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CONSCIENCE

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Beyond Savita
Why the Law Might
Begin to Catch up to Irish
Attitudes on Abortion

BRENDAN O'NEILL

Creaking at the Seams
New Zealand's Access
to Abortion Care

DAME MARGARET SPARROW

Steps Forward and Back Legal Abortion Access in Latin America

ANNIE KELLY

Putin's Russia
Can the Orthodox
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MARINA DAVIDASHVILI

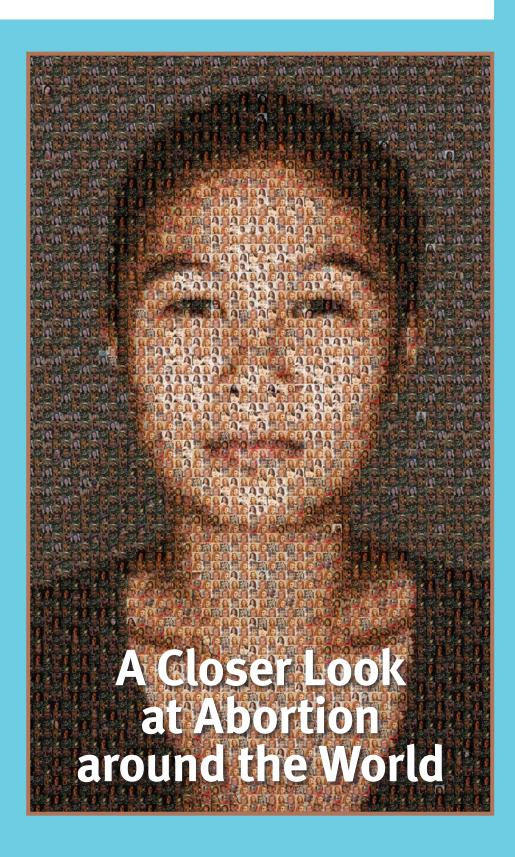
ALSO:

Abortion Reports from Poland, Spain and the United Kingdom and book reviews by Kate Ott, Rev. Harry Knox and Aram A. Schvey

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"Reason often makes mistakes, but Conscience never does." — Henry Wheeler Shaw "He who acts against his CONSCIENCE always sins." — St. Thomas Aquinas "CONSCIENCE is the most sacred of all property; other property depending in part on positive law, the exercise of that being a natural and unalienable right." — James Madison "A good Conscience is the palace of Christ." — St. Augustine "I shall drink—to the Pope, if you please—still to CONSCIENCE first and to the Pope afterwards." — Blessed John Henry Newman

"But no man has a monopoly of CONSCIENCE."

— Mary A. Ward

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Catholics for Choice shapes and advances sexual and reproductive ethics that are based on justice, reflect a commitment to women's well-being and respect and affirm the capacity of women and men to make moral decisions about their lives.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

BORTION IS A SUBJECT THAT WE RETURN TO REGULARLY IN Conscience, but in this issue we have asked contributors from around the world to provide us with some new perspectives and analysis on the subject. We revisit some regions previously examined in these pages and then expand our horizons with articles about countries on which we have not previously reported. Above all, we examine how the debate and tactics around promoting—and denying—access to abortion are changing.

Starting with the reasonably familiar, we have reports from Poland, Spain and Ireland, as well as a summary of what has been happening in several countries throughout Latin America.

We see an interesting mix: in some places the Catholic hierarchy is on the back foot, vainly trying to hang onto the vestiges of power that it once enjoyed. Elsewhere, we see politicians kowtowing to the bishops as if they still lived in the Middle Ages.

From Spain, María R. Sahuquillo, a journalist at El País, examines how the new conservative government is seeking to attack access to abortion, partly to divert attention from the damage that its austerity measures have inflicted. In Ireland, Brendan O'Neill, editor of the online magazine spiked, looks at the furor thrown up by the tragic death of Savita Halappananvar and what the resulting debate means for the introduction of real abortion rights in Ireland.

Two colleagues from Poland, Anka Grzywacz and Piotr Kalbarczyk, give us different perspectives on the situation in their country, where there appears to be little movement in overturning the draconian ban on abortion. Finally, Annie Kelly, a journalist who writes regularly about Latin America for the UK's Guardian newspaper, explains what's behind the recent developments in Mexico and South America and speculates about future developments.

In the new horizons section, Dame Margaret Sparrow and Marina Davidashvili report on developments in New Zealand and Russia, respectively. Dame Sparrow summarizes the history of abortion rights in New Zealand and unpacks the conservative efforts to rebuff the expansion of services in one city. Marina Davidashvili from the European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development looks at how the Russian Orthodox church, in a significant break from the past, has been adopted by Vladimir Putin as his favorite collaborator.

Finally, in "Conspiracy or Confusion: Abortion Politics in Britain," Jennie Bristow, the editor of Reproductive Review, tries to make sense of what has been happening in the United Kingdom, where a rudderless government initiates and withdraws attacks on abortion access with no coherent aim in sight.

David

DAVID J. NOLAN Editor

Conscience is a unique magazine, and one we would like to get as wide an audience as possible. So, I have a favor to ask. Think for a moment. Ask yourself, do I know other people who I want to be as well-informed as I am? I'm sure you do, because inquisitive people always know other inquisitive people.

So, please consider buying them a subscription as well. To purchase, please visit our website, www.CatholicsForChoice.org, or call us at (202) 986 6093.

"Ireland needs abortion because women have the right to be morally autonomous beings in full control of their lives."

—BRENDAN O'NEILL, p14

Conscience offers in-depth, cutting-edge coverage of vital contemporary issues, including reproductive rights, sexuality and gender, feminism, the religious right, church and state issues and US politics. Our readership includes national and international opinion leaders and policymakers, members of the press and leaders in the fields of theology, ethics and women's studies.

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The Bishops' Train of Thought

HE PHOTOGRAPHS OF pantomime dames (in red birettas) illustrating Jodi Enda's informative but depressing article (Vol. XXXIII No. 3) "US bishops' Roman connection" say it all. Cardinal Raymond Burke made himself a laughingstock when he visited the UK and swanned around with acres of red ball gown behind him, but the whole of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops is bringing the ancient and apostolic office of bishop into disrepute—with Rome's support. As Anthony Padovano says in Enda's piece, the bishops have lost an incredible amount of credibility because of their obsession with sex. When a bishop can be quoted as saying that "Jesus didn't say that the government has to take care of [the poor], or that we have to pay taxes to take care of them," he follows our Mrs. Thatcher, who once notably said, "There is no such thing as Society." In Germany, the Catholic bishops excommunicate anybody who refuses to pay a church tax, and here is a US bishop saying the state should not be looking after the poor with our

Letters may be edited for clarity and length.

taxes! Come back Judas; all is forgiven!

SIMON BRYDEN-BROOK Catholics for a Changing Church London, United Kingdom

Not a Conspiracy Theory: Vatican's Backing of **Ultraconservative Clergy**

EVER SINCE THE DA VINCI Code, conspiracy theories about the Vatican have become commonplace, with the result that any mention of elite clergy and their hidden influence sounds like a joke. While it's not the stuff that Dan Brown envisioned, Jodi Enda's article "US Bishops Roman Connection" (Vol. XXXIII No. 3) does an excellent job of tracing the strings pulled in the US hierarchy to the string-pullers in the Vatican. Isolating these conservative influences from abroad helps us remember that there may be many progressive and reform-minded individuals among the Catholic clergy. It is their more conservative counterparts who are rewarded with high-profile appointments and nurtured by a direct line to those at the church's Roman heart. With the hierarchy seemingly determined to keep interfering with US policy, it is wise to keep an eye on the Vatican and its well-documented preference for rightwing candidates in church and secular politics.

> DORIS LANDAU Pittsburg, Pennsylvania

Missed Opportunities for Healing in Church's **Response to HIV & AIDS**

AS A LONGTIME HEALTH advocate, I read Kathryn Joyce's "Beyond Principled Duplicity" (Vol. xxxIII No. 3) with interest. Stigma weakens and misdirects everyone's resolve when it comes to treatment and advocacy. I appreciated that the article went far beyond the usual discussion of Africa's HIV/AIDS epidemic, to a deeper examination of African clergy living with the virus. That some men and women religious feel they must hide their ART treatment is indeed a missed opportunity. The institutional church's inability to bear witness to humans as diverse, sexual beings leaves people in many walks of life feeling alone and rejected, instead of valued and loved. The millions served by one of the largest HIV/AIDS relief networks in the world deserve better.

> ABIGAIL SORENSEN Portland, Oregon

The Real 'Trouble' for **Catholic Priests**

WHAT "GOOD NEWS" IS proclaimed in the article "Troublesome Priests? Awakening Change in the Church" (Vol. XXXIII No.3). Martin Pendergast's collection of reported cracks in the clerical system throughout Europe is refreshing and hopeful.

These priests' groups over-

seas now join hundreds of thousands of reform-minded US Catholics who, for more than 40 years, have proclaimed the Holy Spirit's guidance, rooted in the values inspired by the spirit and documents of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1966).

More than 30 reform organizations in the United States faithfully and consistently affirm a gospelcentered church, rooted in justice, equality and integrity. Their efforts have courageously withstood the virus of retrenchment by the Vatican, collectively discarding, as Pendergast put it, "false obedience to unjust ecclesiastical regulations."

We rejoice that priests around the world courageously join with all Catholics in being faithful to their call to serve the People of God in a community of unconditional love. What we find most astonishing is that thousands of other priests, without question, remain in fear and subservience to the dictates and direction of their local bishop! Isn't this most "troublesome"?

LINDA AND RALPH PINTO Co-Editors, Corpus Reports—the national periodical of CORPUS Shohola, Pennsylvania

Church Reform Effort Needs Clergy. Not Clericalism

I WOULD LIKE TO congratulate Martin Pendergast on an excellent article, "Troublesome Priests?" (Vol. XXXIII No. 3).

I recall a conversation with a new parish priest about a decade ago. He was keen to

assert that many clergy were unhappy with the status quo and wanted change. However, he picked up Martin's point about priests being tied body and soul to the institutional church. He believed that change would not come about unless the laity led it. I believe that he forgot something important in this analysis—that in an absolute monarchy only those who are perceived as essential to its preservation will have any influence. That the clergy are now expressing concern about the wellbeing of the church sends a much more powerful message than the lone voice

A prime concern is that, while we applaud the rise of clergy reform groups in various countries, the end result will not be the empowerment of the whole People of God. Clericalism is deeply ingrained, and if the clergy groups sincerely wish to work with the laity, the issues of both groups' commonalities, differences and status within the church have to be addressed.

of the laity, however much

supported by the ordained.

A second concern is that of "reinventing the wheel." Groups calling for dialogue over current issues of concern in the Catholic church have been in existence for decades and have considerable experience in trying to bring about "updating" in the light of Vatican II. It seems, in the UK at least, that the clergy groups show little interest in tapping into that experience and making use of it.

Surely, all of us, lay and clergy, who seek dialogue in the church need to discover how to work together so that our position is all the stronger and we reflect the institution we would like to bring about.

> VALERIE J. STROUD We Are Church (UK)/ Chairman, Catholics for a Changing Church United Kingdom

Towards a More Beautiful Church

MARTIN PENDERGAST'S "Troublesome Priests," (Vol. xxxIII No. 3) reminds us that the Catholic church does, in fact, change. Despite the branded "hermeneutics of continuity" that many conservative Catholics and clergy parade, there are outspoken international and domestic movements speaking to broader, more "root-and-branch" reform. Empowering the People of God by protesting (pro-teste, witness for) the hierarchy as we know it is a daunting

liberation process, which will provoke a cascade of questions and fears. We must give ourselves the space to explore what a renewed, inclusive and community focused-Catholic leadership might look like. And let ourselves be surprised.

Justice, grace and the Eucharist are the bedrock of any church we work for. This will allow us to know not only Jesus, but all those who are marginalized in the official church. Let us build in our relationships and in our hearts a Catholic church more beautiful than the we know. In this Year of Dialogue, let us listen as loudly as we speak, "for change," as author Dorothy Allison writes, "when it comes, cracks everything open" and that gives me hope.

> KATE CONMY Membership Director, Women's Ordination Conference Washington, DC

US Catholic Higher Education Not Off-Limits for Vatican Attention

"UNDERMINING THE IDEA OF a Catholic University" (Vol. xxxIII No. 3) was a good overview of the conservative forces trying to rewrite our long Catholic academic tradition, but it doesn't go far enough in relating the Peruvian case with the US crisis in Catholic higher education. The former Pontifical Catholic University of Peru is an example of the Vatican's tendency to seize upon a person or an institution as the object lesson needed at the time. There is no way to know if those in Rome have their sights on an American institution, if not to strip it of its name, then to make it an example of those who belong inside the inner circle of church orthodoxy. Or, in the case of the theologians like Sister Margaret

Let us know what you think.

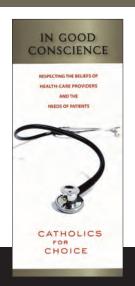
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Farley who have been sanctioned recently, those who do not make the cut. Many people do not understand the ways that church governance continues to influence US Catholic universities, and conversely, how these schools are inextricably woven in to the larger, secular world with its policies and expectations for pluralism. The pending lawsuits about contraceptive coverage at Catholic schools only add more confusion to the many misdirected discussions about the place of Catholic learning institutions within the larger society.

> HAROLD WINTER Chicago, Illinois

Opponents of Diversity on Campus Part of **Concerted Effort**

KIM PUCHIR'S ARTICLE ABOUT the role of the Cardinal Newman Society in enforcing a very conservative Catholicism in higher education ("Undermining the Idea of a Catholic University," Vol. XXXIII No.3) hit close to home.

Back in 1980 as a sophomore at a secular college in Massachusetts, I was asked by the chaplain of our campus Newman Society to step down from leadership after he'd heard that I was a lesbian. Neither I nor any of my colleagues in the organization had had any problem with my being both a Catholic leader and an out lesbian, but this priest told me, "We can't have someone like you representing Catholics on campus."

At the time, I saw this incident as a personal matter and believed the priest to be

in the wrong. Although I knew his position probably represented the beliefs of some Catholics, I never connected it, as I would today, with a concerted, organized and well-funded effort to project a particular "brand" of Catholicism as the only legitimate expression of our faith.

Unfortunately, too many Catholics see the many, many instances of oppression that occur within the realm of higher education and in many other settings—as unrelated occurrences. Heightening awareness of the ways in which groups like the Cardinal Newman Society, the Knights of Columbus and other conservative Catholic organizations work to suppress diversity of opinion or even questioning within our church is of vital importance for all who believe that faithfulness to the Gospel does not demand unthinking obedience to doctrine.

> MARIANNE DUDDY-BURKE Executive Director Dignity USA Medford, Massachusetts

A Church Divided

YOUR RECENT ISSUE (VOL. XXXIII No. 3) is a roadmap showing why, without major reform, there will be no reconciliation among Catholics. What this volume of Conscience describes is really two Catholic churches.

The first is the church of male celibates who believe the Holy Spirit speaks exclusively through them. When they make pronouncements that are not coordinated

with us, they falsely assert these are "authentic Catholic teachings" even when we "laity do not receive them."

The second church is the Sensus Fidelium, "the sense of the faithful." We are influenced, not only by our bishops' statements, but by personal experience and what I call "the dialogue of society"-how the Holy Spirit works through the consciences of all the People of God. What we do is "authentically Catholic."

The article on academic freedom describes the two traditional magisteria of the church: the magisterium of the bishops and the magisterium of the theologians. Due to the Vatican's efforts to suppress all other voices, there is really only one magisterium—that of the papacy.

As a first step toward reconciliation, it is clear that we faithful need to assert our own part in the magisteria consisting of bishops, theologians ... and ourselves. In this endeavor Conscience plays a significant role.

CHARLIE DAVIS Fripp Island, South Carolina

Prophetic Voices in Catholic **Higher Education**

IN HER ARTICLE, "Undermining the Idea of a Catholic University," Kim Puchir raises some very important issues, not just for Catholic universities, but for all higher education. Freedom of expression has been an ideal, not just in this country's Constitution, but in many countries all

through the church's history. It is a history we should not fail to remember as the institutional church—i.e., Rome and the bishops in the US and elsewhere—try to diminish this freedom: the freedom to discuss ideas in the search for authentic faithfulness to Catholic beliefs.

It really is too bad that some in the church feel threatened by open discussion, as many times the very voices viewed as heretical turn out to be prophetic voices moving the church and her people closer to the truth of that faith. I know that one day we will hear the words of Rosemary Radford Ruether echoed throughout the church even as they are heard now only in prophetic spaces such as Women-Church.

From my point of view as an academic, the danger posed by the institutional church in shutting down free-flowing discussion and critical thinking in Catholic universities is a danger to all of us in colleges and universities as well as to academic freedom as a whole. Cardinal John Henry Newman's idea of a university is a model for all of us and the use of his name to try to shut down free speech and discussion in Catholic universities is not only an insult to his memory and faith, but an affront to the raison d'être of all education: the search for truth.

> SUSAN A. FARRELL, PH.D. Kingsborough Community College, CUNY Brooklyn, New York

The Church and Contraception



Supporters of the Reproductive Health Bill celebrate in Quezon City, Philippines, after the legislation was approved by both the House of Representatives and the Senate.

Passage of Philippines' **RH Bill a Watershed** Moment for Health, **Church-State Relations**

IN DECEMBER, THE Reproductive Health Bill (known as the RH bill) passed in the upper and lower houses of the Philippines legislature in a landmark decision to make contraception available to millions of poor women. President Benigno Aquino III, one of the proponents of the reproductive health legislation who was pressured by the powerful lobby of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), signed the bill into law on December 21.

The RH bill was the subject of long debate in the Philippines legislature,

languishing nearly 15 years in large part due to opposition from the nation's Catholic bishops, who intimated that some of the bill's key endorsers were excommunicated and made extreme statements about the effects of contraception access. For example, Archbishop Ramon Arguelles told the *Philippines* Star, "Our president intends to kill 20 million children with a fountain pen."

By contrast, pro-RH lawmakers cited public health reasons and concern for families' wellbeing. The World Health Organization estimates that the unmet need for family planning in the Philippines is 22 percent, and about 26 percent of the population lives under the poverty line, according to

2009 figures from the CIA World Factbook. Support also ran high among citizens in this mostly Catholic country. A survey conducted by Social Weather Stations in late 2011 found that 68 percent of respondents feel that the government should fund all family planning methods.

After the decision, one retired archbishop said that the hierarchy may advocate "civil disobedience," according to the Los Angeles Times. Msgr. Joselito Asis, secretary-general of the CBCP, pledged the bishops' support for a possible Supreme Court appeal.

Acknowledging the effects of the long battle on the populace, President Aquino called for united action in advancing the country's

reproductive health. "When it becomes a law, let us move on to ensure that all the positive attributes of the bill really is what happens," Aquino told GMA News before the bill became law. "This was not a battle where there are victors and losers. This is a battle where the country can be, especially the women and the children, can be victors."

The Church and Abortion

Death of 31-year-old Woman in Irish Hospital **Spurs Change in Abortion Laws**

THE TRAGIC DEATH OF 31-year-old Savita Halappanavar, who was allegedly denied an abortion at Galway's University Hospital in October, brought Ireland's restrictive abortion laws to the center of the world stage. Protests sparked by the incident coincided with the November release of the Irish Expert Group Report, which examined methods for the government "to implement the European Court of Human Rights judgment in light of the X case and the requirements of the Constitution." The X case dealt with a 14-year-old girl, pregnant as a result of rape, who was prevented from seeking an abortion abroad even though she was suicidal.

In keeping with the pledge for swift action made by Prime Minister Enda Kenny's administration, Health Minister James Reilly said that lawmakers were expected to vote on an abortion bill by summer 2013, the first time that Irish parliamentarians have ever voted on the issue, according to the Associated Press. While the legislation will only allow abortion in cases where a woman's life is in dangeropposed to her healthmay be interpreted as including the risk of suicide.

There is support for abortion being made available under other circumstances. In November, two Dublin councils called on the state to implement the X case, and the motion in South Dublin came with what Councilor Chris Bond described as wide support for the idea that women who had been raped had the right to access abortion services. A similar action was carried by the Fingal County Council, according to the Irish Times.

Currently, both the Irish Constitution and the earlier Offences Against the Person Act of 1861 pose legal obstacles for abortion access. The report outlines the advantages and drawbacks of several plans, including nonstatutory guidelines, which are non-binding, and statutory guidelines, which range from Ministry of Health regulations to legislation to a combination of the two.

