rustin argued. Achieving these goals required working through the American political system, which in turn required black Americans to form a political coalition with other groups: “trade unionists, liberals, and religious groups.”² Moreover, forming this coalition entailed a commitment to the major political party currently most compatible with all these groups: the Democratic Party. Rustin expressed hopes that Democratic President Lyndon Johnson, recently re-elected in a landslide with significant black support, would seize the opportunity to “set fundamental changes in motion.”³ He concluded

We are challenged now to broaden our social vision, to develop functional programs with concrete objectives. We need to propose alternatives to technological unemployment, urban decay, and the rest. We need to be calling for public works and training, for national economic planning, for federal aid to education, for attractive public housing — all this on a sufficiently massive scale to make a difference... We cannot claim to have answers to all the complex problems of modern society. That is too much to ask of a movement still battling barbarism in Mississippi. But we can agitate the right questions by probing at the contradictions which still stand in the way of the “Great Society.” The questions having been asked, motion must begin in the larger society, for there is a limit to what Negroes can do alone.⁴

Many aspects of Rustin’s argument had merit. A significant, comprehensive response to poverty required — and still does require — enacting laws and public policies at the national, if not international, level. Direct action in poor communities, whether charitable and philanthropic work or investing in private businesses, is valuable but insufficient unless the larger political and hence economic context is changed. Changing that political context requires working within the political system.

Rustin’s point about coalition building is similarly sound. Political action requires alliances, especially if a group is a numerical minority, as black Americans are. Forming a relationship, even if only a temporary one, with groups that share at least one of your goals is crucial.

Further, despite the significant differences between the civil rights movement in the 1960s and the CLE movement today, Rustin’s insights have relevance for CLE activists. Defending life

against an array of contemporary threats, from abortion to war to the death penalty to euthanasia, depends to some degree on laws and public policies — which in turn depend on political action. Moreover, while CLE activists as such are not subjected to massive oppression and discrimination as black Americans are, they are nevertheless a numerical minority — probably a far tinier minority than the 12 percent of the population black Americans make up. Effective political action therefore requires CLE activists to ally themselves, at least sometimes, with groups who are not CLE but share one or more of our goals.

CLE activists should also take to heart Rustin's emphasis on addressing poverty. Whether or not poverty and other evils that do not involve direct killing of human beings should be considered part of the CLE is a much-debated question. For my part, I admit to having reservations about treating poverty as a "life issue" in the same way as, say, the death penalty or war are. Nevertheless, even if some CLE activists do not view poverty as a core CLE issue, I think effective CLE advocacy requires addressing poverty for two reasons.

First, poverty is intertwined with direct killing in many ways: women who have abortions are disproportionately poor, as are people on death row (people of color are also overrepresented among these groups, pointing to how racism is intertwined with life issues); inadequate access to healthcare and other social support can contribute to suicide (assisted or otherwise) among the elderly, ill, or disabled; the poor are least able to escape or protect themselves from war's ravages. Moreover, direct killing can worsen the poor's situation: abortion-related trauma can make it harder for women to escape from poverty; money spent on weapons means less money spent on social services or left in taxpayers' wallets.⁵ Those who wish to stop direct killing need to grapple with these issues.

Second, for most people, the bottom line matters. Political action that ignores people's concerns and fears for their own material well-being is not going to have much appeal beyond an elite or unusually committed few. CLE activists are particularly at risk here, as so much of our work is on behalf of groups — unborn children, people in foreign countries, death row prisoners — who have little or no ability to act on their own behalf politically. We have to persuade others to act on behalf of these vulnerable groups, and that means taking into account those other people's interests. A CLE political program should include, if only for pragmatic reasons, an economic justice element.

Rustin made a similar point elsewhere, observing that black Americans face challenges "so vast as to allow them very little time or energy to focus on international crises," and commented that "perhaps the peace movement might well conclude that it must give a large part of its energy to the struggle to secure the social and economic uplift of the Negro community."⁶

Rustin's analysis is instructive for CLE activists in all the ways I have mentioned. One significant aspect of his proposed civil rights strategy is deeply flawed, however, and CLE activists would do well to avoid it in their own work: a commitment to support a particular political party.

