



Dignity of Human Life Office ***April 23, 2013***

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Earth Day and Artificial Birth Control

God created the Earth and everything in it. God created man in His image and likeness, and we are called to be stewards of His creation.

So how does artificial birth control fit into this picture?

We know that artificial birth control is being used by women around the world. In the 1960's, the introduction of "The Pill" was seen as a great advance in the women's movement. As time goes on, we are recognizing more and more that artificial birth control has negative effects on our bodies, as well as the environment. Even the World Health Organization recognizes the harm, identifying it as a class one carcinogen.

Let us begin with the harmful impact on women's bodies, the bodies that God created in His image and likeness. Vicki Thorn, founder and director of Project Rachel, shares: "Some of the most serious side effects include the risk of blood clots, pulmonary embolisms, stroke and certain forms of cancer. Both the Depo-Provera shot and the birth control pill can cause bone demineralization and serious nutritional deficiencies. A number of women who are chemically contracepting experience mood swings or depression, and some suffer from migraines."

These effects in turn have an effect on how partners are attracted to each other, which in turn affects intimacy and marital stability. There is a higher divorce rate for those who use artificial forms of contraception.

(above from http://www.kofc.org/en/columbia/detail/2012_07_interview.html)

Second, too many people are unfamiliar with the effects on newly conceived babies. Artificial birth control can act as an abortifacient, prohibiting a newly conceived egg (a newly conceived human being) from attaching to the uterine lining. The baby is discarded, most likely unknown to the woman. We cannot be sure how many lives have been lost, but one life lost in this manner is too many.

Third, if these above mentioned issues are not difficult enough, we also add in the harmful effects to our environment. Mark LeChevallier, director of innovation and environmental stewardship at American Water, as well as a Natural Planning Instructor for over 25 years, educates about the effects that discarded contraceptive medicines and devices have on the nation's water and animals, especially fish. He explains that "'the synthetic estrogen used in birth control pills can wreak havoc on the sex lives of fish,' citing reduced sexual organ size in male fish, masculinized female fish and other sex-related changes." ... He continues "Because the synthetic estrogen is not absorbed well into the body, much of the drug is released into the environment through women's urine." (<http://www.phxnfp.org/articles.php?id=22>)

Vicki Thorn also addresses the effects of estrogen being excreted in the water in the above interview, stating: "We know that in countries around the world where oral contraception has been introduced, male fertility has dropped by about half."

Some may question the seriousness of environmental harm, seeing that as minimal impact, but looking at just the infertility piece caused from hormones in our water, one can see the complex web of ethical issues affecting human life (everything from immoral ways of testing infertility, in-vitro fertilization, surrogate parenting,...).

We cannot minimize the effects that artificial birth control has on our bodies, on newly conceived children, and on our environment. We need to educate ourselves about the harmful effects of birth control and embrace natural fertility awareness, recognizing the beauty of our reproductive systems that the Lord has created so intricately!

Kermit Gosnell on Trial

Kermit Gosnell is an abortionist who was charged in January 2011 for the murders of a 41-year-old immigrant woman (Demerol overdose at the clinic) and seven newborn infants at the Women's Medical Society in Philadelphia. The infants are those who survived their mothers' abortions and then clinic workers severed their spinal cords with scissors. The clinic workers testified that they saw the babies move, breathe, and/or make noises, but Dr. Gosnell assured them that the babies died during the abortion procedure and that any movement was simply impulse movements.

The trial of Gosnell began on March 18, 2013. If he is convicted, he does face the death penalty. Employees are stepping forward to share their stories, many that will haunt the employees for the rest of their lives. They share that there were hundreds of babies who had their spinal cords severed. Employees who were not trained were performing procedures, the clinic conditions were filthy, and body parts of babies were found in various locations within the clinic. Gosnell was also known to go against the law, performing abortions after the legal term limit (which was 23 weeks and 6 days).

The trial did not draw national media attention. There were several rows designated for media in the court room, yet with the exception of 1-2 reporters, those seats remained empty. A Tweetfest on April 12 was held to stand up against the media and say we need coverage. Many feel this lack of media shows the media bias we have in our country. On April 18, 72 Congressman voiced their concern about this media bias. They felt the media should have been covering this important case.

So many prayers needed:

- For those who are involved with the decision making in the trial

- For the former employees who are suffering from their work with Gosnell
- For the soul of Kermit Gosnell
- For the women who are emotionally struggling due to Gosnell's "medical care"
- For an end to media bias
- For justice to be served in an effective way that does not contradict our beliefs

Living Justice Newsletter

At the beginning of each month, the Living Justice Office sends out our monthly newsletter. The newsletter arrives via email with the title: "Living Justice Newsletter." This includes news from the Offices of: Family and Married Life, Dignity of Human Life, and Social Justice. We are conscientious of how many emails we send to your inbox, and we attempt to limit our materials to 1-2 times per month. We encourage you to read our monthly newsletter for our updates!

Intentions and Bulletin Briefs for your Parish (Word of Life)

Each month, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops publishes "Word of Life," which offers Mass intentions and Bulletin Briefs that focus on Respect Life areas. You can go directly to their website to download the materials or you can sign up for their monthly emails. Be sure to check them out! Word of Life is a great resource! <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/resources-for-the-eucharist/word-of-life/>

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STAY CONNECTED