Ireland's bishops have rejected the expert group's findings, warning that allowing women access to abortion for mental health reasons "effectively opens the floodgates for abortion," according to the Irish Times. In the view of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, Savita Halappanavar's death was a "devastating personal

tragedy" but the current Medical Council guidelines offer adequate direction for medical staff in cases where a pregnant woman's life may be in danger. However, Bishop Leo O'Reilly of Kilmore said at a press conference that, "If it is necessary to improve those [medical] guidelines to make them more specific so that doctors have better guidance in the treatments that can be given to save the lives of the mother and child, then by all means introduce those."

A poll conducted in late November for the *Sunday* Business Post found that 85 percent of respondents supported legislation for the X case.

For more information on the Savita case and Ireland's abortion laws, see Brendan O'Neill's article on page 14.

Uruguayan Bishop Links Voting for Abortion Policy, Excommunication

ON OCTOBER 22, URUGUAY'S president, José Mujica signed legislation decriminalizing abortion. The same day, Bishop Herberto Bodeant, secretary general of the Uruguay Bishops' Conference (CEU) made a statement, widely reported in the media, that "if a Catholic votes ... with the manifest intention that he thinks the Church is wrong about [abortion], he separates himself from the communion of the Church." At the time, Bodeant called this "automatic excommunication" and cited canon law referring to "someone who directly participates in an abortion."

Two days later during an interview with Radio Carve, Bodeant recanted, saying that the canon law reference to direct participation "does not include those who vote for a law that allows it."

The CEU attempted to deny that Bishop Bodeant had even made the original statement. "At no time during the interview did the bishop say lawmakers were

excommunicated, but rather responded to a generic question about excommunication in cases of abortion," according to the CEU website. The bishops' conference called it an "erroneous inference" but did admit that the same misapprehension appeared in "various national and international media outlets."

European Court of Human Rights Rules in Favor of **Polish Teenager Denied** an Abortion

THE EUROPEAN COURT OF Human Rights (ECHR) ruled in October that a Polish teenager who became pregnant as a result of rape should not have been repeatedly refused an abortion four years ago. The ordeal that sent a then-14-year-old girl, known as "P.," and her mother to multiple hospitals before finally obtaining the abortion 300 miles from their home left them feeling "manipulated and helpless" after being targeted by antichoice groups and questioned by the police. Charges were brought against the girl for illegal sexual activity, according to Reuters, which noted that this suit, as well as the one against her alleged rapist, were both dropped.

Poland's strict laws do allow abortions in the case of rape, but P. was faced with numerous obstacles, including contradictory requirements regarding referrals from specialists and waiting periods. Hospital officials in one location took her to see a priest, who pressured her not to have the

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procedure. The hospital instigated antichoice harassment of the mother and daughter by sending out a press release about its refusal to provide the abortion.

The ECHR decided that the girl's rights had been violated in several ways under the third article of the European Convention on Human Rights, which prohibits "inhuman or degrading treatment." The court's October 30 decision also contained the provision that Poland should pay 61,000 euros (nearly \$80,000) in compensation.

First Northern Ireland **Clinic to Offer Abortion Opens in Belfast**

IN OCTOBER, MARIE STOPES International opened a family planning clinic in Belfast, making it Northern Ireland's first clinic to provide abortions. The *Irish* Times called the protest at its opening "distinctly underwhelming," but some have spoken out against the center, including Noel Treanor, bishop of the diocese of Down and Connor, who told the Catholic News Agency that he heard the news of the opening with "great concern and dismay."

Attorney General John Larkin wrote to the Stormont Justice Committee, asking it to investigate the Stopes clinic for possibly seeking to change the existing abortion law. The Belfast Telegraph stated that these allegations were met by "fury" over reminders of public comments from Larkin in 2008, in which he compared abortion to



Bishop Paul Loverde speaks with Associate Supreme Court Justice Stephen Bryer after the 2010 Red Mass celebrated in Washington.

"putting a bullet in the back of the head" of a baby. The Irish Times quoted Ulster Unionist leader Mike Nesbitt as saying that Larkin should "withdraw his offer" because "it was such a stark declaration of his moral position that it has to cloud how we look on his offer of legal counsel."

The operators of the Marie Stopes clinic assert that they are operating within the law. Currently, Northern Irish law allows women to access abortion if there is a long-term or permanent risk to her physical or mental health. The BBC reported that only medical abortions up to nine weeks will be available at the Belfast abortion clinic, and these procedures will also be offered to women from the Republic of Ireland "if they meet the legal criteria in Northern Ireland."

The Church and State

After Heavy Engagement in 2012 Campaigns, US **Bishops Change Tone**, not Focus

DURING THE 2012 ELECTION cycle, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) was very involved with dictating to Catholic voters a certain view of their responsibility in the ballot box. Several "non-negotiable" issues were frequently named: abortion, embryonic stemcell research, euthanasia and same-sex marriage were deemed to trump all other concerns, and in a letter from Bishop Robert C. Morlino of Madison, Wisconson, he added "anything that would infringe on religious freedom." Some of the most

egregious interventions are listed below.

Bishop Paul S. Loverde of Arlington, Virginia, instructed people to follow his will: "I have sought in several ways to assist you, respectfully yet authoritatively, to make choices that do justice to the teachings of Our Lord...."

Peter A. Libasci, bishop of Manchester, New **Hampshire**, sent a letter to parishioners the day before the election, reminding them, "We will be standing before a slate of candidates, and we will also be standing before the awesome judgment seat of Christ. As we judge, so will we be judged."

Daniel R. Jenky, bishop of Peoria, Illinois, required his pastoral letter, vividly evoking the crucifixion, to be read at each Mass the weekend before the election. It read in part, "Today, Catholic politicians, bureaucrats,

and their electoral supporters who callously enable the destruction of innocent human life in the womb also thereby reject Jesus as their Lord. They are objectively guilty of grave sin."

Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio of Brooklyn, New York, said that "Roman Catholics who support abortion rights and vote for a candidate because of those policies, place him/ herself outside of the life of the Church. In so doing, they also place themselves in moral danger." In the same vein, Bishop Thomas Paprocki of Springfield, **Illinois**, said that voting for a candidate who supports one of the "intrinsic evils" makes Catholics "morally complicit" and endangers their souls.

Florida's bishops campaigned strenuously for two amendments on the ballot this year, as Bishop Felipe J. Estévez of St. Augustine reminded Catholics in a letter: "Along with all the Bishops of Florida, I urge you to vote 'yes' on these two amendments.... keep[ing] in mind those biblical and Catholic moral principles which cannot be compromised."

Archbishop John C. Nienstedt of St. Paul and Minneapolis, the most visible of several bishops engaged in anti-same sex marriage campaigns, wrote to a mother pleading for acceptance of her gay son, suggesting that she "ought not to participate in the sacramental life of the church" and "[her] eternal salvation may well depend



Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone, of San Francisco, center, and Archbishop William Lori of Baltimore in the audience at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' annual Baltimore meeting in November 2012.

upon" getting in line with the institutional church's rejection of homosexuality.

On Election Day, Catholics followed their consciences, which did not lead them in the same direction indicated by the bishops. As Reuters reported, Catholics again voted for the winning candidate at the same rate as the general population. The reelection of President Barack Obama after the bishops' public conflict with his administration's policy requiring most employers to provide contraception coverage, along with the high-profile successes for same-sex marriage causes in four states, caused concern among the US hierarchy.

Immediately after the election, Cardinal Timothy Dolan, president of the USCCB, spoke at the bishops' meeting in Baltimore. He called for "humility" among the church's ministers. So far, however, the USCCB remains committed to the same stances that proved unpopular to the electorate. Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone of San Francisco

explained the losses on antisame sex marriage initiatives to the Associated Press, "The election is a symptom of a much larger problem. Most people don't understand what marriage is."

In a December news release, the USCCB announced plans for a second Fortnight for Freedom, despite the failure of the first to motivate Catholic voters about supposed threats to religious liberty. The 2013 event will focus on several new issues, including marriage, in addition to the "conscience protections" related to contraception coverage that dominated the campaign last year.

Brazil's Truth Commission to Examine Catholic **Church's Activities** during Dictatorship

A TRUTH COMMISSION established in 2010 by President Dilma Rousseff to investigate human rights abuses committed during Brazil's 20-year dictatorship will also be probing into possible infractions committed by Catholic and

evangelical churches. "The activities of the clergy who opposed the dictatorship as well as the actions of religious groups that backed the regime will be analyzed," said the head of the investigation, Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, according to the Associated Press.

The Church and Reform

Second Employee **Convicted in** VatiLeaks Scandal

IN NOVEMBER, CLAUDIO Sciarpelletti, a computer expert in the Vatican Secretariat of State, was convicted of aiding and abetting Paolo Gabriele, the pope's former butler, in stealing papers, leaking them to the media and "eluding the investigation," according to Religion News Service. Sciarpelletti was given a two-month suspended sentence.

The first conviction in the "VatiLeaks" case came in August 2012, when Gabriele was sentenced to 18 months



Brazilian president Dilma Rousseff addresses the Truth Commission in Brasilia in May 2012.



The Vatican court is pictured during the trial of the pope's former butler, Paolo Gabriele (r).

in an Italian prison for stealing classified documents that were later leaked to journalist Gianluigi Nuzzi, who broadcast some of the information on television and published other selections in a book. According to the Associated Press, Gabriele claimed that he stole the documents to expose "evil and corruption" that Pope Benedict was not aware of-that is, out of a desire to help the church.

The two cases have profound implications for the church leadership: as the UK's *Tablet* pointed out, the Vatican never denied the documents' authenticity, nor did any officials discuss their more controversial contents "showing instances of financial corruption, mismanagement, factional fighting and careerism involving the priests and bishops that run the Roman Curia." Further, the Vatican Radio report of the

ex-butler's testimony included his naming of four Vatican insiders with whom he "shared confidences": retired Cardinal Paolo Sardi; Cardinal Angelo Comastri; Ingrid Stampa, one of the Pope's longtime assistants; and Bishop Franceso Cavina.

Vatican spokesman Fr. Federico Lombardi had indicated that Gabriele might still be charged with more crimes, but in late December, the pope pardoned the former butler, who was released from jail.

Pope Issues New Guidelines for Catholic Charities' Funding and Activities

POPE BENEDICT XVI ISSUED A papal letter, "The Service of Charity," encouraging bishops to tighten their control over Catholic charities' activities and funding sources, according to the Religion News Service. Charities must not "accept commitments" that would prevent them from "follow[ing] Catholic principles in their activity," nor may they accept funding "from groups or institutions that pursue ends contrary to the church's teaching." In addition, employees should "share, or at least respect, the Catholic identity" of the charity while living "an example of Christian life." Any organization that falls short of these standards will be prohibited by the local bishop "from using the name 'Catholic."

While the Catholic News Service (CNS) characterized the letter as having "the status of canon law," the CNS also interviewed Msgr. Giovanni Pietro Dal Toso, secretary of the Pontifical Council Cor Unum, who painted a slightly more informal interpretation of the papal letter. According to the CNS interview with Dal Toso, "the rule would not necessarily prevent such

agencies from taking money from national or local governments that fund, promote or permit practices condemned by the church, such as abortion or contraception." Likewise, Msgr. Dal Toso said, non-Catholic personnel will still be welcome at Catholic charities, but they "should be aware of the fact that (they) are working in a Catholic organization."

Bourgeois Dismissed from Order for Supporting Women's Ordination

IN NOVEMBER, THE Maryknoll order announced that Fr. Roy Bourgeois had been dismissed after a long dispute about his advocacy for women's ordination. Fr. Tom Doyle, the canon lawyer who represented Bourgeois, told the National Catholic Reporter that the announcement came as a surprise after the order assured them a few months before that they were still engaged in dialogue. "And then this just happened, unilaterally. [Bourgeois] had no idea," Doyle said, referring to the October decision by the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

The longtime peace activist came under scrutiny in 2008 when he participated in the ordination of Roman Catholic Womanpriest Janice Sevre-Duszynska. In the same year he was told that he had incurred a latae sententiae excommunication and his status within Maryknoll was in jeopardy unless he recanted. He was also detained by Italian police in 2011 as part of a group of

activists trying to deliver a petition to the Vatican in favor of women's ordination.

The letter from Maryknoll announcing Bourgeois' removal from the order he had belonged to for 40 years cited his "ignoring the sensitivities of the faithful across the country" as reason for his laicization. By contrast, Bourgeois' statements have consistently invoked both his conscience rights and the rights of the faithful "to be able to speak openly and freely without fear ... of being dismissed or excommunicated."

The Church and Abuse

Australia Opens Official Investigation into **Handling of Church Sex Abuse**

IN NOVEMBER, AUSTRALIAN Prime Minister Julia Gillard initiated an official investigation into the way child sex abuse cases have been

handled by churches and the government. Two months earlier in September, a report was released in which church officials confirmed more than 600 children have been sexually abused by priests in the state of Victoria since the 1930s. Gillard told a press conference that there would be a special focus on coverups: "people being moved around, for example ... and by acts of omission."

The Australian hierarchy, which has been struggling to formulate an adequate response to the sexual abuse crisis since the late 1980s, released two reports in the '90s, "Towards Healing" and "Towards Understanding." According to the *National* Catholic Reporter, "By implication, 'Towards Understanding' was arguing that the culture of clericalism should be fundamentally reformed." The report was never made public, however, which may have something to do with a Vatican meeting attended by some of the



Cardinal George Pell at a 2008 news conference about church sexual abuse in

Australian bishops, who were required to sign a blueprint for dealing with their country's abuse crisis that effectively put clerical culture off limits.

Cardinal George Pell, the head of Australia's Catholic hierarchy and Archbishop of Sydney, pledged the church's cooperation but disagreed with the focus on the Catholic church. Pell said, "We are not interested in denying the extent of misdoing in the Catholic church. We object to it being exaggerated, we object to it being described as 'the only cab on the rank," Reuters reported. Pell cited a review by Patrick Parkinson, an independent auditor of the church's sexual abuse protocols, as evidence that the issue was being handled properly. The Lateline news program from ABC News Australia reported that Parkinson subsequently withdrew his approval and now alleges that the church still was engaged in the cover up of sexual abuse cases as late as 2005.

Geoffrey Robinson, retired auxiliary bishop of Sydney, who was a victim of childhood sexual abuse, vehemently disagreed with Pell's response to the inquiry, calling it "a disaster for the Catholic church" and Pell "an embarrassment to me and a lot of good Catholic people," according to the *Reporter*.

Australians Consider Whether Confessional Seal Holds for Sex Offenses

SEVERAL AUSTRALIAN lawmakers have brought up the confessional seal as it relates to mandatory reporting of suspected abuse cases. "I struggle to understand ... that if a priest confesses to another priest that he's been involved in pedophile activities, that that information should not be brought to police," New South Wales Premier Barry O'Farrell said to the state parliament, according to the National Catholic Reporter. Federal Attornev General Nicola Roxon, one of the leaders of the Australian commission

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into church sex abuse, has also mentioned the possibility of requiring priests to report suspected abuse cases, even if they heard about them in confession.

Cardinal George Pell of Sydney reacted by calling the confessional seal "inviolable," and recommended that priests refuse to hear the confession of people they knew to be abusers.

Retired auxiliary bishop of Sydney, Geoffrey Robinson, took a different view, saying that he would report abuse cases he heard about in confession to the police for the "greater good."

End Notes

British Theologian's Fellowship Revoked by **University of San Diego**

THE CANCELLATION OF AN invitation to Tina Beattie, a British theologian who had been slated to come to the University of San Diego in November, has touched off a firestorm of debate about academics and dissent at Catholic universities. University president Mary Lyons disinvited Beattie by letter on October 27, citing the theologian's suggestion that Catholics could support same-sex marriage.

Inside Higher Ed reported that the theologian's public statement in reaction to the controversy contained a detailed rebuttal of accusations from the Cardinal Newman Society. The self-appointed "watchdog" group for Catholic higher education had publicly mischaracterized her views on abortion

and accused her of mocking the Mass.

Subsequently, almost 100 faculty members declared a vote of no confidence in Lyons after asking the president to reinstate Beattie's appointment. In 2008, the University of San Diego withdrew its appointment of Rosemary Radford Ruether for serving on the board of Catholics for Choice.

"The Pope's presence on Twitter is a concrete expression of his conviction that the Church must be present in the digital arena," according to a Vatican statement.

"Part of the pope's job description is to spread the word and Twitter is turning out to be a great way to do that," Greg Burke, the Vatican's senior adviser for

intensely—and expensively-against same-sex marriage, one teenager's confirmation was derailed after a Facebook post in favor of same-sex marriage rights. Sixteen-year-old Lennon Cihak and his mother, Shana Cihak, claim that their parish priest, Fr. Gary LaMoine, told them Lennon forfeited his right to be confirmed by



Pope Benedict XVI posts his first message on Twitter in December 2012.

Pope Makes Social **Networking Debut** on Twitter

POPE BENEDICT XVI HAS joined the Twitter social networking site, where he will use the handle @pontifex to distribute tweets primarily in English. Before his first tweet he already had more than 600,000 followers. Questions about faith can be sent to the hashtag #askpontifex or #B16, with answers to be posted mostly on Wednesdays.

communications told NBC News. Earlier this year, Burke, a member of Opus Dei and former Fox News correspondent, was hired by the Holy See's Secretariat of State.

Minnesota Teenager's **Confirmation Cancelled** over Facebook Post in **Support of Same-Sex** Marriage

IN MINNESOTA, A STATE where the Catholic hierarchy campaigned most

expressing a view contrary to Catholic teaching. LaMoine claims that Lennon withdrew from the confirmation process but "Even if he had not withdrawn ... I would have had no choice but to remove him from consideration given his rejection of marriage as we understand it. Rejection of the church's teaching on marriage is a very serious breach of faith," said LaMoine, according to a Los Angeles Times report.





Beyond Savita

WHY NOW COULD BE THE MOMENT FOR CHANGE IN IRELAND'S ABORTION LAW

By Brendan O'Neill

HE TRAGIC DEATH OF SAVITA Halappanavar in a hospital in Galway has reignited the furious debate about abortion access and the severe lack thereof—in Ireland. Halappanavar, a 31-year-old Indian national who worked as a dentist in Galway, was four months pregnant when she was admitted to the city's University Hospital with severe back pains. Following an agonizing three-day-long miscarriage, she died from a pregnancy-related blood infection on October 28. According to her husband, Praveen, they had both pleaded with doctors to perform an abortion, but medical staff refused on the basis that a fetal heartbeat could still be detected and Irish law forbids performing a termination under such circumstances. Abortion is forbidden by the Irish constitution: performing an abortion is punishable by imprisonment—potentially life imprisonment. Praveen recalls one of the doctors saving that Savita couldn't possibly have an abortion because "Ireland is a Catholic country." Apparently, the couple's

BRENDAN O'NEILL is the editor of spiked and a columnist for the Australian and the Big Issue. He is also the author of Can I Recycle My Granny and 39 Other Eco-Dilemmas (2008).

desperate plea that "We are not Catholics; we are Hindus" fell on deaf ears, and no attempt was made to perform an abortion.

The case raises many questions. On the specifics of what happened to Savita, there's the question of why, given that her life was clearly in danger, the option of abortion was allegedly not offered by any of the attending doctors. After all, following a 1992 ruling by Ireland's Supreme Court, it has been legal to abort a fetus if there is a "real and substantial" risk to the life of the womanthe only circumstances in which abortion is permissible in Ireland. Yet this did not happen in Savita's case. Moreover, there is now a heated, increasingly sectarian debate in Ireland over whether an abortion would have done anything to help Savita anyway. Two inquiries into her death are being carried out: one by the hospital in which she died and one by central government officials. The exact circumstances in which her condition worsened and her death occurred remain to be seen. Antiabortion campaigners have pounced with rather ugly glee upon claims that Savita's death was more a result of medical failure, possibly malpractice, rather than of her having been denied an abortion. That the Irish Times journalist who broke the story of Savita's death has now admitted that some of her facts may have been "muddled" has further confused the debate about whether an abortion is what would have saved Savita.