To some degree, Lyndon Johnson and the Democratic Party fulfilled Rustin's hopes. The Civil Rights Act was followed by more laws and policies meant to promote racial equality and reduce poverty: the Voting Rights Act of 1965, as well as Medicare, Med-

icaid, and Head Start. A "refashioning of our political economy" did not occur, however — and still has not.⁷ Further, Johnson would dramatically escalate the American war in Vietnam, to the loss of tens of thousands of American lives and untold Vietnamese lives. A morally sensitive person could not ignore these actions by a president or party, even one committed to civil rights and reducing poverty.

Rustin, however, sadly took a relatively muted stand on Vietnam in years following the "Politics and Protest" essay. Although opposed to the war, he tended to criticize the anti-war movement and was ambivalent about the efforts by Martin Luther King and others to link civil rights and anti-war activism. Rustin's stance, while a thoughtful, principled one, may also have been influenced by political pragmatism: in a 1967 meeting of civil rights leaders, Rustin reportedly observed that "the civil rights movement could gain nothing without President Johnson's support... The President's support might be diluted if civil rights leaders took strong stands against the administration's policy in Vietnam."⁸

In the 1960s, a commitment to the Democratic Party presented a problem for peace activists. For a CLE activist today, such a commitment to the Democrats is even more problematic, not merely because of continued Democratic support for hawkish foreign policies but because of the party's whole-hearted embrace of killing the unborn through abortion. At the same time, CLE activists should not simply instead turn to the Republican Party. (Indeed, a common criticism of pro-life activists is that they have been too unswervingly loyal to the Republicans.)

The flaw in Rustin's analysis carries a final, paradoxical lesson for CLE activists. To succeed, CLE activists must engage in political action, must work with non-CLE groups, must expand their concerns beyond issues of direct killing to include poverty and economic justice — but they must not make a stable commitment to any political party. We need to be more politically flexible than that, able to work with Democrats, Republicans, and third parties, with the political left, right, and center — and not to become too tied to any of them. To strike such a balance is not easy (to put it mildly); we must make the effort, though.

Notes

¹ Bayard Rustin, "From Protest to Politics: The Future of the Civil Rights Movement," in *Time on Two Crosses: The Collected Writings of Bayard Rustin*, ed. Devon W. Carbado and Donald Weise (San Francisco: Cleis Press, Inc., 2003), 124; available online at <https://bit.ly/2GhAMHI>.

² *Ibid.*, 125.

³ *Ibid.*, 128.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 129.

⁵ For a discussion of how abortion can contribute to poverty, see Rachel MacNair, "Poverty and Abortion," Consistent Life Network, accessed January 14, 2019, <https://bit.ly/2IC9tbQ>.

⁶ Bayard Rustin, "Guns, Bread, and Butter," in *Time on Two Crosses*, 148, 150.

⁷ Bayard Rustin, "From Protest to Politics," in *Time on Two Crosses*, 124.

⁸ John D'Emilio, *Lost Prophet: The Life and Times of Bayard Rustin* (New York: Free Press, 2003), 445. See also Rustin's own comments in "Interview with Bayard Rustin, 1982," The Vietnam Collection, October 7, 1982, <https://bit.ly/2HeUcSa>, as well as Shawn Gude, "The Tragedy of Bayard Rustin," Jacobin, May 23, 2018, <https://bit.ly/2Ckvk5K> and Cathy Young, "What Tributes to Bayard Rustin Leave Out," RealClearPolitics, September 3, 2013, <https://bit.ly/2TP17mm>, for varying assessments of his views.



Passing the Mic:

On Creative Nonviolent Action and Allyship

By Herb Geraghty

The history of our country is filled with cruelty and dehumanization. From our very beginnings, with the colonization and genocide of the native people on this land, to the human beings kidnapped and forced into legal slavery: violence runs deep in our nation's past. Now, with countless deaths caused by our ongoing imperialist wars and the descendants of those aforementioned subjugated indigenous and black humans at an increased risk of violence in the forms of police brutality and inhumane incarceration — is this violence just a part of our national identity?

The answer is complicated. Yes, there are myriad historical and modern examples of widespread state sanctioned violence, but along with these examples there are also always those who risk their reputations, livelihoods, and even lives to bring about justice. Particularly, the work of members of those oppressed and subjugated classes of human beings has been instrumental in bringing about the societal change that has been accomplished.

A great example from history is the life and work of Frederick Douglass. Born into slavery, Douglass eventually escaped and chose to dedicate himself to the abolition of the inhumane practice. Douglass worked with many prominent abolitionists of his time, most of whom were not former slaves but white allies to the cause. In a culture where many black people were denied legal personhood because they were deemed “inferior,” Douglass's writing and public speaking were instrumental in the effort to rehumanize the enslaved people in the United States. Douglass's words and existence as an educated black man disproved many of the misconceptions that society had about the people subjected to slavery. His white allies were also important in that they used their privilege and influence to share Douglass' story and promote his perspective.