Yet for good or ill, Savita's death has shone a glaring spotlight on Ireland's continuing and stringent criminalization of abortion. Savita's death-and the international debate about, and protest against, Ireland's abortion laws that it has given rise to—has exposed the Irish state as lagging behind in both international opinion and the attitudes of its own populace on the issue of abortion. Condemned by the Indian government, which has demanded that the Irish ambassador to India provide an explanation for Savita's death; and criticized by officials in the European Union, who frequently call on Dublin to provide some kind of abortion service for women; Ireland increasingly appears as an aberration in modern Europe, a behind-the-times antiabortion outpost that stubbornly refuses to grant women any measure of control over their pregnancies. Will the Savita tragedy change this, energizing and politicizing the fairly broad and sympathetic prochoice sentiment in Ireland and allowing it, at last, to have some influence over government?

Currently, abortion in Ireland is a serious criminal offense. It is outlawed under the Offences Against the Person Act of 1861, which was passed by the Parliament of Westminster at a time when Ireland was ruled by Britain as part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. The Act specifies that,

"Every Woman, being with Child, who, with Intent to procure her own Miscarriage, shall unlawfully administer to herself any Poison or other noxious Thing, or shall unlawfully use an Instrument or other Means whatsoever with the like Intent, and whosoever, with Intent to procure the Miscarriage of any Woman, whether she be or be not with Child, shall unlawfully administer to her or cause to be taken by her any Poison or other noxious Thing ... shall be guilty of

an offence ... and shall be liable to [imprisonment] for Life."

In short, a woman who attempts to abort a fetus, and anyone who helps her, is a criminal and can potentially be sentenced to life in jail. This antiquated, antiwomen section of the 1861 Offences Against the Persons Act was repealed in England and Wales in 1967 when the Abortion Act was passed allowing women to seek medical terminations of their pregnancies. Ironically, it still holds in Ireland, a colony of Britain when the law was passed but now an independent state. In Northern Ireland, too, which is still part of the United Kingdom, abortion is illegal under both the 1861 Offences Act and the Infant Life Preservation Act of 1929.

In 1983, Ireland took this unforgiving antiabortion stance to its logical conclusion by holding a referendum on whether a special amendment should be made to the Irish constitution that would give a political underpinning to the legal prohibition of all abortions. The Eighth Amendment to the constitution said:

"The State acknowledges the right to life of the unborn and, with due regard to the equal rights to life of the mother, guarantees in its laws to respect, and, as far as practicable, by its laws to defend and vindicate that right."

Sadly, this constitutional elevation of the so-called rights of the unborn over the rights of women to determine the futures of their pregnancies and their destinies was passed by the electorate in the 1983 referendum, with 66.9 percent of voters in approval, and 33.1 percent opposing it. Thus in Ireland, there is an actual constitutional provision for the antichoice ideology that cynically promotes the "rights" of the unborn as a means of curbing the choices and determinations of living women, effectively reducing Irish women to the level of vessels whose capacity to be autonomous is seriously compromised when they are

with child. At that moment, they become state-monitored carriers of the protected and cherished category of "the unborn," rather than individuals with control over their bodies and lives.

Ireland's abortion laws are among the most stringent in the European Union. Only in Malta and Andorra is abortion outlawed as utterly as it is in Ireland. In Poland, too, following years of fairly liberal abortion laws under communist rule, abortion has in more recent years become far more strictly policed. But in most of the rest of the EU, abortion is legally available under broad circumstances during the first trimester, and then various conditions are imposed upon abortions carried out in the second and third trimesters. Ireland's criminalization of abortion has an undeniably detrimental impact on pregnant women's lives. It makes becoming pregnant into a potential crisis for many women, particularly those who are not sure if they want to be pregnant and those who definitely don't want to be. These women's lives are thrown upside down by these harsh laws forbidding the ending of a pregnancy. As a consequence, each year an estimated 4,000 women travel from Ireland to Britain to have abortions under England's more liberal 1967 Act. This makes Irish women's decisionmaking—their basic ability to control their reproductive lives—far more stressful and expensive than it ought to be, in effect turning them into temporary fugitives who must cross the Irish Sea in search of a procedure that is forbidden in their own country. It is bizarre that the Irish government is aware that thousands of its female citizens travel to Britain every year for abortions—to the extent that it recently decriminalized the distribution of information about abortion services in the UK—and vet refuses to legalize abortion and allow these women to access this essential medical service in their own home towns and cities.

Prior to the Savita tragedy, various attempts had been made by Ireland's prochoice activists and prochoice lawyers to force the Irish government to liberalize its laws on abortion, with some small successes. It is reported that Savita's husband Praveen is preparing to sue the state of Ireland at the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) over its failure to provide a severely ill pregnant woman with the option of an abortion. Previously, Ireland's prochoice activists have sought to bring about change in the abortion laws through cases brought before both European courts and Ireland's own courts. In 1992 following the infamous X Case, the Supreme Court of Ireland decreed that legal abortions could be available on the island if there was a "real and substantial" risk to the life of the pregnant woman. This case involved X, the legal pseudonym given to a

nancy while simultaneously battling cancer would pose a risk to her life because they were worried that she would subsequently seek an abortion. Mrs. C felt she had no choice but to travel to England and have an abortion, believing, but not knowing for certain, that it was risky for her to continue the pregnancy in her current state of health. The ECHR found that there had been serious violations of Mrs. C's rights under the European Convention on Human Rights, particularly her rights to life and to medical information, and the court demanded that Ireland reform its abortion laws. This was considered a major victory by Ireland's prochoice activists, who have since used this ECHR judgment to put pressure on the Dublin government to liberalize abortion laws.

carried out in 2011, only 24 percent of Irish people have a "favorable" view of the Catholic church, compared with 47 percent who have an "unfavorable" view. This is extraordinary in a country that was dominated by the Catholic church and its teaching for so many decades. Today, the hierarchy's ability to direct and control public debate, especially pertaining to matters of morality and choice, is severely compromised, creating an opening for promoting a new and fresh take on abortion and women's autonomy.

Secondly and even more importantly, there has been a palpable shift in Irish people's attitudes towards abortion. This is especially true of younger generations. In 2004, a survey carried out by the Royal College of Surgeons found that

Ireland's abortion laws run counter to the comparatively progressive and aspirational outlook of a majority of the Irish populace....

14-year-old girl who had been raped and made pregnant by a neighbor and then shockingly prevented by the authorities from traveling to Britain for an abortion. That is, despite having been raped, being pregnant at 14 and suffering from suicidal thoughts, this teenager was forced to stay put in Ireland, and thus to stay pregnant against her will. This cruel and unusual treatment of a girl by the Irish authorities caused public outrage, leading to the Supreme Court case and the very slight relaxation of Ireland's abortion laws. (X eventually miscarried.)

In 2009 in what became known as the C Case, lawyers and campaigners took the state of Ireland to the ECHR over its refusal to provide not only abortion services but basic health information. The C Case involved a woman, known as "Mrs. C," who had cancer and then discovered that she was pregnant. Her doctors refused to give her information about whether continuing her pregNow some advocates hope that the Savita case, if it, too, gets heard at the ECHR, will exert enough pressure on the Irish government to be the decisive factor for change.

It certainly feels that the time is right for a major change in Ireland's archaic and oppressive abortion laws, but are prochoice activists going about making these changes in the right way? There are two conditions that make liberalization of Ireland's abortion laws a greater possibility today than it has been in years. Firstly, there is the existential crisis and disarray of the Catholic church in Ireland. The Irish Catholic hierarchy, which has frequently been at the forefront of those insisting that Ireland keep abortion illegal, has in recent years fallen into historic disrepute. As a result of child abuse scandals and various government inquiries into its institutional cruelties, the Irish Catholic church is held in very low esteem by a large sector of the Irish public. According to a poll

among Irish people under the age of 45, 51 percent supported abortion without restriction; a further 39 percent supported abortion in "limited circumstances." In 2010, a poll by the Irish Examiner newspaper found that 60 percent of 18- to 35-year-olds believed abortion should be legalized. Irish doctors tend to favor legalizing abortion, as well. In a 2011 poll of 750 of Ireland's general practitioners, 52 percent said that they supported abortion rights, while 24 percent said abortion should be allowed in "some circumstances" and only 11 percent supported continuing the ban on abortion. Clearly, Irish social attitudes are changing dramatically.

Close on the heels of the public uproar over Savita's death, headlines began announcing plans to legalize, or at least liberalize, Ireland's abortion law. In reality, the administration has proposed to allow abortion in cases where a woman's life is in danger, as opposed to her health—this may be interpreted as including the risk of suicide. In other words, in the best case scenario, the Xcase ruling will be put into effect. Irish law, it seems, is changing less quickly than Irish people.

By insisting that abortion must remain illegal in all or most circumstances, the Irish authorities are not only falling foul of more liberal-minded politicians and judges in Brussels, but more importantly, they are failing to keep abreast of what their own people want and expect. Ireland's abortion laws run counter to the comparatively progressive and aspirational outlook of a majority of the Irish populace, especially those under 30, who are the future rulers of Ireland and determiners of its morality and its destiny.

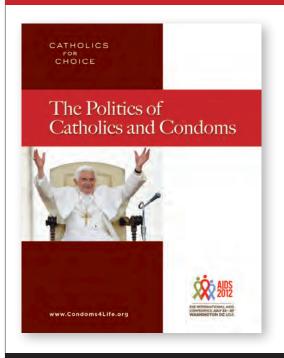
With the Catholic hierarchy very much on the defensive in public debates about morality, and with major shifts occurring in public attitudes to abortion, there has never been a better time to put pressure on the Irish authorities to liberalize abortion laws. However, prochoice activists need to think carefully about how to accomplish this. The Savita case has exposed a tendency among Ireland's prochoice activists to do two things: first, to present women who need abortions as victims who are vulnerable and even pathetic; and second, to appeal to authorities outside of Ireland, particularly in Brussels, to force Dublin to rethink its laws. While both of these tactical approaches are understandable, there is the potential for

them to backfire.

In presenting women who seek abortions as victims in the mold of a tragically drawn Savita, prochoice activists are making a logical move to harness public sympathy for Irish women who find themselves in very bad situations. But the downside to this is that the true argument for abortion access—on the basis that women are free and autonomous and should be treated as full, proper citizens—gets lost in the rush to depict pregnant women who don't want to be pregnant as victims of circumstance who need our pity or our assistance. Also, asking the external ECHR to put pressure on Dublin to provide abortion services can be seen as a clever attempt to encourage the Irish government, which is so reliant upon the favor and support it gets from Europe, to seriously rethink its abortion laws. But the downside is that prochoice activists spend more time appealing to lawyers overseas than they do trying to harness the increasingly progressive outlook of their fellow citizens. This groundswell of progressive public opinion is surely a better form of leverage than the rulings of faraway judges. What's more, if abortion is legalized in Ireland on the say-so of European judges, antiabortion activists could try to depict it as a foreign imposition, when in fact, a great many Irish people want abortion services and want them now.

It is incumbent upon those of us who want to see serious change in Ireland to think about the tactics, but also the principles, of any campaign to change that country's cruel and outmoded abortion laws. Even if we highlight the sufferings of some Irish women who need abortions and continue taking the legalistic route towards change, we must also bear in mind that in the long run, Ireland needs abortion because women have the right to be morally autonomous beings in full control of their lives, and because growing numbers of Irish people believe it is appropriate and civilized for abortion services to be made available in their country.

Get more background on condoms, the Catholic hierarchy and faith-based AIDS care.



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Creaking at the Seams

CHANGING NEW ZEALAND'S ACCESS TO ABORTION CARE

By Dame Margaret Sparrow

N SEPTEMBER 4, 2012, THE Southland Times, a provincial daily newspaper in New Zealand, published an opinion piece by Jon O'Brien under the headline "Opposition to abortion not the stance of all Catholics." Why should the president of Catholics for Choice become involved in a debate half a world away? Thankfully he did, because one of the trends of recent years has been for greater international cooperation between those advocating for justice in reproductive rights. The thrust of the article was to demonstrate that the right to safe abortion is a global issue, even though it was written in response to a particular local issue. In this case, the Catholic bishop of Dunedin sent to the media a letter to be read at church services on Sunday, August 5, protesting the plan by the Southern District Health Board (DHB) to establish a new abortion service.

To understand the context in which the debate erupted, it will be helpful to provide some background. New Zealand

DAME MARGARET SPARROW (awarded Queen's Honours in 1987 and 2002) retired after years of working as a family planning doctor and abortion provider and is currently a director of Istar Ltd., a not-for-profit company that imports the abortion pill from France into New Zealand. She has served for over four decades on the Abortion Law Reform Association (ALRANZ), and is the author of Abortion Then and Now: New Zealand abortion stories from 1940 to 1980.

(population 4.4 million) is located in the South Pacific and comprises two main islands rather unimaginatively named the North and South Islands. There is a Maori indigenous population and colonization by British settlers was formalized by the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840. New Zealand is one of the 54 independent members of the Common-

wealth and recognizes Queen Elizabeth II as head of state.

In colonial days, New Zealand inherited the restrictive English abortion laws of 1861, which meant that abortion was classified as a serious crime with harsh penalties. For over a century, women needing abortions had to resort to selfabortion or find an illegal abortionist. When global travel improved, those with money could travel elsewhere in the world to obtain a safe abortion.

In 1967, there was a window of opportunity when the abortion laws of England, Scotland and Wales were liberalized, but although New Zealand often followed trends in Great Britain, on this occasion the government chose not to follow suit. New Zealand women had to wait another decade until the New Zealand Parliament invented its own rather complicated system of controlling abortions by a system requiring approval by two doctors.

The new legislation came into effect in 1978 and with it came major benefits.



1. It provided New Zealand doctors and their patients with a pathway (albeit rather complicated) for legal abortions.

2. It stopped the need for desperate women to resort to unsafe abortions and put the illegal abortionists out of business.

- 3. The abortion traffic to Australia (about a three-hour flight across the Tasman Sea) gradually diminished as New Zealand services became established in hospitals and clinics.
- 4. For the first time, a method of obtaining accurate statistics on abortion was implemented.
- 5. An Abortion Supervisory Committee (ASC) became responsible for overseeing abortions and reporting annually to Parliament.

However, this situation has not withstood the test of time. Those in favor of safe, legal abortions do not approve of the bureaucratic system of approval, which delays access to early abortion. The decision to have an abortion is the prerogative of two doctors, not the woman. Rape is not grounds for abortion, but only a factor that can be taken into account. Geographically, there are significant differences in services depending on available staff. Rural women are particularly disadvantaged.

Those opposed to abortion were frustrated that for many years the number of abortions increased, although in recent years there has been a leveling off. What had seemed like a restrictive law on paper was being interpreted in a liberal fashion by the gatekeepers—the doctors. Claims are made that this amounts to "abortion on demand." The fact that 98 percent of abortions are performed on the grounds that continuing the pregnancy is a serious risk to the mental health of the woman merely fuels the debate.

tors who appreciate efficient and economic services.

Parliament has steadfastly refused to grapple with the abortion issue. Now, 34 years later, the legislation is basically unchanged and creaking at the seams. Groups in favor of decriminalization, such as the Abortion Law Reform Association (ALRANZ) and the Family Planning Association, advocate for change on the basis of health and safety, justice and human rights. Change was also recently endorsed by the United Nations Committee on CEDAW (the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women), which was conducting a periodic review of New Zealand's compliance with the convention. The committee urged the government to review the abortion law and

in 2010, which stated, "We continue to be concerned about accessibility of services for women and believe it is unacceptable that women in some parts of the country have to travel long distances in order to access abortion services.... We have been concerned about the lack of local service for the women of Southland, but are encouraged that the newly formed Southern DHB is actively addressing this matter."

Whatever plans were under way received a large jolt at exactly 12:51 pm on Tuesday, February 22, 2011, when a major earthquake struck Christchurch, causing devastation in the central city, including major damage to the busy abortion clinic, which subsequently closed. It was an event that should have prompted an urgent review of all abor-

It was a daunting time for prochoice advocates ... mainly inexperienced in dealing with medical authorities but not lacking in resolve or passion.

One group opposed to abortion has spent the last seven years in a marathon legal case that finally terminated in the Supreme Court in March 2012. To simplify the very complex arguments: Right to Life New Zealand (RTLNZ) was contesting the role of the ASC in the decision making process for abortions, but lost the case in a 3-2 judgment.

Another relatively new issue is that the 1978 legislation was written for surgical abortions and did not anticipate the advent of medical abortion. In 2001, a High Court ruling was necessary to define the correct procedure to follow for medical abortions. The judge ruled that both medications in the protocol (mifepristone, followed 24-36 hours later by misoprostol) must be taken in a licensed institution, an outcome that is less than satisfactory. It means that home administration is not possible, while extra visits to a clinic are off-putting both for patients who appreciate home comforts and health administrapractice with a view to simplifying it and ensuring women's autonomy.

So much for the background. Back to the Southern DHB case that emerged recently. In 2009, New Zealand was divided into 21 DHBs administering services to the respective populations. The two most southern districts—Southland (main city Invercargill) and Otago (main city Dunedin)—were the first to discuss merging to optimize resources. In May 2010, the two amalgamated to form the new Southern DHB. One of the responsibilities of any District Health Board is to provide core services, including abortion. Previously, Otago DHB had provided abortion services in Dunedin, but Southland DHB had never provided services even in the main city of Invercargill. In fact, Dunedin could not cope with the demand from Southland and many women had to travel further away to Christchurch, where there was a larger clinic.

This deficiency was highlighted by the ASC in its annual report to Parliament

tion services for the lower part of the South Island, but change came slowly.

Except for the statement by the ASC that the Southern DHB was addressing the matter, there was no publicity until over a year later. The Southland Times published an article on May 16, 2012, with the news that the DHB had applied for a license to open an abortion clinic at Southland Hospital, Invercargill.

For 35 years, until he retired in 2006, Dr. Norman MacLean had practiced as an obstetrician and gynecologist at Southland Hospital and was proud of the fact that while he was there no abortion services were provided. It was not surprising that he led the 2012 campaign to oppose the establishment of an abortion service. He was already a patron of RTLNZ and became the spokesperson for the newly formed Southlanders for Life. He encouraged hospital staff to resign in protest, and one pediatrician actually wrote a letter of resignation that was later withdrawn. Dr. MacLean appeared

in newspapers, spoke on the radio and helped organize protest meetings.

It was a daunting time for prochoice advocates, mainly young women, mainly inexperienced in dealing with medical authorities but not lacking in resolve or passion. With support from ALRANZ, meetings were held in August that only strengthened the mission to provide a better service for the women of Southland. Most importantly, the DHB did not back down from its resolve to provide abortion care, even though the letters to the editor were numerically in favor of antiabortion views and protest activities could not be ignored. Then, Bishop Colin Campbell of Dunedin entered the debate, using the authority of the church to influence decision makers. That is when ALRANZ approached Jon O'Brien to present an alternative Catholic viewpoint.

Has it helped? In a word, yes. On Thursday, September 6, the clinic opened and will be providing a choice of early medical abortion or surgical termination up to 12 weeks using manual vacuum aspiration. Two midwives manage a weekly clinic with visiting doctors carrying out abortions. An afterhours help line has been set up to provide patient support.

Has the debate gone away? In a word, no. A call by Southlanders for Life to "name and shame" the staff who work at the clinic led to a television debate on October 16 between Dr. MacLean of Southlanders for Life and Dr. Alison McCulloch of ALRANZ. A poll conducted during the program asked, "Should abortion clinic staff have the right to privacy?" and the result was a resounding 82 percent yes and 18 percent no.

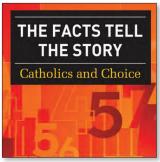
The following day, however, ALRANZ received a disturbing e-mail that read, "People who work at the clinic are legitimate targets and so are you. You'll be hearing from me again; that is, if your computer, or, in fact, your premises, are in one piece." That threat has been referred to the police.

And so the need for vigilance remains, along with the need for international collaboration.

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Steps Forward and Back

LEGAL ABORTION ACCESS IN LATIN AMERICA

By Annie Kelly

AST OCTOBER, AN ARGENTINEAN woman who had been kidnapped and trafficked into a prostitution ring found herself at the center of a bitter legal struggle over her right to terminate a pregnancy that she insisted was a legacy from the abuse she had faced at the hands of her captors. By law, rape victims in Argentina have the right to seek an abortion, a point clarified by the Supreme Court last March. Yet minutes before the procedure was to take place in a Buenos Aires hospital, an antiabortion group won an injunction from a lower-court judge to halt the termination.

The woman's ordeal finally ended after the Supreme Court issued an urgent instruction that the abortion be allowed to proceed. The court also publicly rebuked the lower-court judge, Miriam Rustán de Estrada, for leaking the victim's identity and whereabouts to antiabortion protesters who then gathered outside her house shouting "murderer."

Argentina is deemed to be one of Latin America's most progressive and liberal states because there have been impressive advances on sexual equality rights and antidiscrimination legislation. Still, abortion is a very public battleground

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where every inch of progress is fought for tooth and nail.

The story is the same throughout Latin America. The region is the bastion of some of the world's most draconian antiabortion legislation. Three countries—Chile, Nicaragua and El Salvador—ban abortion completely, even if the pregnancy will end with both the death of the mother and the fetus. Across the rest of the region, bar a few exceptions, most governments operate on an "exemptions" approach to abortion where abortion remains illegal but penalties are waived in specific circumstances.

Despite the widespread implementation of rigid antiabortion laws, abortions are still taking place in huge numbersmore than 30 per 1,000 women of childbearing age compared to fewer than 20 in the US and 12 in Western Europe.

The knock-on effect of these largely illegal abortions on the lives of women makes for grim reading. According to a 2010 Guttmacher Institute report, Latin America has the highest number of unsafe abortions in the world, with nearly 95 percent of the 4.2 million abortions carried out every year considered unsafe. One in every four women who has a clandestine abortion ends up in hospital, seriously ill or dead from complications.

"Abortion has become almost like the last stand for Catholic conservative forces who have perceived they have been losing ground and will not cede

their control over women's bodies," says Carmen Barroso, regional director of the International Planned Parenthood Federation, Western Hemisphere Region (IPPF/WHR). "Their continuing influence has made it probably the most dangerous place in the world to have an abortion."

Yet could the ground be shifting? When Argentina's Supreme Court ruled in March 2012 that abortion is legally available to all rape victims, and that a sworn affidavit by the woman or her legal representative was sufficient to show the pregnancy resulted from rape, it was celebrated as a considerable step forward by prochoice activists.

Since then, the city of Buenos Aires and provincial governments have drafted regulations to implement the ruling. A bill was narrowly passed in the Buenos Aires city legislature, scrapping a 12-week time limit on abortions for pregnancies resulting from rape and allowing rape victims of 14 and older to abort without parental consent. The bill was subsequently vetoed by Buenos Aires' conservative mayor, Mauricio Macri. However, Alvaro Herrero from Argentina's Asociación por los Derechos Civiles (Association of Civil Rights) says any attempts to introduce legislation are a sign that debate around the legalization of abortion is steadily moving into the public arena: "This and other legal steps, such as a project to legalize abortion recently being discussed at a Criminal Law Committee



In October 2012 Uruguayan senators voted 17 to 14 in favor of bill to legalize abortions during first 12 weeks of pregnancy.

in the National Congress, is the first time that the notion of legalization is being publically debated."

More radical change was introduced in Mexico City in 2007, when it became only the second location in Latin America after Cuba to allow abortion on request to any woman up to 12 weeks of pregnancy. This move followed a decision by Colombia's Constitutional Court in 2006 to lift an absolute ban on abortion and allow legal terminations in three circumstances: when the life or health of a woman is threatened, when the pregnancy results from rape or incest or if the fetus is unlikely to survive. The emphasis on the health as well as the life of the woman was celebrated as a leap in the right direction.

"In Colombia there is now an understanding that it is not just the life but the physical and mental health of the woman that must be considered," says Maria Mejia, executive director of Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir (CDD) in Mexico City, who has spent decades campaigning for legal reform across the region. "This is almost unprecedented."

Then last year, the tiny country of Uruguay became the first nation in the region to partially decriminalize abortion, passing a revolutionary bill that legalizes abortion in the first trimester, permits abortion through 14 weeks of pregnancy in cases of rape and allows later-term abortions when a woman's health is at risk. The bill passed the Lower House by a margin of just one vote, with 50 in favor and 49 against.

"Mexico and Uruguay are big success stories and they are an indication of a general trend of advances across the region, where abortion is finally becoming an issue of public debate," says Mejia. "Overall

women's rights and access to abortion look very different than they did 10 years ago."

Public opinion about abortion also seems to be shifting. For example, a July 2008 survey of women across the country conducted by Corporación Humanas, a Chilean NGO, found that despite the current total ban on abortion, 79 percent of Chilean women were in favor of decriminalizing abortion when the life of the pregnant woman is at risk and 68 percent said legislation on the issue was urgent.

Alvaro Herrero in Argentina believes that prochoice activists are realizing that the key to pushing open the door to further decriminalization is to engage with lawmakers, politicians and healthcare providers in a different way. "The public debate around abortion has historically been a polarization between prolife or prochoice mired in moral debates about the origin of life. Now there has been a shift to focus on the practical aspects of the lack of access to safe and legal abortion," he says.

"[Thanks to the efforts of the prochoice movement], today it is increasingly understood that abortion is a serious public health problem that affects thousands of women each year," Herrero continues. "It is known that women who die or are hospitalized are young, poor and in many cases migrants, yet middle and upper-class women can access safe abortions in private clinics. Many people understand that the 450,000 illegal abortions in Argentina every year show that prohibition does not work. Many human rights groups have become actively the number of people who support us. But we have also greatly increased the number of people actively fighting us."

In other countries, moves towards legalization or decriminalization have been soured by the inclusion of legal provisions ensuring that the decision to have an abortion rests not with the woman, but with the state. Across the region, legal abortions are routinely blocked by judges and government officials. Clearly, winning in the legislature does not equal winning the war.

A report by the Guttmacher Institute found that, despite the changes to abortion laws in Colombia, only 0.08 percent of the 400,000 abortions carried out in the country in 2010 were done legally. ized abortion, but even this gain is under threat. The right is gathering signatures to call a referendum on overturning what has been put in place."

One of the greatest weapons in the hands of the opposition, according to Mejia of CDD in Mexico City, is that so far prochoice campaigners have failed to effectively engage healthcare professionals on the issue of safe abortion. "Medical professionals have perhaps been the least involved [of all sectors] in debates and discussion around abortion,"

Mejia continues, "In Mexico, prolife campaigners used a deliberate strategy of targeting and influencing healthcare professionals and attempting to coordi-

Moves towards legalization or decriminalization have been soured by the inclusion of legal provisions ensuring that the decision to have an abortion rests not with the woman, but with the state.

involved in the promotion of abortion [access], which has further helped put the issue on the public agenda. All of this has greatly influenced the public debate around abortion and generated greater support for its legalization."

Yet while advances across the region may point to a shifting of ground, progress is still slow and often stalled. "What we gain in a country we have lost in another," says the IPPF's Barroso.

She points to Mexico where, following the changes to abortion law in Mexico City, more than half of the country's 31 states passed new antiabortion laws defining a fertilized human egg as a person with the right to legal protection, severely reducing the possibility of the capital's prochoice legislation making it to national law. "Any changes that are implemented are constantly attacked," Barroso says. "Our progress on abortion is much slower than expected. We have cut some stigma. We have greatly increased awareness of the problem and The report concluded that women who were entitled to an abortion under the changed laws were still opting for clandestine operations due to the lengthy and often traumatic process of gaining consent from healthcare providers and the justice system.

In Uruguay, seen as the region's second-biggest success story, a woman seeking abortion under the new legislation must justify her desire to have an abortion to a panel of at least three people, including a gynecologist, a social worker and a mental health professional, who must then discuss abortion-related health risks and alternatives including adoption. The woman must then go and "reflect" for five days before she is allowed to go ahead with a termination.

"We did what we could," says Karina Daveiro from women's rights group Pan y Rosas in Uruguay. "We know that the steps taken here are important and that we are one of the few Latin American countries that has partially decriminalnate a mass conscientious objection campaign in hospitals across Mexico City. The prochoice movement has to frame abortion as a human rights and public health issue but at the same time we cannot deny that this is also a moral arena. We have to find a way of engaging with this dialogue, to frame abortion as a public health issue but also as a concept of freedom of conscience, which in itself is a strong Catholic teaching. We cannot be seen to be against the church, we have to learn to argue on this from a Catholic point of view."

Further advances, she says, will depend on the prochoice movement's ability to keep abortion in the public arena, where it is debated, dissected and talked about as a real issue touching the lives of millions of women.

"At times it seems like there is an impossibly long way to go," Mejia says. "But the gains we have made would have been inconceivable a decade ago, so that gives me hope."

What It Means to Be Prochoice

IN SEPTEMBER 2012, JON O'BRIEN OF CATHOLICS FOR CHOICE AND ANN FUREDI OF bpas convened an international meeting of abortion providers, advocates and academics at Chandos House in London to talk about what it means to be prochoice.

The following statement from the meeting is being advanced through discussions in the prochoice community around the world to foster reflection, discussion and our understanding of what it means to support choice. We welcome your thoughts on it.

London Declaration of Prochoice Principles

We believe in a woman's autonomy and her right to choose whether to continue or end a pregnancy. Every woman should have the right to decide the future of her pregnancy according to her conscience, whatever her reasons or circumstances. A just society does not compel women to continue an undesired pregnancy.

We recognize that support for choice in itself is not enough. Access to abortion is an integral part of women's reproductive healthcare, and we believe in the right to receive this. Women need access to resources and services, including the counsel of the professionals, friends and family they choose to involve. Legal, political, social and economic changes are necessary to allow the exercise of reproductive choice, and a commitment to such changes is part of a commitment to choice.

We express solidarity with those who provide abortion care, and we recognize the moral value of their work. We recognize and respect that some healthcare personnel may choose not to provide abortions, but we believe it is ethically imperative for them to ensure that a woman receives a referral to a willing provider.

We believe there is a profound moral case for freedom of reproductive choice. We are committed to explaining why abortions are necessary and why women are competent to make decisions and act on them responsibly.

To be prochoice is to be committed to the right of women to make their own reproductive decisions and to:

- Strive to create the conditions in which reproductive choice may be exercised.
- Support reproductive autonomy.
- Advocate for legal frameworks that allow autonomous decision-making.
- Educate the public and policymakers globally about the value of reproductive autonomy.

Women are the only ones who can make the right decision for themselves. This is the very essence of what it means to be prochoice.

Chandos House London September 2012

Putin's Russia

CAN THE ORTHODOX CHURCH REPLACE THE COMMUNIST PARTY?

By Marina Davidashvili

N NOVEMBER 2011, RUSSIA ADOPTED legislation restricting access to abortion. Women now must undergo a new "silence period"—that is, a waiting period ranging from 48 hours to seven days depending on the gestational age. The new law also limits the availability of the procedure, making abortion accessible upon request only in the first 12 weeks. Abortions are still available and offered by the state up to 22 weeks in cases of rape, and for medical reasons at any point. Additionally, for physicians with a conscientious objection to abortion, the law introduced protocols—framed in a way that could create obstacles for patients with few treatment options, such as in rural areas. The Russian Orthodox church was heavily involved in campaigning for these changes, as well as others that did not pass.

At the time, I could not stop asking myself the question: How, just 20 years after the collapse of the atheist Soviet Union, does the church have such an influence on politics in this country that it could have a hand in amending what was once the most liberal abortion law in the world?

The Orthodox church—and religion overall—were very much under the control of the intelligence services during the Soviet period. Not a single candidate for the office of bishop, or any other

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Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin kisses Patriarch Kirill during a 2011 Easter service in Moscow.

high-ranking religious position, could be appointed without the approval of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the KGB. Fully defunded after the 1917 revolution and separated from the state in 1918, the church experienced a period of immense persecution and repression. This was especially brutal in the 1920s and '30s (when bishops, priests and much of the active laity were executed or exiled) and early in the '60s during the rule of Nikita Khrushchev. In the 1990s, Patriarch Alexy II did acknowledge the fact that the bishops (including him) had come to an understanding with the Soviet

government and now publicly regretted these compromises. Only with the arrival of Mikhail Gorbachev and the implementation of policies of Glasnost and Perestroika did social liberalization and a loosening of control over religious life in the country take place.

Huge opportunities arose for the Orthodox church from these regained liberties—it was simply up to the patriarch to seize them and return the church's power and status to what existed before the Soviet era. Under the rule of Patriarch Alexy II, enthroned in 1990, the Russian Orthodox church immensely expanded

the number of dioceses, parishes, monasteries and schools, not to mention the number of newly built churches.

While Alexy II resisted the idea of the church becoming the political instrument of the Kremlin, the collaboration between the two greatly advanced with the arrival of Patriarch Kirill in 2009. Within the last three years, the Russian Orthodox church has entered into direct cooperation with the government by signing speWorking Group was asked during a Moscow meeting in October 2011, none of the group members could imagine a woman's reasoning for choosing an abortion. The working group was comprised of seven Orthodox Church officials, one representative of Islam, a linguist representing women's concerns, a member of a group called "Life," government officials and members of parliament. The group prepared suggestions for the upcoming Nevertheless, they proposed four amendments.

- 1. Reducing availability of all abortions, including those for "social reasons," in state clinics to 12 weeks. (This was not adopted—abortions in cases of rape, considered a social reason, are still performed up to 22 weeks.)
- 2. Imposing a silence period. (This was adopted, but with changes. Currently, there is a 48-hour waiting period for 4-7

How, just 20 years after the collapse of the atheist Soviet Union, does the church have such an influence on politics in this country that it could have a hand in amending what was once the most liberal abortion law in the world?

cial agreements with a number of ministries and governmental agencies, such as the Ministry of Health and Social Development and the Ministry of Emergencies. According to patriarchate officials, this relationship will also extend to shaping the school curriculum.

The way the church acts in concert with the state generally follows a certain model. The annual International Christmas Educational readings, started in 1993, are a church-society forum for discussing developments in the sphere of Orthodox education that tend to draw more than 5,000 participants. The challenges identified in thematic workshops are then summed up, with special working groups created to propose legal changes to improve the situation.

It was at the 17th International Christmas Educational Readings in January 2010 that the thematic workshop "Ethical-legal aspects of the demographic policy of Russia: the problem of abortion" took place. The workshop participants, which included Hon. Yelena Mizulina, MP, chair of the State Duma Committee on Family and Children, decided to create a Working Group that she would chair. The aim was to amend the current abortion law in view of the country's very high abortion rate and concurrent demographic decline. Significantly, when the federal draft law on health in the Russian Federation. Interestingly, there were no experts in demography or gynecology among its members.

The Working Group on Abortion seems not to have considered that while the abortion rate in the Russian Federation remains high by international standards, it is currently at a historical low since the introduction of modern contraceptives after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

weeks of gestation; a 7-day waiting period for weeks 8-10; and a 48-hour waiting period for the 11th and 12th weeks.)

- 3. Requiring parental consent. Abortion for minors would have been possible only with consent of one of the parents or legal representatives. (This was not adopted.)
- 4. Instituting a "consent form" for women. This document would include information about supposed negative consequences of abortion, including (continued on page 30)

In the words of members of the Working Group on Abortion, which crafted Russia's new abortion legislation:

"I assure you if you just teach teenager girls how to swaddle a child by bringing a doll and practicing together in the classroom, it will activate their natural motherly instincts; they will instantly want to become mothers and this is the remedy against abortions!"

"Let me tell you something! For me as a priest, it's much more profitable that there be more babies! Because the funerals are cheaper. But birth followed by baptism, communion, wedding, again birth and baptism—generates income!"

—Father Dimitry, head of the Informational-Editorial division of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department of Youth

"Sexual education corrupts youngsters and 'our' values are different. Children must adopt the religious views of parents and obediently follow them."

—Olga Letkova, member of the biomedical ethics and medical section of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department of Youth

From notes of the meeting between the European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development and the Working Group members at the State Duma on October 10, 2011.

"The Secret History of Sex, Choice and Catholics" features interviews with leading experts in the fields of theology, philosophy and ethics who examine Catholic traditions, teachings and beliefs on the following key issues:

- Abortion & Contraception
- HIV & AIDS
- Sex & Sexuality
- Religion in Public Policy

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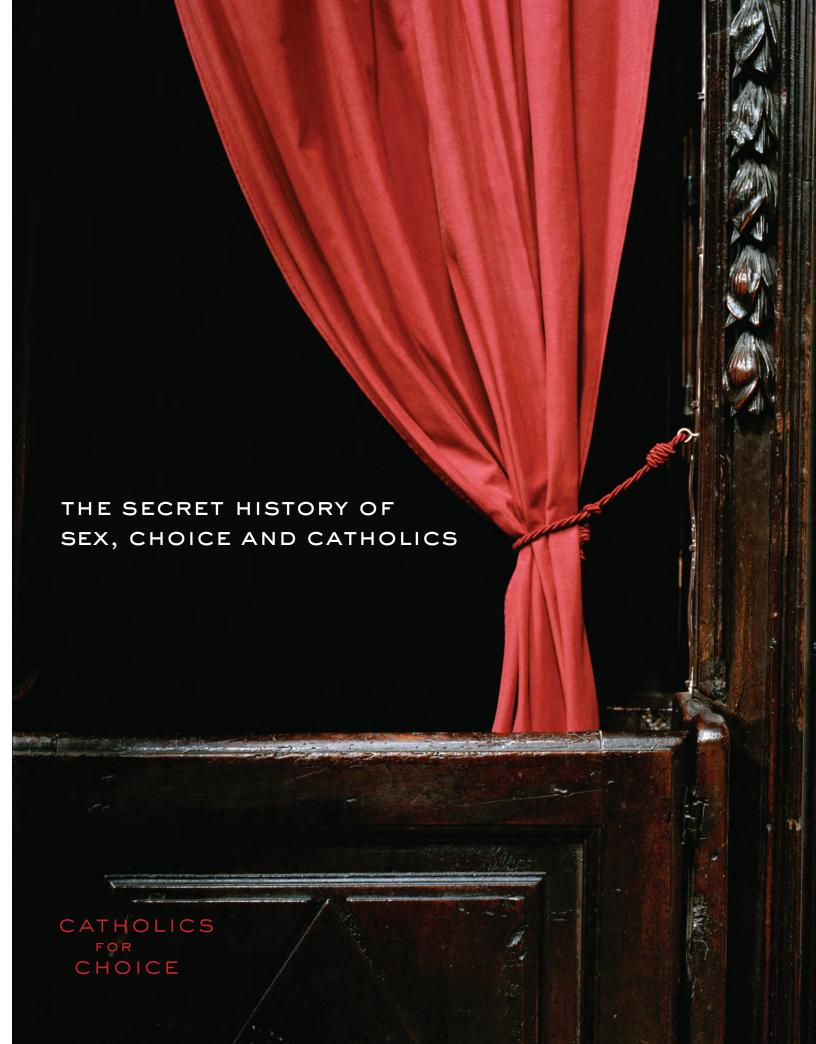
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possible sterility. Before signing the form, the woman would be required to view an ultrasound image of the fetus and listen to the heartbeat. There would also be a consultation with a psychologist or a social worker who would explain the woman's right to refuse an abortion. (This was not adopted.)

The largely antichoice and antiwomen amendments were met by an outcry from Russian civil society and the country's medical associations. It was obvious that the real purpose behind the draft law was not to improve the situation for women and families and enable them to have the number of children they wish, but to pressure them to keep unwanted pregnancies.

However, the changes were backed by the Holy Patriarch, who viewed them as representing important systemic advances to counter abortion and support families. In spite of the loud objections, several amendments restricting women's access to abortion were adopted, among them the introduction of a mandatory waiting period before being allowed to access an abortion. President Medvedev signed into law two separate new provisions in 2011: the first required abortion providers to devote 10 percent of any advertising to describe the dangers of abortion, with another statute prohibiting an advertisement from making any statements to the effect that an abortion can be safe. Secondly, the Ministry of Health cut the list of "social grounds" (that is, life circumstances), that allow women to have a free abortion. This means that abortions "on request" (up to 12 weeks) are still available free in staterun clinics, while abortions on social grounds (12-22 weeks) will now be free and available only in cases of rape. Previously, abortions were also free from 12-22 weeks in other cases, such was when there was a court decision to relieve a woman of her parental rights, if she was in jail, or

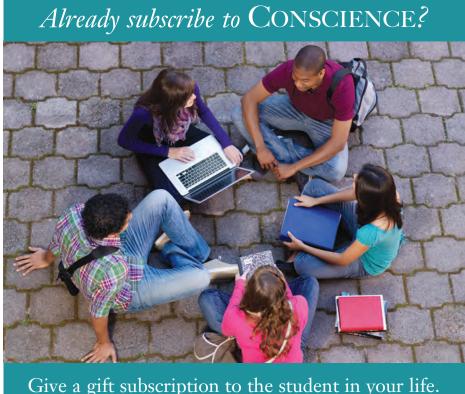
if the father became disabled or died during the pregnancy.