For a long time, I felt like I did not know how to best strive to be an ally to marginalized people — especially when it came to racial justice issues. As a white person, I did not want to speak over the

experiences of my friends who were not as privileged as I on the axis of race, but I also did not want to be silent on these important issues. The best solution I have found to this quandary is the concept of “passing the mic.” This is what many of Frederick Douglass' supporters did when they invited him to speak at events and share his story. This is a direct challenge to the idea that we must always speak for the weak. Rather than speaking on behalf of the voiceless, we should not accept that some members of the human family are metaphorically voiceless. We must use our privilege to “pass the mic” and highlight the lived experiences of those who are most affected by whatever injustice we are looking to combat.

This paradigm shift is vitally important to social justice and human rights work, especially when widespread dehumanization is at play. Take, for example, the problem of the disproportionate amount of murders committed against transgender people. “Passing the mic” does not mean that cisgender people should never speak to this issue; rather, that it is best to look to the leadership of those who are most impacted by the violence, in this case: transgender women of color. The work of cisgender allies is vitally important, especially in spaces where there are no transgender people to speak for ourselves, or where it would be unsafe to do so. However, when discussing this issue, it is important to highlight the words and experiences of the people most affected. Showing that you value the humanity of the marginalized group enough to let them speak for themselves, while using your privilege to shine a light on their words, is one of the best ways to rehumanize the people affected by the injustice.

This rule is generally good; however, there are a few instances wherein the oppressed group literally cannot speak for themselves. The most glaring example of which is young children, and particularly, the preborn. How can we best show solidarity to this group of human beings whose human rights are regularly trampled partially because they cannot defend themselves and proclaim their own humanity?

One display of creative, nonviolent direct action that has been



incredibly successful in this endeavor is letting the preborn speak for themselves in the only way they can — their heartbeats. Last year, pregnant mothers in Chile with the pro-life feminist group, Reivindica, made international headlines when they chose to amplify their babies' heartbeats with megaphones to protest growing support for legal abortion in the country. Recently, I saw this unique type of protest in action at the Walk for Life West Coast, as another group of women again used megaphones to amplify the "voices" of their preborn children. This innovative form of protest is a beautiful way to proclaim the humanity of the preborn and I hope that it becomes more popular; however, so far this seems to be the only way to figuratively "pass the mic" to the preborn members of our human family. The question then is, how else can we center the preborn when working to defend their rights?

Recently, a friend and I tried to do just that. We wanted to do our best to show solidarity with this marginalized group as allies. So much abortion apologism focuses on the inherent differences between prenatal humans and "real people" (i.e., humans who have been born). Yes, of course, there are major differences between myself and a given fetal human being. I'm older, larger, more developed, I need less assistance from other people, and I no longer reside in one of my parent's bodies. However, as members of the anti-abortion community know, things like size, age, level of development or dependency, and location shouldn't determine human rights. None of the differences between the born and preborn are enough to justify the widespread lethal discrimination against the latter group.

As someone who believes in equal treatment, I couldn't help but notice that the biggest difference between the born and the pre-

born really is how we are treated under the law. For the first several months of all of our lives, it was legal to poison, starve, and dismember our bodies simply because we had not yet been born. Rather than our human rights being treated as inherent and belonging to us by virtue of our humanity, the state holds the power to determine which of us are worthy of living free from aggressive violence. As it stands, our government has determined that

it is legal to kill us if we haven't hit whatever benchmark they determine should grant rights — in many states this benchmark is simply having been born.

While contemplating this striking disparity, I couldn't help but think of the document that most strongly represents this arbitrary distinction of rights — my birth certificate. Thousands of human beings are being legally slaughtered every day simply because they do not have

that piece of paper. This realization sickened me.

That is why I decided to show solidarity with the preborn by burning my birth certificate in front of the Supreme Court of the United States. I was joined by my fellow atheist and pro-life feminist, Terrisa Bukovinac. With this small act of creative and nonviolent direct action, we represented our rejection of the system in which some lives are valued more than others. Our hope is that this action will inspire others to show their support for marginalized groups who are still unable to speak for themselves.

The question then is, how else can we center the preborn when working to defend their rights?