The most striking fact was that Yelena Mizulina, member of parliament and chair of the above mentioned Working Group, is a member of the "Fair Russia" Party, which describes itself as the largest leftist party in Russia. The party has more than 400,000 members as well as a consultative membership with Socialist International, the organization that unites all socialist parties around the world.

Contrary to the idea that political support for religion tends to come from the right, in Russia we have seen Mizulina, a parliamentarian belonging to a left-wing party, act as a bridge between the Russian Orthodox church and the State Duma. The party leader of Fair Russia, Sergey Mironov, assured the alarmed members of Socialist International, as well as the 12 Social Democratic parliamentarians from various European countries, that Mizulina's support for the Working Group's amendments was based on her personal beliefs. Indeed Fair Russia, Mizulina's own party, voted against the whole legislative package, while some amendments were voted through by the majority of the members of parliament belonging to United Russia, Putin's center-right, conservative party.

PUTIN AND THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

In Russia today, such church influence would not have been possible without the blessing of the country's political elite. Not only in Russia, but in Eastern Europe, the Orthodox church was never considered to be a part of the democratization process. This is in contrast to the influence of Catholic and Protestant churches in the political transitions of Poland and Lithuania in the 1990s, or the anti-Soviet movements in Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and East Germany, where the Catholic church played a major role in resisting communism. The Russian Orthodox church's current alignment with state power reflects the Byzantine traditions of decentralization and subordination of religion to secular rulers.



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Vladimir Putin is the first Russian leader since the time of tsars who is strongly and openly religious. During the Russian Empire, the church was not simply a pillar of society, as distinct from government—it was a state institution with the task of rallying the citizens in support of the emperor. When developing his approach to the Orthodox church after being elected president in 2000, Putin was most likely inspired by both his KGB past as well as the example of the Russian Empire. His support was

key in consolidating cooperation between the Orthodox church and the state and ensuring support among the Orthodox religious community. One of many examples of the Orthodox hierarchy taking a stand on politics occurred on January 25, 2012, St. Tatiana Day, shortly before the election. While Putin's opposition was rallying the streets of Moscow, in the Holy Patriarch Kirill's address at Moscow State University's St. Tatiana

Church he called on students "to beware of revolutionary action" and "involvement in struggle" or "bloodshed in the name of false ideals." Putin, in turn, makes public and political displays of his support by attending church services and underlining the importance of the church in society.

IDEOLOGICAL VACUUM AFTER COMMUNISM?

Some have described a "vacuum of values" left after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Communist Party, but is it correct to say that the church is filling this void? Yes, according to Putin himself. As he stated just after coming to power in 2002, "Currently there are no labor groups, party cells and organizations, as there used to be with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. There are no tutors and mentors. And nothing except religion can bring human values to people." Putin underlined the need to help religious leaders create the conditions that will remove the "wall" between them and the citizens.

In February 2012, shortly before the elections, Putin—again a presidential candidate—once more reaffirmed his commitment to "configure all the state



An Easter service attended by (L-R) Russian President Medvedev, First Lady Svetlana, Prime Minister and President-elect Vladimir Putin and Moscow Mayor Sobyanin in 2011

structures to ensure closest cooperation with religious organizations." This relationship is deemed especially important for solving demographic problems through supporting families, which Putin stated has always been the "traditional direction of the religious organizations' activities." This includes his full support for Patriarch Kirill's proposal to organize family support centers in each urban district and municipality—an excellent idea in itself, if not for the complete absence of similar state-run secular centers to serve the non-religious or families belonging to other confessions (40 million of Russia's 140 million citizens do not consider themselves Orthodox Christians).

OUTLOOK

It's worth mentioning that the 2012 Christmas readings (the Russian Orthodox Christmas takes place in January) revealed a new direction for the role of religion in society—the educational sphere. In support of the enhancement of religious life in Russia, the "Basics of religious cultures and secular ethics" course is now taught in all schools across the country.

In addition to schools, the patriarchate is concerned with the presence

> of priests in the army and the return of church properties, but it identifies a large part of its work in the direction of legislation, which is carried out by the Department for External Church Relations. Construction of new churches (200 in Moscow alone) will also be carried out.

Mr. Putin's reelection will guarantee the further empowerment of the Russian Orthodox church and its fusion with the state. Knowing the poor record of Orthodoxy in ensuring democratic

changes in the region, the prospects for the Russian Federation do not seem very good.

The pendulum has swung 180 degrees since the Stalinist regime. While before there was an active, indeed cruel, repression of religious expression, today we are witnessing what amounts to a fusion of the religious into the state. It can be said that religious structures are being subordinated to meet political objectives, as was evident in Patriarch Kirill's February 2012 statement that Putin's time in power has been a "miracle of God." In either case, be it the history of the Soviet Union or what is emerging as today's modern Russia, fundamental freedoms are still not guaranteed.

Trying to Turn Back the Clock on Abortion Rights in Spain

By María R. Sahuquillo

HE CONSERVATIVE PARTIDO Popular (People's Party, or PP) administration aims to backtrack on abortion rights. This move, which comes as Spain finds itself in a deep economic crisis, would turn the clock back 30 years.

The right to choose is now a reality in Spain. As of July 2010, a woman may terminate her pregnancy up until the 14th week without having to give a reason or explanation. This is her right under the Sexual and Reproductive Health Act, a law championed by the Socialist administration of José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero and modeled on current legislation in most European countries. But this social gain is in jeopardy. The administration of the People's Party, in office since December 2011, has repeatedly stated that it will amend the law to "defend the rights of the unborn." This harkens back to the previous law, in effect from 1985 to 2010, which made it a crime to have an abortion except in cases of rape, fetal malformation or a risk to the woman's health. But the conservative rollback could go even further. Justice Minister Alberto Ruiz-Gallardón has also said he will eliminate the exemption for fetal malformation—a setback for reproductive rights to the reality of 30 years ago.

The abortion debate in Spain has never been a calm one. It has always been colored

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Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy (r) and Alberto Ruiz-Gallardón at the People's Party national congress in 2012.

by ideology and politics—as well as morality and religion, due to the onerous rule of Francisco Franco (from 1939 until his death in 1975), when the dictator marched in step with the Catholic hierarchy and its dictates. For nearly 40 years, no aspect of people's private lives was safe from the bishops' interference. Anything the bishops considered a sin became a crime. Such was the case with homosexuality and abortion, which under Franco were not only banned but actively targeted for persecution.

Abortions still occurred, albeit clandestinely. "Women would go to aborteras (women who performed clandestine abortions) or attempt to terminate the pregnancy themselves—such as by inserting sewing needles into the vagina, detergent, alcohol, bleach, parsley, lye.... " recalls spokeswoman for Clínica Dator, the first clinic to be legalized in Spain. "The women would fly out on Thursday and return on Sunday. We even tried to pay for those who couldn't afford it."

Neither abortion nor contraception were allowed in Spain at that time. "Thanks to these groups," recalls Torres, "some family planning centers were opened, but even a discussion on contraception and sexuality was considered an illegal gathering. We would get contraceptives from France, and we constantly had problems with the police." Contraception was finally decriminalized in 1978. The slogan used to mobilize progressive women—"Contraceptives so as not to abort, abortion rights so as not to die"—was partially achieved.

"The struggle for the right to choose

that awaited the country as a result of divorce, legalized in 1981, and contraception-mobilized their own machinery and took the new law before the Constitutional Court. The highly anticipated legislation was put on hold until 1985, when the high court ruled that women's rights "cannot take absolute priority over the life of the fetus." A woman's right to an abortion would only prevail, the court said, in one of three scenarios: rape, fetal malformation or a risk to the woman's physical or mental health.

"This ruling meant that abortion was no longer a crime under these three scenarios," explains gynecologist Javier Martínez Salmeán, an expert on the history of abortion law in Spain, "but a woman needed a doctor to testify that the pregnancy was a danger to her health, and

For nearly 40 years, no aspect of people's private lives was safe from the bishops' interference. Anything the bishops considered a sin became a crime.

Justa Montero, who cofounded the Abortion Rights Committee in the mid-1970s. "This was very hazardous, and if caught they could face up to 12 years in prison." The only exception allowed by law was termination of an unwanted pregnancy to preserve the honor of the woman and her family. Some women were imprisoned for having an abortion.

Abortion, though completely taboo, was nevertheless a reality. The Supreme Court estimates that some 300,000 clandestine abortions per year were carried out at that time, with some 3,000 women dying every year as a result. These were the poorest women, because those who could afford it and had connections would leave the country to have an abortion. Luisa Torres, a social worker and reproductive and sexual rights activist, accompanied many such women to London or Amsterdam. "The women's organizations would make all the arrangements with a travel agency and foreign doctors," says Torres, now a

had only begun," says feminist Empar Pineda. Franco had died, but his legacy lived on, an obstacle to the recognition of social rights. In 1979, for example, abortion charges were brought against 11 women in Bilbao. The defendants were of modest means, many of them were married and already had children and were living in severe financial straits. The trial shed light on the compelling reality of clandestine abortion in Spain and spurred many Spaniards to demand the right to an abortion free of charge. After months of protests—many of them very creative, with open letters, political graffiti and mobilizations of all kinds the 11 women convicted in Bilbao were pardoned. Society was evolving.

In 1982 the Partido Socialista Obrero Español (the Spanish Socialist Workers Party, PSOE) came to power. One year later, the government announced it would decriminalize abortion. Conservative forces and the Catholic hierarchy—which had spent years warning of the "disaster"

most would claim psychological problems in order to have an abortion. It was done, but women and doctors had no legal certainty. There was no freedom of choice."

After decriminalization—and even before, as feminist organizations waged a struggle for legal reforms—abortion ceased to be a taboo topic. One hundred women, many of them famous, signed an open letter publicly admitting to having had an abortion. The controversy continued at the political level, even as society began to accept the idea of abortion. "The law was not good, but it was the best that could be achieved at that time, given Spain's historical, political and social backwardness," says Pineda.

For years the extreme right kept up its attacks on abortion, but when José María Aznar of the People's Party (PP) took office in 1996, he didn't touch the law. During his eight-year tenure, in fact, more than 500,000 abortions were performed in Spain. The PP's inaction was met with harsh criticism from the Catholic hierarchy, headed by Archbishop Antonio María Rouco Varela. But Aznar had no need to scrape up more votes from the right; he already had enough. He even went so far as to say that "appearing too close to the bishops takes away votes." Mariano Rajoy—Aznar's handpicked successor who, after losing twice to Zapatero of the PSOE, has taken office as a result of the country's hard economic times—does not seem to agree.

Rajoy intends to do away with the PSOE-sponsored law that in 2010—after a bitter debate—established the right to an abortion based on the notion of "freely chosen motherhood." The People's Party never liked the law, which allows a woman in the first 14 weeks of pregnancy to obtain an abortion without having to give a reason. Rajoy has always said that this violates the rights of the "unborn" and goes against the Constitutional Court's 1985 ruling. He asked the same court to suspend the law in 2009 as a preemptive measure, but was unsuccessful. Now, though, the court is expected to rule on whether the law violates the Spanish Constitution, as claimed by hard-line conservatives.

The PP stood with the Catholic hierarchy in the large-scale mobilizations during Zapatero's term. PP leaders marched alongside bishops in demonstrations when the hierarchy called on Catholics to mobilize against gay marriage (legalized in 2005), abortion and even a new education law that introduced a civics course aimed at teaching democratic values and tolerance. The right wing criticized this course as a form of moral education that would undermine parents' control over what morals their children should be taught.

Many of these mass protests against previously gained social rights were, in fact, fueled by disillusionment with the government. And efforts to return to greater restrictions on abortion had nothing at all to do with the will of society. In fact, statistics show that support for a woman's right to choose has been strengthened in Spain. In 1981, 57 percent of Spaniards said that abortion should be

decriminalized, according to the Sociological Research Center. In 1985, when decriminalization finally occurred, this figure had increased to 65 percent. Earlier this year, 75 percent of Spaniards said they support a woman's right to choose. The figure among People's Party voters is 57 percent, according to opinion polls by the consulting firm Metroscopia.

The statistics speak for themselves and raise questions about the true motives of the Mariano Rajoy administration in trying to change the abortion law—especially since, according to experts, the law is working well and the number of abortions has not gone up (113,000 were performed in 2010, compared to 115,800 in 2008). "The PP is trying to appease the most conservative wing of the party and society," says Martínez Salmeán, "but it's also using abortion as a smokescreen to divert attention from the economic crisis and unemployment." Abortion has always been a controversial, sensitive issue, and the administration may believe that reviving it will lessen the attention given to the unemployment rate, now over 25 percent.

Justice Minister Alberto Ruiz-Gallardón has certainly taken up the effort to amend the abortion law as his personal cause. He inherited this issue from his father, the legislator who, in 1983, appealed to the Constitutional Court to stop the decriminalization of abortion. The justice minister—who has said that changing the abortion law is "the most progressive thing" he will ever do-and his team decline to give further information on the future reform. They have, however, been revealing their intentions bit by bit, such as a ban on abortions due to fetal malformation, which are currently allowed for defects that are very severe or incompatible with life.

But unless the government decides to ban abortion altogether, which would be highly unlikely under current social conditions, it will not satisfy the Catholic hierarchy or ultra-right groups, which are in effect calling for a "zero abortion" law. This demand comes from groups such as Derecho a Vivir (Right to Life),

Hazte Oír (Make Yourself Heard), and Foro de la Familia (Family Forum), which all have ties to US organizations, such as Focus on the Family and the Alliance Defense Fund, and have become increasingly visible in recent years.

The global conservative wave is moving forward and radicalizing in an attempt to stem what it sees as attacks on religious freedom. They are also trying to stop secularization. And they hope to capitalize on the rise of conservative administrations such as those of Rajoy in Spain or Viktor Orbán in Hungary.

These organizations notwithstanding, opinion polls do not appear to indicate any popular support for the PP in its effort to make abortion laws more restrictive. "This would also move Spain further away from most European Union countries—such as France, Greece, the Netherlands and Germany—which have laws that, like Spain's, specify a period of the pregnancy during which a woman is free to choose," says Purificación Causapié, the PSOE's equality secretary. "Spanish society has taken a huge leap forward; Spaniards have evolved and believe that sexual and reproductive rights are essential. We cannot go back."

Torres agrees: "Motherhood fulfills a social function and must be voluntary. It cannot be imposed by the government. But when a woman needs an abortion, she will resort to any means to have it, even if not protected by the law. No woman gets pregnant to have an abortion. Any law passed with its back to reality is senseless and doomed to be broken."

In the Spain of 2013, women no longer apologize for having an abortion. They see it as their right. Young women can't even fathom a time when their mothers had to travel to London or resort to a clandestine abortion practitioner. The social change in just 40 years has been spectacular. The question now is whether Spaniards will allow these gains to be reversed and their rights taken back, such as the right to decide whether to be a mother—rights that have already been won.



By Anka Grzywacz

The Hidden Story of Pope John Paul II's 'Culture of Life' and Polish Abortion Policy

INE YEARS AGO IN THE POLISH city of Piła, a young woman got pregnant. She started suffering from severe abdominal pain, and soon after doctors diagnosed her with a serious colon disease. During her stay in different hospitals, doctors took her suffering and worsening condition for granted, refusing to perform the necessary examinations and introduce treatment that might put the pregnancy at risk. They did not manage to keep the fetus alive. Unfortunately, the 25-yearold woman died as well—in terrible pain.

Stories of women suffering and sometimes even dying because they have been denied access to abortion are not uncommon in Poland. Yet in public discussions, we hear the existing legal provisions (which allow for a pregnancy to be terminated only in cases of risk to a woman's life, serious fetal anomalies, rape or incest) presented as a compromise. In reality, the stigma surrounding the issue means that even women who are legally entitled to an abortion face resistance and have to fight to exercise that right.

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Dr. Wanda Poltawska was a lifelong friend of the late Pope John Paul II and had a great influence upon his views about contraception and abortion.

The themes that dominate today's debates about reproductive rights are that Polish society as a whole believes in traditional values, nurtures the "culture of life" idea cherished by the late Pope John Paul II and is against liberalizing the abortion law. Bishops and prominent decision makers claim that the fight for a woman's right to choose is a private war waged by a group of leftist feminists whose aim is to destroy the structure of the family and the foundations of our nation. These views are not grounded in reality. Thousands of women each year

travel abroad for the procedure or undergo illegal abortions in Poland. In this brief analysis I will go back and investigate the transition from regarding abortion as a common and not too controversial phenomenon, until today when, despite huge progress in many areas of social and economic life, women's basic human rights—like the right to life, health and dignity—are violated in the name of protecting life.

In 2006 I met Maria Jaszczuk, then 91, a survivor of the Auschwitz and Ravensbrück concentration camps. As a member of parliament in 1956, she was the rapporteur for the Bill on Conditions of Pregnancy Termination that made abortion legal for Polish women for the next 37 years. During a conversation with feminist activists, she explained that the reasoning behind the introduction of the progressive regulation had women's best interests at heart. Due to the lack of effective contraception at the time, the rate of unwanted pregnancies was high and women sought help with "induced miscarriages" in back alleys. In the 1950s, approximately 80,000 women were hospitalized every year to treat the health impacts of illegal abortions. It is worth noting that a common claim about the more liberal abortion laws-that they were forced on Poland against the popular will by the Communist regime—is not true. Discussions about the possibility of decriminalizing abortion date back to the 1920s, when the debates about the Polish criminal code started. Activists such as Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński and Irena Krzywicka argued that abortion should be available to end the underground market that provided abortion services while putting women's health and lives at risk.

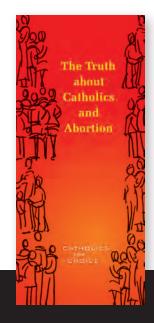
Thirty years ago when my mother was a young woman, abortion was a standard procedure available with few restrictions. Like in the case of many Soviet bloc countries, contraception was not widely available here and termination was often the only possible option of controlling family size. The quality of services left a lot to be desired, and the concept of patient's rights seemed like a distant fantasy. Women I spoke to said that at the time, abortion was not something to brag about, but at least if you decided to end the pregnancy for "social or economic reasons" you could access the procedure regardless of your financial status.

In the Communist era, the Roman Catholic hierarchy did not devote as much attention to the issue of abortion compared to today. It had its hands full supporting political resistance against the regime. Back then, attending Mass was a political statement—members of the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR) were expected to promote secular, even atheist, views, so those who went to

church were regarded as the antigovernment opposition. Members of the ruling elite or those working close to it— for example, Communist police forces—who were practicing Catholics had to organize religious ceremonies, such as baptisms or weddings, in secret. The election of Karol Wojtyła, a young cardinal from Poland, as the new Pope John Paul II helped Poles keep their faith and gave them strength to continue their fight for democracy. The new head of the Roman Catholic church was a skillful diplomat and charismatic spiritual leader. Unfortunately for Polish women, however, his long, conservative papacy fortified the institutional church in the country and made it immune to reform.

When the abortion law was made more restrictive in 1993, the words of the pope were quoted by right-wing deputies from parliament. With his stern antiabortion stance, John Paul II valued the philosophical idea of protecting what he saw as "defenseless" fetal life, more than the lives of women. A closer look at his personal life and people who influenced his views—interestingly, critical and ana-

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lytical publications about John Paul II started appearing in Poland only after his death in 2005—reveals he had a very unrealistic view of womanhood. His mother, Emilia, died when he was nine and the boy Karol was raised among men. Later, this devoted Catholic found a missing mother figure in the cult of the Virgin Mary—an impossible ideal of a virtuous woman without flaws, caring and strong, who accepted her motherly calling without a single question.

It takes some effort and research to find out that the pope's fierce antichoice views were strongly influenced by one woman, his close friend Wanda contraception also developed early, heavily influenced by his friend, whom he trusted as a source of reliable scientific evidence because Półtawska had a medical education and a PhD in psychiatry. During lectures and in publications—popular mainly among antichoice circles—she argued that the use of contraception leads to neuroses and causes irreversible damage to the human organism. She believed that acceptance of contraception in the Soviet Union led to widespread abortion, contrary to mainstream opinions that women in the Soviet bloc had multiple abortions because they

in the abortion debate. The proposal filed by MPs from the Labour Union (UP) was rejected by the conservative parliamentary majority. Later, the social democratic government amended the law, making abortion for "social reasons" legal again, but the Constitutional Court in 1997 decided—on the basis of a questionable legal interpretation—that the act liberalizing the abortion law was, in fact, unconstitutional.

January 2013 marked the 20th anniversary of the Polish abortion law—one of the most restrictive such regulations in Europe. Two decades of antichoice propaganda have virtually eliminated

Today ... despite huge progress in many areas of social and economic life, women's basic human rights—like the right to life, health and dignity—are violated in the name of protecting life.

Półtawska, a survivor from the Ravensbrück concentration camp, who—as a result of her traumatic experiences during that time—developed an attitude of disgust towards matters having to do with the body and sexuality. Półtawska, whom the late pope called his sister in their long-term correspondence, was an uncompromising opponent of abortion rights, even in the most difficult circumstances—for example, if a woman knew the fetus had such serious defects that the baby would die right after birth, or if she had been raped during armed conflict. Półtawska often made comparisons between abortion and the Holocaust, arguing that a society that makes pregnancy termination legal leaves the door open for genocide, as well. Interestingly, Maria Jaszczuk, the parliamentarian who defended women's right to choose, did not develop similar views, although she had also been imprisoned in the same concentration camp as Półtawska and endured all kinds of inhuman treatment.

Wojtyła's negative attitude towards

were not able to effectively prevent pregnancies due to the shortage of effective contraceptives.

Shortly after Poland regained independence in 1989, the push to "restore normality," i.e. make abortion illegal again, started with the introduction of additional restrictions requiring women to obtain permission for an abortion. The argument that the motherland of John Paul II could not allow for the spread of the "civilization of death" has been heard ever since. Nevertheless, when the restrictive abortion bill was passed by Parliament in 1993, the public took a firm stand against it. Politician Zbigniew Bujak started an initiative setting up committees to collect signatures supporting the proposal to hold a referendum on the question of criminalization of abortion. The campaign proved to be the biggest grassroots mobilization effort since the Solidarity movement. The result was astonishing—1.7 million signatures were collected nationwide from citizens demanding that the people should have the final say

any attempts to discuss the negative effects this law has on women, replacing them with discussions about fetal rights and building the atmosphere of condemnation around those deciding to end a pregnancy. Polish women may not be put in prison for illegal terminations, but the taboo and stigma surrounding abortion are so strong that the majority who do undergo the procedure decide to never reveal their experiences to anyone, even closest friends. At the same time, there is growing fatigue in Poland with the Catholic hierarchy's involvement in the shaping of national policies, visible in particular during recent debates about IVF legislation. New political initiatives, such as the Palikot Movement, which demands true separation of church and state, are growing stronger. The result of the 2015 parliamentary elections is a great unknown, and we may see a surprising turn in voter preferences after years of ultraconservative governments. Should that happen, Polish women may finally see their reproductive rights restored.



By Piotr Kalbarczyk

Abortion in Poland: The Change that Never Happened

WOULD LIKE TO START THIS ARTICLE with a memory. I remember a cold, rainy day in 1989, as gray as only a November in Poland can be. I was sitting with one of my school friends at the bus stop, and she was telling me about having an abortion. She spoke about it openly and I wasn't surprised or shocked because I knew that those things happened sometimes. Many of our friends had already gone through it. This was a friend, not a girlfriend, but still I related to her situation. She was about to graduate and didn't want to have an unplanned pregnancy, for which she could be expelled from school.

This memory comes to mind because, just four years later, the Polish parliament decided to limit access to legal abortion. How could Polish society, the same society where abortions were legal for decades, accept that change? My answer lies in this quite controversial thesis: nothing actually changed for citizens, so in turn, nobody today wants to work for change on the abortion issue.

MYTHS ABOUT NUMBERS

The available data on abortion in Poland is extremely unreliable. The figures range from the official statistics, which claim

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Pope John Paul II pictured under a Solidarity banner in 1983.

around 600 legal procedures per year, up to 200,000 abortions yearly, including clandestine procedures, which is the figure presented by NGOs. What is the reality? Let's look at the data on abortion from the Communist period: in the mid-1970s, the available information indicates that there were 100,000 abortions per year. That total decreased with time. In the mid-1980s there were around 50,000 abortions per year. In 1992—just before abortion was banned-official data shows around 23,000 abortions were performed per year.

Obviously, the decreasing number of abortions was related to the social changes that occurred since 1980—the bloom of

democracy and "Solidarnosc," or the Solidarity movement. At the same time, there was increasing access to contraceptives and better information about sexuality. What is the real number of abortions in Poland now, when access to contraceptives is much broader and legal abortion is limited? Those two factors not only limit the number of abortions (legal and illegal), but also have an influence on individuals as they adjust to these new conditions. This means that people would rather modify their choices and behaviors (increase the usage of contraceptives, limit unprotected sexual intercourse) to reduce the need for abortion, than expose them-

selves to the risk of unplanned pregnancy.

All these factors lead us to an estimate of the number of abortions in Polandaround 15,000-17,000 each year. If we compare this to the number of Polish women of reproductive age (11.7 million) the issue of abortion is not statistically significant. Why should anyone care about it?

MYTHS ABOUT ACCESS AND CRIMINALIZATION

Poles have a very particular attitude toward the law. Sociologists define the phenomenon as "anomie"—a widespread social consent to ignore the law. However, access

tion. The results show a stable pattern: about 55 percent of respondents are for legal abortion access and 45 percent are against-without significant differences related to variables such as age, residence, economic status, gender or religious beliefs. The lack of any clear demographic division between the two groups leads some to simply answer: society is indifferent, or, society accepts the current situation. There are many factors that confirm this hypothesis: for instance, the relatively small number of grassroots organizations interested in the liberalization of the law; the lack of social reactions to any attempts to matched. But even that mismatch means nothing to the general public, which is jaded by the exploitation of the abortion debate in the political arena.

Polish politicians cynically use the abortion issue as a political tool. Abortion was the reason for many political divorces on the right wing of the Polish political scene. Opinions on abortion among politicians could change in the span of a few days. Even already-oppressive legislation could be made more restrictive. Every year we observe attempts in that direction. The current political division of power in Poland seems to guarantee keeping the

Faced with the resources of the institutional church, Polish NGOs that might be sympathetic to abortion rights have withdrawn their interest from the issue.

to abortion is stringently limited by law, so we cannot directly say that people should stop following that law. This double standard is confirmed by the number of the advertisements for services called "inducing menstruation" (sometimes with a bonus: "with anesthetic"). These services are widely available, but the price varies greatly from around \$300 up to \$500, depending on the region or the reputation of the doctor. Is that a big sum in Poland? Yes and no. If someone is in real need, it's not a problem to find this kind of money. Given these conditions, the number of investigations and prosecutions related to breaking the abortion law should be significant. But it's not. There are an average of two cases per year brought against doctors related to abortion. How many have been sentenced? In last 10 years—about 10. Keep in mind that there are about 15,000 gynecologists in Poland. The social importance of these scant prosecutions? Zero. Again, why should anyone care about it?

MYTHS ABOUT ATTITUDES

The legal limits to abortion were implemented in 1993. Since that year, we have had multiple research studies and surveys about abortion in Poland. Most of them dealt with societal attitudes toward aborliberalize or tighten the abortion law; and the absence of any political will to change the legislation in any direction. If most Poles are content with the current situation, why should anyone to care about it?

IS THERE ANYONE WHO CARES?

In 1993, coincidentally, the Polish government signed a concordat with the Holy See. The abortion legislation was used as a kind of gift for Pope John Paul II in thanks for his spiritual support during the struggle against Communism. Since that moment, we have seen a growing number of NGOs working against abortion, which are almost entirely related to, or supported and funded by, the Catholic hierarchy.

Faced with the resources of the institutional church, Polish NGOs that might be sympathetic to abortion rights have withdrawn their interest from the issue. Out of a total of over 120,000 NGOS operating in Poland, only two openly fight for abortion rights. Their will and ability to fight are based on external funding, as well as the social recognition of their role as advocates and service providers. But are they strong enough to overturn the overwhelming power of the Catholic hierarchy? The answer is no: the two sides of the abortion debate are not evenly status quo as part of their public relations strategy. Proposals from the opposition go in the same direction. There is no common strategy for change, no cooperation with NGOS, no will for cooperation or listening to the opinions of stakeholders. Thus, any proposals about abortion couldn't be considered to be a priority, or even a serious political activity. Do politicians really care about the legalization of abortion? No.

So what should happen to change that? The current situation seems to be a socially agreed-upon stasis, which can only change when one philosophy on access to abortion wins. Paradoxically, I believe that the necessary ingredient for the liberalization of Poland's abortion law will be either the complete abolition of all abortion rights, or at least the serious threat that this may come to pass. This paradox is probably rooted in an intrinsic element of the Polish personality. A full ban on abortion—one that causes all the thinly veiled advertisements to disappear from the newspapers—would show people what they have really lost. It would bring women like my school friend into the spotlight, instead of allowing society to ignore their needs. Only that shock will shake up society and give Polish citizens the impetus to fight for their rights.

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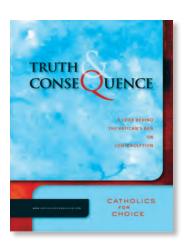


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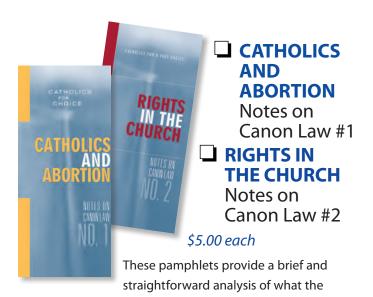
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Conspiracy or Confusion?

ABORTION POLITICS IN BRITAIN

By Jennie Bristow



The No More Names campaign from bpas is counteracting the myth that there is a certain "type" of woman who decides to end a pregnancy. Instead, all the women in our lives deserve to make reproductive decisions without stigma.

WHEN THE CONSERVATIVE-LIBERAL DEMOCRAT COALITION GOVERNMENT took power in May 2010, abortion providers and prochoice advocates in Britain were not unduly concerned. Abortion is not a "party political" issue in Britain: amendments to the

abortion law are made according to a free vote to allow Members of Parliament (MPs) to vote according to their personal views rather than the "party line," and opinion polls suggest that Conservative voters are just as supportive of women's ability to have an abortion when they need one as are Labour voters. Nevertheless, the last two years have proven that abortion access, although alive and well in Britain, is not an immutable fact.

A poll conducted in 2011 by the market research company Ipsos Mori for the UK nonprofit abortion provider British Pregnancy Advisory Service (bpas), backed up the idea that abortion views cannot be pre-

JENNIE BRISTOW is editor of the British Pregnancy Advisory Service publication Reproductive Review and author of Standing up to Supernanny (Imprint Academic 2009).

dicted by party identification. The poll found that those who intended to vote Conservative were slightly more likely to agree with the statement "A woman should not have to continue with her pregnancy if she wants an abortion" and the least likely to disagree (59 percent and 16 percent respectively). This is in comparison to those who intended to vote Labour (58 percent agreed, 20 percent disagreed), while of Liberal Democrat voters, only 47% agreed with the statement.

Among politicians, there are similar variations of opinion. For example, in July 2012 Amber Rudd, the Conservative MP for Hastings who describes herself as "unequivocally prochoice," announced that she was setting up a cross-party inquiry into unwanted pregnancy. Referring to Nadine Dorries, the Conservative MP for mid-Bedfordshire who

recently made some high-profile attempts to limit women's access to abortion, Rudd noted that "people think Nadine Dorries is the voice of the government because her voice is heard." Rudd went on to say that if the outcome of the new inquiry "is to change people's perception and make it clear that we are prowoman and prochoice then that is a fantastic byproduct."

In Britain today, women's need for abortion remains both publicly and politically accepted. It is important to emphasize this context because events of the past two years have often made it appear as though abortion access is under serious threat. Abortion providers have faced a barrage of attacks on their businesses and reputations, and those working in the field have had to expend a great deal of time and energy fighting slurs and defending their practices. In other words, abortion provision has been simultaneously accepted by the mainstream and viciously attacked by senior figures in and around government. How do we explain this?

CONSPIRACY OR CONFUSION?

Perhaps the clearest indicator that something strange and unpredictable has happened to the British abortion debate has been the influence of Nadine Dorries on recent debates. Dorries, no stranger to the abortion issue, had previously conducted zealous campaigns to bring the "time limit" for abortion down from 24 weeks' gestation to 20 weeks. In 2011 she, along with the Labour MP Frank Field, tabled an amendment to the Health and Social Care Bill—a significant bill that brought about a major reorganization of the entire National Health Service—

368. But Health Minister Anne Milton went on to propose a government consultation on pregnancy counseling implicitly endorsing the idea that there was a problem with abortion providers supplying information and advice to women. This intervention threw official weight behind Dorries' cause.

At this point, it was clear that we faced a very different situation from the one under the previous Labour government, which over its 13 years in office did much to fund abortion services and improve access. The Labour government's support for abortion was a pragmatic one with some troublesome features—and, to the anger of prochoice advocates, it did not to allow Parliament to vote on progressive amendments to the outdated 1967 Abortion Act when the opportunity arose in 2008. However, abortion had been quite successfully incorporated into

The following month, Lansley announced there would be a series of surprise inspections on abortion providers performed by the healthcare regulator, the Care Quality Commission (CQC). The inspections were justified on the grounds that doctors were suspected of pre-signing abortion authorization certificates in advance of reviewing the woman's notes. Again, relatively few cases of this were uncovered, and this was, in any event, a practice generally undertaken by doctors speeding up women's access to services in light of the legal requirement that two doctors must certify an abortion. The CQC's role is to ensure that basic standards of quality and safety are met, and it found no evidence that women had received poor care as a result of this practice.

Yet a great deal of damage was done to the confidence of abortion providers,

Perhaps the most important outcome of the past couple of years has been that those who think of themselves as prochoice have been reminded that access to abortion cannot be taken for granted.

calling for abortion providers to be stripped of their ability to provide "information and counseling" to women seeking an abortion. Dorries and Field argued that a "conflict of interest" occurred when independent abortion providers (primarily, charities such as bpas and Marie Stopes International) provided information and advice. They argued that these organizations "profit" from providing abortions and thus have a "vested interest" in encouraging women to end their pregnancies rather than keep the baby or allow the child to be adopted.

Abortion providers fought back against these allegations. The Dorries-Field amendment was eventually exposed as a tactic designed to restrict women's access to abortion, and when the House of Commons came to vote, the amendment failed spectacularly—118 votes to

mainstream healthcare and was treated as politically uncontroversial.

By 2011, all that seemed to have changed. And in February 2012, there were further suspicions of a conspiracy to undermine abortion providers with the launch of a high-profile "sting" on independent abortion providers, in which the Daily Telegraph attempted to trick doctors into authorizing abortions supposedly for reasons of sex selection. Despite the fact that the sparse "evidence" of such practices uncovered by the newspaper is highly disputable, and that the wording of the Abortion Act does not make abortion on grounds of fetal sex actually illegal, Andrew Lansley, health secretary at the time, penned an opinion piece for the Telegraph effectively declaring war on such practices should they occur in abortion clinics.

as these events signaled that the government could—and in this instance, would—interpret the law rather differently than it had done for over a decade, leaving doctors at risk of professional investigation and criminal prosecution.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

At the beginning of 2013, things appear to have stabilized. But such is the arbitrary character of contemporary British politics and policy: one can never foresee when a crack might appear in that stasis, or a new challenge gain momentum.

In October, the new health minister, Anna Soubry, announced that the government was dropping the abortion counseling consultation, and that it "did not intend to change either the law or the guidelines." At the same time, Nadine Dorries flew to the Australian jungle to take part in the reality TV show I'm A Celebrity... Get Me Out Of Here! to the displeasure of her party. The new health secretary, Jeremy Hunt, and the women's minister, Maria Miller, have both expressed personal support for a reduction in the abortion time limit. Yet Anna Soubry and Amber Rudd clearly have different views; and the fact that a number of attempts to discredit the service have been tried and failed means that those wanting to undermine abortion provision have been stalled.

Perhaps the most important outcome of the past couple of years has been that those who think of themselves as prochoice have been reminded that access to abortion cannot be taken for granted. Just because Britain has a comparatively liberal law does not mean that it will always be interpreted liberally, and the fact that abortion has become successfully integrated into mainstream healthcare does not mean that it is exactly the same as other healthcare procedures. Some people will always have profound moral objections to abortion, and that is why those working in abortion care need to argue for its continued availability.

At a public meeting organized by prochoice advocates in October 2011, Evan Harris, the former MP for Oxford West and Abingdon who, in the run-up to the parliamentary debate on the abortion law in 2008 was a crucial voice in arguing for positive reforms, provided some thought-provoking criticisms of the "wasted opportunity" that existed under the previous Labour government. Over this time, he said, there was a general tendency to try to avoid debates, with student societies attempting to ban antiabortion groups and prochoice voices in the government tending to focus on defending the status quo rather than fighting for positive improvements to the law.

Harris's speech indicated that there was a degree of complacency among sections of the prochoice movement at a time when the argument appeared to have been won. This has made the apparent turn in the tide of political opinion more difficult for us. If providers and advocates have fought back hard against their critics now, and won some important battles, this is a testimony to their energy and dedication. Events of the past two years show how important it is to understand and question the prevailing social and political context. Above all, we must look to being ever more proactive in making the case for why free, accessible, straightforward abortion services need to be there for women, when women need them.

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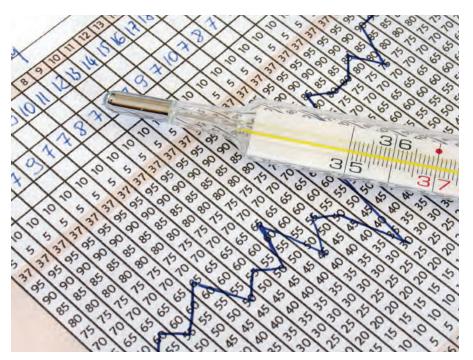
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'The Lesser of Two Evils': Living the Illogical Ban on Contraception

By Jeanne DeSocio



AM WRITING THIS STORY FOR THE girl who used to clean the altar, pray the rosary and think seriously about becoming a nun. I write for the young woman who had so deeply absorbed the Catholic culture portraying all sexual pleasure as sin that she at first balked at Vatican II's affirmation of joy, freedom of conscience and gender equality. But most of all, I tell the story of the girl, the young woman, and the woman whose

JEANNE DESOCIO is a widow with four children and three grandchildren. She worked for over 20 years as a registered nurse and 30 years as a justice and peace activist. She is a member of Call To Action of Central New York and is active with Catholics for Choice.

reproductive health needs were ignored again and again by Catholic healthcare and the hierarchy, because we are one and the same and we are not alone. In places where the Catholic hierarchy has thrust its roots into healthcare and the government, strangers continue to dictate the spiritual and reproductive health decisions for women, just as they were for me.

Fifty years ago, I went to my local bishop's rectory directly from my OB/ GYN's office. I had just been instructed that delivering my third child via Cesarean section had left me at risk of not surviving another pregnancy. My request to be allowed to use contraception, and thus ensure that I would be alive to raise my three toddlers, was denied. Suffering from severe postpartum depression after the delivery, the message that Catholic leaders thought my life was worthless got through loud and clear. I lost all my self-esteem, and caring for three active children in this state was very difficult until the symptoms subsided.

The bishop had reassured me that my husband and I could use Natural Family Planning (NFP) to prevent pregnancy the very method we had been using when two of our children were conceived. Finally, through the intercession of our priest, the bishop agreed to allow the Pill on the grounds it might regulate my irregular menstrual cycle and allow me to go back to using NFP. When I was unable to tolerate the Pill, my husband and I were thrust back into the nightmare of worrying about a dangerous pregnancy, which ruined the intimate side of our marriage. I soon became pregnant for the fourth time.

Throughout the pregnancy I experienced complications and was confined to bed at the end. The C-section procedure was long, painful and resulted in a dangerous amount of blood loss. My delivery took place in a Catholic hospital and the doctor wasn't sure if he would get into trouble for doing a hysterectomy then and there on a 33-year-old with no terminal illness, so he didn't follow his clinical instincts.

My beautiful baby was soon diagnosed with multiple disabilities, including damage to the speech centers of his brain. Many couples have experienced the strain of trying to care for a child with special needs without neglecting their other children. For us, we also had to face a future without a reliable method of birth control and thus, the stakes for sexual relations were simply too high.

When the bishop heard that we were talking about divorce, he finally gave a blanket permission for my husband and me to use any form of contraception. He said that contraception was a lesser evil than divorce. Evidently, according to Catholic church teaching, God would rather a woman die than use contraception, but prefers she use contraception rather than get a divorce. I did not understand this convoluted reasoning. At least, my husband and I were finally able to each use a contraceptive to be doubly sure of preventing pregnancy.

Seven years after my last child was born, a routine visit revealed a tumor and I was told I would need a hysterectomy. Strangely, I was not at all upset. Being told I might have cancer and would undergo a hysterectomy was not nearly as bad as it would have been to hear that I was pregnant. Actually, it was a relief to know that, no matter what happened, I would never have to worry about getting pregnant again.

When I woke up from surgery, no hysterectomy had been performed. In this Catholic hospital, the doctor told me the nurses congratulated him for not performing the procedure I was slated to have.

I was left with chronic pain, anemia, weight loss and extreme weakness. My husband took me from doctor to doctor, none of whom could understand why the last surgeon had not performed the hysterectomy.

After months of suffering, an uncle who worked as an OB/GYN in New Iersev referred me to someone who could help. I was immediately admitted to a hospital there, where I underwent a hysterectomy that lasted seven hours. It was one of the worst cases the doctor had ever seen, and he said in wonder, "I don't know how you walked, no, I don't know how you lived with what you had inside of you," and he enumerated all the sites where he had found adhesions.

My husband and I have always had compassion for people who are worse off than we in developing nations, particularly predominantly Catholic countries. We regularly donated to Bishop Sheen's Society of the Propagation of the Faith because we believed that, though we didn't have much money, we were rich compared to individuals in these poor areas.

One day, years later, I realized I was donating to the same church that influenced heads of state to ban reproductive health clinics for the poor. I was sacrificing my money to support the Catholic oppressors of the destitute people I wanted to help. The total ban on abortion even to save a woman's life in Nicaragua is a perfect example of the Catholic influence on politicians. In the first year of this total ban, at least 82 women died of pregnancy complications.

That clinical-sounding phrase, "pregnancy complications," will never be just a statistic to me. It's not a regrettable but unavoidable price a woman must pay because she either cannot access quality reproductive healthcare, or she is forbidden for doctrinal reasons from using what is available to her, as the Catholic hierarchy seem inclined to condone. The girl and the young woman that I used to be would never have believed that their church wouldn't be there for them. That the price of their spiritual life in communion with the Catholic church's representatives—whether in the hierarchy or in the hospital—might be life itself. Now, I offer my story to convince skeptics that all those who work to provide the reproductive healthcare women and girls need, when they need it, are inspired by the Holy Spirit to the practice of compassion.

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Change as a Constant: Towards a Catholic Sexual Ethic **Beyond Procreation**

By Kate Ott

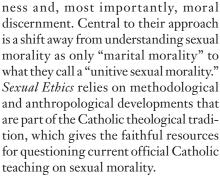
Sexual Ethics: A Theological Introduction

Todd A. Salzman and Michael G. Lawler (Georgetown University Press, 2012, 250 pp) 978-1589019133, \$26.95

EXUAL ETHICS: A THEOLOGICAL Introduction is one of the most comprehensive and carefully written books for a Catholic-educated lay audi-

ence in recent history. It distills the best

of the sexuality-related theological and ethical claims raised in the edited series Readings in Moral Theology published over the past 20+ years. Salzman and Lawler situate their work in the Scholastic tradition of quaestio disputata, meaning the disputed question, inviting the reader into a process of historical excavation, contemporary aware-



KATE OTT is assistant professor of Christian Social Ethics at Drew University Theological School in Madison, NJ. She is a Catholic feminist scholar who writes and teaches on issues of children and youth, sexuality and professional ethics.

The starting point of this thesis is that doctrinal and theological change in the Catholic tradition is not an anomaly but, paradoxically, a constant. The authors depict the basis of Catholic teachings as fluid— "the scriptural rule of faith and

> the theological writings derived from it are historically and culturally conditioned"-and take this to mean that "they will require translation, interpretation and enculturation to truly disclose God in every different historical and cultural situation." Their work is meticulous, to the point of repetitious in some places, as they show how theolog-

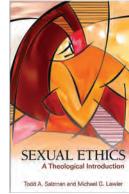
ical and doctrinal change is often influenced by more accurate social and scientific information and new conversation partners. In other instances, however, change is stunted by magisterial concerns over authority (such as happened with the papal Birth Control Commission and Humanae Vitae).

The book's approach requires the reader make a shift from a classicist to a historically conscious worldview—that is, from a fixed to a fluid perspective on truth. For example, the first chapter takes the reader through a broad and representative history of sexuality issues from scripture through the Birth Control Commission, demonstrating that a

variety of stances on sexual acts, marriage and procreation have been part of the Catholic tradition. In particular, Salzman and Lawler are most concerned with how two ends of sexual intercourse—procreation and conjugal love (marital communion)—became set in a hierarchical relationship and how procreation as a good of marriage in general eventually was seen as required of each and every marriage act. The historical approach explains how classicist decisions shape the current procreative marital morality of Catholic teaching. In response, the authors propose a unitive sexual morality that reflects both historical and theological truths.

Ultimately, the central claim of the text is not a new sexual ethic. Many moral theologians have argued that a diversity of relationships exists, and that they should be judged on their moral qualities, meaning that there are morally justified sexual acts beyond procreative sexual intercourse—spousal love need not come in second to childbearing. What is unique about Sexual Ethics is the diligence with which the claims are argued in a contemporary Catholic language and situated within the whole of the Roman Catholic tradition. These sexual ethics are set within the context of a whole person who is, reflecting the language of Vatican II, a "relational, incarnated, enculturated, historical subject." The authors, like many Catholic ethicists in the 20th and 21st centuries, define sexuality as having multiple, significant moral dimensions beyond the physical to include relational, psychological, spiritual and emotional aspects. This requires an integration of current social and scientific knowledge about sexuality.

They also employ a more robust account of "nature" reaching back to Aguinas and well-supported by the writings of Vatican II. Nature is more than pure biology; it is better understood as what facilitates human well-being and human flourishing. Conversely, the book says, "To claim that nonreproductive sexual acts are 'unnatural' or 'against nature,' one must prove that such acts,



by definition, frustrate human wellbeing for human flourishing." A more holistic account of nature disrupts the reductive interpretation of doctrine that would have us believe that sexual organs are always reproductive organs and that they have a "natural finality." In other chapters, this argument is then fleshed out with regard to contraception, assisted reproductive technologies and nonreproductive acts related to gay and lesbian sexual behaviors.

HE CHAPTER ON "UNITIVE SEXUAL Morality" is perhaps the densest portion of the book as the authors distill the incredibly rich theological and ethical work from their 2009 book, The Sexual Person: Toward a Renewed Catholic Anthropology, for a lay and student audience. In the end, the reader may not be

women are two halves of a whole, each with essential differences. In this book, however, complementarity is not left for others to define; instead, a model of personal complementarity is proposed with three aspects—communion, affective and parental—that oppose the common model of biological complementarity that is heterogenital and reproductive. In a twist of theological prowess, Salzman and Lawler reclaim a historically heterosexist term, using it to argue for gender equity and the inclusion of gay and lesbian relationships.

The book has separate chapters on marriage, cohabitation, homosexuality, contraception and assisted reproductive technologies. The chapter titled "Cohabitation and the Process of Marriage" is a prime example of the book's methodological and contextual approach. Sal-

course and for gay and lesbian marriage in the Catholic tradition.

The cohabitation chapter is not alone in offering doctrinally deft and theologically sound proposals. Each chapter is marked with similar precision. Yet, the book's attention to detail and scope of Catholic history leave little room for an analysis of how contemporary Catholic teachings contribute to everyday disparities in a global church. Readers get glimpses of such a critique in the chapters on cohabitation and assisted reproductive technologies, but questions about the HIV/AIDS pandemic are not considered in relation to contraception use—or the hierarchy's staunch opposition to condom provision by Catholic charities and hospitals. Access to healthcare in developing countries or the US is also not factored into the

A more holistic account of nature disrupts the reductive interpretation of doctrine that would have us believe that sexual organs are always reproductive organs and that they have a "natural finality."

persuaded that we are always sexual beings regardless of sexual actions or partnering. The authors blur their claim with a tendency to define sexuality within a marital/partnered ethic by using examples that rely primarily on intercourse. Fortunately, they break this tendency (albeit briefly) when they argue that truly human sexual acts include nonreproductive sexual acts (such as masturbation, anal sex and oral sex).

At times, Salzman and Lawler appear constrained by their commitment to justifying their sexual ethic within contemporary Catholic conversation. As noted above, the ever-present connection of sexuality to marital/partnered relationship is one example of this. A far more creative instance is their approach to complementarity. The authors admit that they would like to "abandon both the idea and the word," and feminists have also been troubled by the idea that men and

zman and Lawler provide the reader with a Catholic history of how consent and betrothal led to spousal status prior to nuptials or a wedding, in which case sexual intercourse and living together occurred prior to the wedding. They do not only show differences within the Catholic Western historical tradition, but also point to current African Catholic practices of waiting until the birth of a child to consider a couple "married." These examples are placed within the framework of recent Catholic marital writings, including those by Pope John Paul II that teach about the becoming and continual development of spouses. This book argues for spousal love as the foundation for any legal or religious bonds, affirming that the marital journey begins prior to the wedding day and lasts beyond any consummating moment or act. These conclusions create space for some acts of premarital sexual interanalysis. Perhaps this omission is understandable given the authors' mission to argue for a renewed Catholic sexual ethic, both grounded in the tradition and arising out of that tradition. This helps avoid charges that such a perspective is forced by or adapting to circumstances outside that tradition, such as current sociocultural circumstances.

This may be where we as readers need to pick up the conversation. In what ways are Catholics, indeed, all members of the global community, unable to live a truly human sexual ethic because of racism, poverty, gender violence, inadequate sexuality education or limited access to care, to name just a few reasons? These are questions we must ask if we are to respond to Salzman's and Lawler's call to "marshal all the evidence about human sexuality and make honest, faithful, and true judgments of conscience about moral sexual behavior."

A Country, Not a Congregation

CONSTITUTION

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

DENNIS J. GOLDFORD

By Aram A. Schvey

The Constitution of Religious Freedom: God, Politics, and the First Amendment Dennis J. Goldford (Baylor University Press, 2012, 310 pp.) 978-1602584198, \$44.95

HE PRECISE CONTOURS OF THE First Amendment's Religion Clauses are the subject of Dennis Goldford's new book, The Constitution of Religious Freedom. In it, he analyzes competing

claims about the meaning of the clauses, and concludes that they were intended to protect not religion, but religious freedom. In other words, the Religion Clauses were not instituted to protect Protestantism, or Catholicism, or even atheism. Rather, they were designed to facilitate a political order in which every indi-

vidual can decide, free of

coercion, his or her own religious orientation. Perhaps it's easiest to see the different approaches to religion in the public sphere by starting with the justpast holiday season.

The winter holidays are the time of year marked by family get-togethers, frenzied shopping and, of course, angry denunciations by religious conservatives of the apparently godless curmudgeons

ARAM SCHVEY serves as Policy Counsel at the Center for Reproductive Rights. He was previously Litigation Counsel at Americans United for Separation of Church and State and a fellow at the Georgetown University Law Center and Fordham Law School. He also serves on the editorial board for Human Rights magazine.

who have the audacity to suggest that Christmas should be celebrated in the home or at church, rather than in the public square or city hall. But this year, the annual ritualized outrage we all know as the "War on Christmas" was joined by

> the equally fictitious "War on Religion." The latter refers, of course, to the Obama administration's contraceptive coverage policy, which requires most employee health insurance plans to cover FDA-approved contraception and counseling without a copay. Despite the fact that the policy was part of a broader effort to make preventive care more affordable, reli-

gious conservatives, including the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, have decried the policy as calculatedly anti-religious. What to most seems to be a sensible (and medically sound) policy designed to promote women's and children's health (and reduce healthcare costs) is seen by some as an affront to their religious liberty.

The claims that underlie the "War on Christmas" and "War on Religion" are certainly nothing new. Indeed, friction over the role of religion in government—and government in religion—has permeated our national fabric since the nation's founding. The very text of the First Amendment encapsulates these competing interests: government must not interfere with individuals' religious exercise, but also cannot enact laws for the establishment of religion. These two dictates do not always coexist easily. A government-built church would greatly facilitate the faithful's religious exercise—at least, for the adherents of that one sect-but would violate the prohibition on religious establishment. On the other hand, prohibiting the celebration of all religious rituals might demonstrate a lack of favoritism towards any one religion, but it would surely interfere with believers' religious exercise.

Whereas many religious liberty scholars look to the nation's Founders for guidance, Goldford notes—correctly that this is ultimately a fruitless quest. The Founders disagreed with each other, and often acted in ways contrary to what they claimed to believe. Looking to the Founders for a clear answer is, Goldford concludes, not only impossible, but also unnecessary. Instead, he notes, the Religion Clauses embody a principle "richer and broader than what those in the founding generation might have thought they were supporting."

From there, Goldford dissects the oft-echoed claim that America is a Christian nation. While conceding that more than three-fourths of Americans self-identify as Christian, Goldford goes the next step and explores the complex fault lines among these self-described Christians—not just between Protestants, Catholics, and other Christians, but also among various subgroups (for example, the author identifies 16 subgroups among evangelical Protestants). In addition, he looks at the degrees of biblical literalism embraced by various religions. In sum, he concludes, there is no clear "majority" or "minority"; the question is how one parses America's religious community.

Goldford's underlying point—that it is reductivist to the extreme to speak of "Christians" or a "Christian nation" is also true with respect to Americans' self-described religious beliefs and their actual deeds. For example, about

Bookshelf

Across God's Frontiers:

Catholic Sisters in the American West, 1850-1920

Anne M. Butler (University of North Carolina Press, 2012, 424 pp)

Before there were "nuns on the bus," America saw nuns on the boat—the many sisters who came from Europe—and the stagecoach, as they traveled west. This book is a celebration of the intrepid spirit of sisters who established ministries on the frontier, often in harsh climes or isolated regions. Of special interest are the encounters with Native American communities, which betray cultural compromises on both sides, with the sisters acting as acculturating forces at the same time that they learned native languages and customs.

Interestingly, members of the hierarchy appear in sometimes supportive, sometimes unsupportive roles that echo the varying relationships communities of women religious have with their male counterparts today.

The Birth Control Clinic in a Marketplace World

Rose Holz (University of Rochester Press, 2012, 226 pp)

This book traces the charity clinic movement, which carved out an identity opposed to pharmaceutical companies and the many "quack" products available at the beginning of the 20th century by positioning the medical establishment at its center. This construct came at the price of individual choice, however. The diaphragm was pushed as the main option for decades, and the choice of contraceptive ultimately fell to the doctor, rather than the woman. In the 1960s, however, the advent of the Pill brought a more consumer-oriented approach to birth control clinics, but today we can still see modern Planned Parenthood's charity identity in its mission to reach people in underserved areas and women with no health insurance.

The author also deals with some of the more troubling aspects of the birth control clinic's history, including accusations of classism in the way that doctors deemed more "intelligent," that is, better educated, women worthy of the diaphragm, while those who had unintended pregnancies were deemed "careless" and "difficult."

Christianity, the Papacy, and Mission in Africa

Richard Gray (author) and Lamin Sanneh (editor) (Orbis Books, 2012, 197 pp) Richard Gray was a pioneer in African history, and this short book, assembled after the author's death, is a window into his groundbreaking scholarship about the interaction between the Catholic church and African peoples. The author describes the many conflicting attitudes towards Africa that existed simultaneously within the church. The first record of the Atlantic slave trade being brought to the attention of the papacy occurred in 1630, and a Vatican statement condemning the slave trade came out in 1686. Contradictions remained between values and practice because "the Catholic church, however, was not only the church of the poor and the oppressed.... It was also the church of the conquistadores." These history-rich chapters about missions and competing missionary philosophies and motivations tell an interesting tale about African cultures in the past while lending insight into the African Catholic church of the present.

(continued on page 53)

one-fourth of Americans are selfdescribed Catholics. And the most conservative interpretation of Catholic teachings prohibits the use of contraception. But to conclude, therefore, that at least one quarter of the population has never used contraception or rejects it out of hand is completely wrong. Indeed, research indicates that virtually all sexually experienced Catholic women—98 percent—have used contraception, a fact that bears heavily on the current discussion about the contraceptive-coverage benefit.

HE BULK OF THE BOOK SETS ITS sights on a central premise of the Religious Right: that government neutrality in matters of religion is tantamount to the establishment of atheism or secular humanism as a national religion. In that vein, religious conservatives claim that governmental limitations on religious exercise—whether prohibiting crèches on courthouse steps, or preventing employers from dictating to employees which health insurance services they can access—violate the Establishment Clause by effectively "establishing" secularism as a national religion. Goldford rightly points out that not only is such an argument wrong because it would render the Religion Clauses meaningless, but it is also misleading because it ignores the fact that a neutral government stance makes room for all religious views (and none), whereas a sectarian government stance leaves no room for those of differing faiths, or none. A robust wall between church and state means that all people's religious beliefs are equal under the law, but a porous wall inevitably favors the religious majority at the expense of the minority.

Ultimately, Goldford concludes, religious nonestablishment means that government must not take a position on (1) religion in general (versus nonreligion); (2) particular religions or religious beliefs (as against others); or (3) particular religious practices. This neutrality, which Goldford calls "secularity," is to be distinguished from secularism. While secularism is a belief system that "only things of this world are real or are important," secularity is a non-belief-system that ensures that all worldviews, whether evangelical Christianity or atheism, are entitled to equal respect. In addition, the author embraces a broad understanding of prohibited religious coercion (and rejects Justice Scalia's cramped understanding of coercion as limited to "force of law and threat of penalty"). A law requiring religious tithing is coercivebut so is a religiously themed graduation speech at a public school or city council's opening prayer.

Goldford's book sets forth a theoretical underpinning for a nuanced understanding of the proper relationship between government and religion. Although the prose is quite dense and sometimes too reliant on block quotations, Goldford's robust defense of the Religion Clauses as protecting religious freedom-and not religion itself-is a welcome antidote to conservative scholars and advocates whose understanding of religious liberty is at once too sweeping (because almost any limitation on using the machinery of government to promote a religious message would be too much) and too cramped (because almost no attention is paid to the rights of those with differing views).

In the end, we live in a country of 300 million people, a nation endowed with almost endless religious diversity. The First Amendment's genius is in setting up a system that protects one person's religious freedom no more than the next. We have the right to pray and worship as we wish-or not to. We can take Communion, attend Kol Nidre services, conduct salah or stay home and watch Glee. But we do not have the right to impose our religious beliefs on our fellow citizens—whether by erecting a nativity scene at city hall, or by making an employee's health benefits contingent on her supervisor's religious beliefs. After all, as Goldford points out, we live in a country, not a congregation.

Faith Jeremiad: Reinventing the Narrative of the New Religious Right

By Rev. Harry Knox

Stumping God: Reagan, Carter, and the Invention of a Political Faith Andrew P. Hoque (Baylor University Press, 2012, 333 pp) 978-1602584297, \$49.95

R. ANDREW P. HOGUE'S Stumping God: Reagan, Carter, and the Invention of a Political Faith seems to be primarily targeted towards students of rhetoric and political science in conser-

vative Christian colleges and universities. The author's religiously conservative and partisan Republican bias is apparent early and is consistent throughout. The book's primary value to nonacademic readers, and those interested in more than having conservative philosophies reinforced, is in Hogue's analysis of presidential religious rhetoric:

that used by Jimmy Carter and Gerald Ford in the 1976 election and Ronald Reagan's subsequent expansion and redirection of that language in 1980.

Opening with a brief "rhetorical history" of religion and American conservatism from 1944-1979, Hogue wades through analyses of the writings of

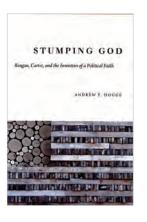
REV. HARRY KNOX is president and CEO of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, based in Washington, DC. He was founding director of the Religion and Faith Program of the Human Rights Campaign and served on President Obama's first Council on Faithbased and Neighborhood Partnerships.

economist Friedrich Hayek, noted conservatives Richard Weaver and William F. Buckley, as well as Communistturned-National Review writer Whitaker Chambers, without managing to alert the reader as to why he has bothered to

do so. His ultimate conclusion that Reagan was influenced by Chambers' use of the jeremiad, or prolonged complaint, as a rhetorical device is supported chiefly by Hogue's opinion that Chambers' apocalyptic description of the ultimate end of Communism sounds like something Reagan would say. No evidence is offered that Reagan or any of his sev-

eral writers and political advisers even read Hayek, Weaver or Buckley. One may assume that an intellectual like speechwriter Peggy Noonan was smart enough to have done so, but Hogue doesn't document intellectual connections between those philosophers and Reagan or his writers.

Buried in his "rhetorical history," Hogue makes the point that the Republican Party prior to 1976 was largely uninterested in religion. This view is better elucidated in his treatment of the political history of engagement between the GOP and religious leaders from 1942



through Carter's election as president. (He doesn't bother with the history of the Democratic Party in this regard.) Hogue quotes a remark on abortion then-Governor Reagan made in 1975 as an example of a neophyte "fumble":

"In our Judeo-Christian religion we recognize the right to take life in defense of our own. Therefore an abortion is justified when done in self-defense. My belief is that a woman has the right to protect her own life...."

In *Stumping God*, the story of why and how Jimmy Carter and Gerald Ford made broad use of religious rhetoric is well told. Ford, tainted by his pardon of

sexually provocative articles. At the same time, the interview put off many liberals because Carter used it as an opportunity to share his judgmental perceptions about the lifestyle choices of those espousing sexual freedom.

he ford campaign capitalized on Carter's tactical error with newspaper ads in medium-sized media markets juxtaposing the cover of *Playboy* with the cover of the thencurrent issue of *Newsweek*, which contained a flattering picture of Ford and the headline: The Ford Presidency. While the media hounded Carter about the campaign's decision to take an inter-

Carter's dexterity at positioning himself, in spite of *Playboy*, as a trustworthy Christian to whom religious conservatives could relate, on the other. Hogue goes on to say that Carter disappointed religious former supporters by failing to hold a hard line against those who advocated for access to abortion care and basic freedoms for lesbian and gay people, whom Hogue insists on anachronistically referring to as "homosexuals." He includes a long discussion of the alleged highjacking of Carter's White House Conference on Families by pro-abortion and pro-gay forces.

Hogue would have the reader believe that the New Religious Right—which emerged on the political scene during

Hogue is devastatingly accurate in his description of how Ronald Reagan learned the value of religious speech and used it for political advantage.

Richard Nixon, survived a bitter nomination fight with Ronald Reagan, who not only did not appeal to religion in the campaign, but upset religious conservatives by announcing during the convention that if nominated he would run with moderate Republican Sen. Lowell Schweiker. Carter strategist Hamilton Jordan's calculus about post-Watergate America's desires for a leader who could be trusted, but who did not represent a political lurch to the left, meshed with the comfort with which Jimmy Carter, the Baptist Sunday School teacher, talked about his own religious motivations for political leadership.

But the image of altruistic purity the Carter campaign put forward with great effect was jeopardized by the decision to accept an interview request from *Playboy* magazine.

Hogue recounts how the *Playboy* article offended the sensibilities of religious conservatives who had been excited by Carter's unabashed Christianity, simply because of the venue in which it was published—a magazine that contained pictures of nude women and

view in a magazine considered scandalous by religious conservatives, Ford accepted invitations to speak to a convention of the National Association of Evangelicals and Carter's own Southern Baptist Convention.

President Ford's testimony to his personal Christian faith, stories about his support for one of his sons' pursuit of a seminary degree, and his thoughts on how faith motivated his political decisions did much to temper enthusiasm for Carter among Evangelicals, though Ford still lost the demographic on election day. In the end, Hogue's analysis is that perennial partisan considerations weighed most heavily in determining the outcome of the contest—and Carter won because there were simply more voters who identified as Democrats than Republicans in 1976.

The author goes on to delineate his opinions about why Evangelicals turned away from Carter during the course of his presidency. Those opinions begin in an explanation of Carter's electoral success as rooted in what are termed "fuzzy" policy positions, on the one hand, and

the Carter administration—was a divinely inspired spiritual phenomenon and its leaders simply outraged pastors (or mothers—the two never mixed) responding to the cries of their religious communities for righteousness. The gloss he puts on the machinations of leaders like James Robison, Anita Bryant, Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, Phyllis Schlafly and Pat Boone is pure spinshine, which serves the purposes of the movement they skillfully catalyzed and managed along with politicos Richard Viguerie, Paul Weyrich and Howard Phillips, among others. But it does not accurately reflect either the genesis or the execution of what was a well-coordinated, deeply researched messaging machine long before the election of 1980. Hogue also fails to tell the story of strategic organizations like the Institute for Religion and Democracy, which had been feeding the movement financially and rhetorically since the 1960s.

Hogue does a good job describing how the rhetoric of both election cycles worked. He is devastatingly accurate in his description of how Ronald Reagan

learned the value of religious speech and used it for political advantage. But he fails the reader by positing that both the New Religious Right and Reagan's rhetoric were simple reactions to the policy decisions of President Carter. The author does include interesting thoughts on former liberal Republican John Anderson's personal struggle. Having called fellow Evangelicals to political service early in his career, Anderson later reaped what he had helped to sow in his whirlwind as the third party candidate in 1980. But the value in that section of the book is in the description of Reagan's use of religious language to create a jeremiad with an upbeat. It would pay for all community leaders to learn lessons from the Great Communicator, regardless of whether you believe Reagan to be saint or sinner.

In this book, the reader will not find any critical analysis of the Reagan administrations or an evaluation of how well their policies reflected moral and religious codes of the right or the left. Catholic influence on the elections of 1976 and 1980-and the administrations they prefaced—is inexcusably minimalized in the volume.

What one will find is a last chapter that briefly comments on the Obama administration and its relations with conservative religious leaders as part of a discussion of possible long-term effects of the politicization of religion. Again, progressive religious leaders are beneath Professor Hogue's mention. But he contends that President Obama has been at least partially successful in opening doors through which some current Evangelical leaders—like Richard Cizik and Joel Hunter—are willing to enter as they seek relevant engagement around a narrow set of progressive issues, primarily related to poverty and the environment. In this way, Hogue begins to capture for future historians some of the blurring of relationships that will be determined at some later date to have been either boon or bane for Obama and the American people.

Bookshelf

(continued from page 50)

Feminisms, HIV and AIDS: Subverting Power, Reducing Vulnerability Vicci Tallis (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, 225 pp)

Addressing the specific impact HIV & AIDS has upon women requires a delicate balance: on the one hand, there are numerous ways in which women, especially women in the developing world, do not have the same access to power as men. This can be seen in women's difficulties in negotiating safer sex practices and accessing treatment; high rates of sexual violence against women; their extra responsibilities as mothers and caregivers; and additional factors like sex trafficking and paid sexual encounters. Yet to focus on the many challenges faced by women at risk for, or living with, HIV & AIDS is to perpetuate the undervaluation of women's agency that underlies all of these problems.

The author attacks the common misconceptions about the systems that prevent women from accessing sexual and reproductive power while unearthing their personal agency on two levels. Vicci Tallis, who works in HIV & AIDS programs in Africa, shares case studies in which women living with the virus talk about everything from forced sterilization to a general attitude of disrespect by hospital workers as they construct new narratives for personal empowerment. "I have a new identity—I am not a person living with HIV; I am a young woman living with HIV," explained one participant. Stories about women abused by their partners and a healthcare system that ignores their specific medical and social realities show why a woman-centric approach to the epidemic is necessary, and why women-controlled prevention methods like microbicides are essential. The book provides a rich assortment of theoretical models for approaching HIV & AIDS in a way that upholds women's agency.

Hippocratic, Religious, and Secular Medical Ethics: The Points of Conflict Robert M. Veatch (Georgetown University Press, 2012, 242 pp)

The author, a professor of medical ethics, provides an interesting perspective on the Hippocratic Oath, which has become distilled in the popular awareness as the doctor's injunction to "do no harm." In reality, not only has the Hippocratic Oath been replaced by other ethical codes in medical professional groups, Veatch argues that the full language of the oath is impractical for several reasons, among them that it seems to prohibit surgery. On an ethical level, however, the author's premise is that the Hippocratic Oath gives undue weight to the physician's judgment and elevates the injunction to avoid harm to the patient above all other considerations, including societal good.

Then the book tackles more modern ethical systems, such as those adopted by groups of medical professionals, and finds these to be problematic as well. Hippocratic, Religious, and Secular Medical Ethics delineates the many competing voices that become evident in a conflict over hospital policy or medical practice, offering several different ethical frameworks, among them those dealing with human rights. Besides walking away with the idea that there is no simple or singular way to articulate a physician's responsibilities, readers may be interested in the author's view that even those medical personnel following religious ethical systems must do so with humility and tolerance of other views because human fallibility is always a factor.

Reports Worth Reading

Abortion Surveillance -United States, 2009

Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, November 23, 2012 Every year, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) receive abortion data from most US state health authorities. This report reflects trends from 2000-2009, and shows that there was a gradual decrease in both abortion numbers and rate during the early years of this period, a leveling off between 2006 and 2008, and then the largest decrease in both rates and number between 2008 and 2009.

The study also examined factors such as age, marital status and ethnicity. There was an overall increase in the number of unmarried women seeking abortions during this time. In areas that broke down data by race/ethnicity, the abortion rate decreased seven percent for non-Hispanic white women, six percent for Hispanic women and one percent for non-Hispanic black women. Between 1990 and 2008 there was a 40 percent decrease in the number of pregnancies for girls aged 15-19 and there was an even greater decrease in the abortion rate. Although the report is incomplete because of the lack of data from California, Delaware, Maryland and New Hampshire, the information from the other 46 states (along with the District of Columbia and New York City) is provided according to a number of dimensions, including gestational age and abortion method.

Governmental Coercion in Reproductive Decision Making: See It Both Ways

Sneha Barot, Guttmacher Policy Review, Guttmacher Institute, Fall 2012

A frequent accusation from antichoice sectors is that

reproductive rights activists are really working to impose government control where there should be individual choice—with the most extreme critics pointing to reports of coerced abortions in China as the logical result of this outlook. This article posits the opposite thesis, claiming that the reproductive rights sector has a long history of standing up for choice in the most expansive definition—not only the freedom to access reproductive healthcare like family planning, but that it must be accessed voluntarily. For instance, the author points to the 2012 London Family Planning Summit, where reproductive rights advocates expressed concern that the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation plan to add 120 million new users of contraception by 2020 could lend itself to incentivizing or compelling something that must be left to individual choice.

The article will be useful for anyone who has been confronted by antichoice groups equating reproductive rights with repressive government tactics. There are many examples of the reverse, such as "informed consent" laws that are actually designed to discourage women from exercising reproductive choice.

Reclaiming & Redefining Rights: ICPD +20 - Status of Sexual and **Reproductive Rights in Central** and Eastern Europe

ASTRA, October 2012

This report from ASTRA, the Central and Eastern European Women's Network for Sexual and Reproductive Rights and Health, is an allencompassing summary of the current state of SRHR in Central and Eastern Europe, along with historical context for how these conditions

came to be. The benchmarks used in

the report are the standards set at

the United Nations International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), held in 1994.

The great diversity among the countries studied is reflected in the many useful statistical tables, but a few trends emerge for most of the region overall. The lack of sexuality education and its relationship to traditional gender roles, teen pregnancy, STIs and/or unplanned pregnancies and subsequent abortions is mentioned by advocates from most of the areas represented. Countries like Hungary, Russia and Poland have experienced several key setbacks in policy since the 1990s, due to what a Russian interviewee called the "clericalization of state power and institutionalization of misogyny." Georgia, on the other hand, has made progress due in part to the establishment of the National Reproductive Health Council, created

One of the strengths of this publication is its emphasis on social factors, such as the economic challenges faced by most Central and Eastern European states that directly impact sexual and reproductive rights and related policies. In many cases, there exists a stark contrast between the services available in urban areas compared to rural regions. Lack of state funding for reproductive health services is a concern in some countries, especially because modern contraception must be imported to places like Russia and is thus extremely expensive. Some reproductive health advocacy organizations choose to steer clear of state funding because governmentsponsored programs carry with them the dominant, church-sponsored ideology.

Given that abortion-related deaths account for just over a quarter of maternal deaths in Central and Eastern Europe, there is an urgent

need to improve the policies supporting sexual and reproductive health and rights. Internationally, standards like those from ICPD are part of the strategy for achieving this progress. Because domestic legislation tends to put other concerns ahead of SHRH, the report cites several examples in which international bodies like the Council of Europe and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women were the only recourse for women.

The Strong Right Arm of the **Bishops: The Knights of** Columbus and Anti-Marriage **Equality Funding**

Equally Blessed, 2012 With the Catholic hierarchy committing vast resources to fight against marriage equality in recent elections, one of its allies has emerged center stage as a formidable spender on anti-LGBT campaigns. According to this report from Equally Blessed, a coalition of pro-LGBT Catholic organizations, the Knights of Columbus spent \$6.2 million on anti-marriage equality efforts between 2005 and 2012.

"The Strong Right Arm of the Bishops" provides insight into what lies beyond the largest Catholic fraternal organization's image as the leader of pancake supper fundraisers. Known for donating to charities throughout the world, the organization restructured Knights of Columbus Charities, Inc., in 2009, "to serve as a conduit and distribution channel for donations to the Knights of Columbus' Culture of Life Fund," which the report says included state referenda on anti-marriage equality.

The publication includes charts documenting the sums donated to oppose same-sex marriage rights on the state level. But the Knights' contribution to the cause cannot

merely be counted in dollars. The Knights of Columbus helped establish the Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family, a theological institute housed at the Catholic University of America. The Institute claims as its unique mission to "conceiv[e] marriage and family, and all the moral problems associated with these, within an entire vision of reality"—a conservative vision of Catholicism to be instilled in theologians and clergy.

The Knights have close ties with prominent members of the hierarchy, such as Archbishop William E. Lori, the head of the USCCB's Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty, which considers opposition to samesex marriage to be part of its raison d'etre. These relationships, as well as their ample coffers, make the organization one to watch among the opponents of LGBT and reproductive rights.

12 Rules for Mixing Religion and Politics

Peter Montgomery, People for the American Way, 2012

Now that the 2012 US election is past, it is easier to reflect on the furor of the political process during the last year and wonder, "How did things get to this point?" This concise report from the People for the American Way Foundation can help untangle the gut-level reaction that many people had to the frequent improper mixing of religion and politics. The concise chapters find historical links to current issues like special rules for faith-based nonprofits and doomsday prophesies about a "Godless" future just around the corner. It helps to learn that the US has not "always" handled religion and church/state separation in any one way, and thus, there is room for improvement in how we approach these always tricky areas today.

Some of the report contains advice for journalists, one force on the national scene during this bitterly partisan election cycle. "Reporters, politicians, and activists from across the political spectrum are often guilty of treating religious communities as monolithic," the author writes, cautioning that "journalists and others should avoid falling into the trap of equating religious orthodoxy with religious authenticity."

Unsafe Abortion Incidence and Mortality: Global and regional levels in 2008 and trends during 1990-2008

World Health Organization, 2012 This short summary assembles statistical findings from the last two decades into a clear picture of unsafe abortion and its consequences. While there are charts documenting slight improvements—such as a small decrease in the rate of unsafe abortions compared to 1990 worldwide, one in 10 pregnancies still ends in an unsafe abortion. There is a strong parallel between low contraceptive use and unsafe abortion in Eastern, Middle and Western Africa. Overall, an estimated three out of four induced abortions could be prevented if comprehensive contraceptive services were made available for the unmet family planning needs around the world.

The report contrasts global figures with regional health disparities: while there is approximately one maternal death for every 500 unsafe abortions worldwide, the casefatality rate for Africa is almost three times higher than the Asia region and more than 15 times higher than in Latin America and the Caribbean. Further, the mortality rates due to unsafe abortion in Latin America and the Caribbean are 10 times those in Europe.

"He said I was a very poor Catholic president. [I told him] 'I am not a Catholic president, I'm president of Ireland.""

—Former president of Ireland Mary McAleese, recounting a "most dreadful encounter" with Cardinal Bernard Law in which he berated her in front of an audience of government ministers, officials and ambassadors.

"Christians now find themselves in much the same situation as they were in ancient, pagan Rome: surrounded by an antagonistic, sexually-saturated pagan culture, demanding contraceptives, abortifacients, direct abortion, and infanticide to remove the unwanted 'side-effects' of sexual libertinism." ²

—A "history lesson" about the Obama administration's contraception coverage policy from Catholic World Report, which also claimed "our secularism looks suspiciously like ancient paganism."

"Many marriages end in divorce because of [contraception's] effects. Many couples, in all honesty, have no idea what they are doing by using contraception." 3

—Jane Deegan, writing about the "disordered love of self" caused by contraception in her booklet, "Divorce," published by the Catholic Truth Society.

"Are women getting too choosy? I'd say yes.... I think many are setting aside their aspirations for later, but by the time they get around to it, they've missed their chance." 4

—Father Tony Kerin, episcopal vicar for justice and social service in the Archdiocese of Melbourne, discussing the large disparity between marriageable men and women in Australia.

"If what I have heard is true about the relationship between the physical and mental health of gay men, if it is true, then society is being very quiet about it.... Recently in Scotland there was a gay Catholic MP who died at the age of 44 or so, and nobody said anything, and why his body should just shut down at that age?" 5

—Archbishop Philip Tartaglia of Glasgow, Scotland, suggesting that there was a link between politician David Cairns' sexuality and his death from acute pancreatitis.

"What they are doing is abuse on our nation. We are like a beaten woman, abused by somebody stronger, in her own home." ⁶

—Antichoice Polish journalist Joanna Najfeld, echoing objections by the Polish Episcopal Conference about a Council of Europe convention on domestic violence.

"Many conservative prelates and lay Catholics exhibit an array of morbid symptoms: lurid fantasies of sexual pandemonium; paranoid delusions of cultural conspiracy and government persecution; and ugly outbursts of rage at a world they no longer understand, control, or can persuade. Ashamed of the ecclesial present, the bishops seem transfixed by venerable memories of power and eminence." 7

—Eugene McCarraher, associate professor of humanities at Villanova University, in an article for *Commonweal* titled "Morbid Symptoms: The Catholic Right's False Nostalgia."

"Some of the most fundamental issues for the formation of a Catholic conscience are as follows: sacredness of human life from conception to natural death, marriage, religious freedom and freedom of conscience, and a right to private property." 8

—Bishop Robert C. Morlino of Madison, Wisconsin, adding a right to private property to the list of "intrinsically evil" non-negotiables.

1 Patsy McGarry, "McAleese in support of same-sex marriage," *Irish Times*, October 9, 2012. 2 Benjamin Wiker, "Preparing for a Fortnight for Freedom: A Short History Lesson," *Catholic World Report*, June 18, 2012. 3 Liz Dodd and Nicholas Cottrell, "Booklet links use of contraception to rise in divorce," *Tablet* (UK), September 1, 2012. 4 Damien Currie, "Catholic Church says would-be brides are being too fussy," *Herald-Sun* (Australia), May 7, 2012. 5 Severin Carrell, "New archbishop of Glasgow under fire for remarks about death of gay MP," *Guardian* (UK), July 25, 2012. 6 Thaddeus Baklinski, "European convention defining gender as social construct condemned as "rape" of Polish society," Life Site News, July 18, 2012. 7 Eugene McCarraher, "Morbid Symptoms: The Catholic Right's False Nostalgia," *Commonweal*, November 23, 2012. 8 Bishop Robert C. Morlino, "Subsidiarity, solidarity, and the lay mission," *Catholic Herald* (Diocese of Madison, WI), August 16, 2012.

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Index: Abortion around the World

Countries, grouped by conditions in which abortion is allowed ¹
Not legally permitted on any grounds
Only when a woman's life is threatened
To save a woman's life or to preserve her physical health
To save a woman's life, preserve her physical or mental health
To save a woman's life, preserve her physical or mental health, or socioeconomic reasons
Without restriction as to <u>reason</u> , although other limits such as gestational limits may be imposed 56
Percent of maternal deaths due to unsafe abortion ²
World
Africa
A.:-
Asia
Europe
Europe
Europe 8% Eastern Europe 11%
Europe 8% Eastern Europe 11% Latin America + Caribbean 12%

¹ Department of Health and Children, Ireland, "Report of the Expert Group on the Judgment in A, B and C v Ireland," 2012.

World Health Organization, "Unsafe abortion incidence and mortality: Global and regional levels in 2008 and trends during 1990–2008," 2012.

^{*} Some make exceptions for rape, incest or fetal abnormalities.

^{**} All make exceptions for rape, incest or fetal abnormalities.

^{***} No estimates are shown where the incidence is negligible.