

# CONSCIENCE

THE NEWSJOURNAL OF CATHOLIC OPINION

VOL. XXXII—NO. 3 2011

## **The Secret History of the GOP and Choice**

CATHOLICS FOR CHOICE

## **Prochoice Republicanism**

A Roundtable Jointly  
Convened by Catholics for  
Choice and the Republican  
Majority for Choice

## **Why a Prochoice Activist Would Choose to Remain Republican**

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## **Fighting For Women's Lives in Argentina**

Making the Connection  
Between Abortion Rights,  
Human Rights and  
People Power

MARTA ALANIS AND  
JACQUELINE NOLLEY ECHEGARAY

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# CONSCIENCE

THE NEWSJOURNAL OF CATHOLIC OPINION

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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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CATHOLICS  
FOR  
CHOICE

## EDITOR'S NOTE

**F**AMILY PLANNING IS TOO IMPORTANT AN ISSUE TO BE LEFT TO partisan politics. However, that is precisely what has happened in the US, where it has become not just a partisan issue, but a controversial partisan issue. The Republican leadership is seemingly unanimous in opposing access to this most basic healthcare service and, while most Democrats have been generally in favor, some of them have supported anti-family planning initiatives as well. No matter which party these lawmakers call home, however, it's bad politics and bad public health policy.

As has been widely reported, anybody running as a Republican for any elected office must almost bend over backwards to affirm their antichoice credentials. Some who have previously supported prochoice policies have retracted those statements. Mitt Romney is just one of many who have done so. In a 2002 meeting Romney, then running for governor of Massachusetts, told local NARAL Pro-Choice Massachusetts representatives that, if elected, he would protect the state's abortion laws and that overturning *Roe v. Wade* would be a "serious mistake for our country." Now running for the Republican presidential nomination, he has supported a personhood amendment so extreme that the Catholic bishops do not agree with it, has proposed eliminating the Title X family planning program and adopted numerous other antichoice positions.

But we know that, just as Catholics are ill-served by their leadership, so too are Republicans ill-served by theirs. We are very aware that, as the Republican leadership has become even more extreme in its pandering to anti-family planning advocates, the bishops have aligned themselves more and more with the Republican leadership on this issue. It's a dangerous combination. One group doesn't truly represent Catholics, and the other doesn't truly represent Republicans.

Three articles in this issue examine the past, present and future of prochoice politics in the Republican Party. We collaborated with Kellie Ferguson and her colleagues at the Republican Majority for Choice in convening a roundtable for prochoice Republican policymakers, advocates and pollsters. We asked Ann Stone, the president of Republicans for Choice, to tell us why she remains a prochoice Republican. We also looked at the history of the Republican leadership on choice issues, and found a very different picture than the one that we see today. In addition, we looked at ongoing demands for justice for women in Argentina and the Philippines, and for victims of the clergy sexual abuse scandal in Ireland.



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](http://www.CatholicsForChoice.org), or call us at (202) 986 6093.

*“Some people say, ‘You’re prochoice; just become a Democrat.’ Well, if we did that we wouldn’t be holding true to the values that we believe in. And we believe that the prochoice position is very much in line with the history of the Republican Party.”*

— ROUNDTABLE, 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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COVER: © CORBIS / JOHN LUND

ABOVE: FORMER FIRST LADY BETTY FORD, A LIFELONG ADVOCATE FOR REPRODUCTIVE CHOICE, RECEIVES THE MEDAL FOR DISTINGUISHED PUBLIC SERVICE IN 2005.

© REUTERS / MICHAEL TWEED, 2005

## Bishops' Campaign Distracts from Real Work of the Church

THE US CONFERENCE of Catholic Bishops has released another of its peculiar propaganda videos ("Made for Life' Turns Bishops into Moral Pretzels," Vol. XXXII No. 2). Listening to the real-life couples—allegedly speaking in their own words—awkwardly contorting their statements so as to incessantly drop in the word "life" is uncomfortable and jarring. It certainly defeats the video makers' attempt to soft sell its idea.

Rife with such silly and unsubstantiated bromides and platitudes, all one can really worry about is stifling a great big yawn. These attractive couples become decidedly unattractive when they dutifully lay harsh judgments on families different from their own. Citing junk science and insulting the intelligence and lived experience of Catholics is hardly an effective tool of persuasion.

What is indeed troubling about this exercise is the distraction from the real work of the church. The church has offered up its

scarce resources in service to one political party's narrow, divisive agenda. The church undermines its calling of service to the young, the elderly, the poor, the marginalized and disenfranchised of our country.

With just weeks to go before the 2010 election, the Archbishop of Minneapolis and St. Paul spent almost \$1 million to produce and mail DVDs to every parishioner's home, with the not-so-subtle message that electing candidates of one party would bar the door to same-sex marriage. The legislature he helped elect immediately launched attacks on working men and women, protections for the poor, human rights enforcement, affordable and accessible healthcare, job and childcare supports, and a fair and adequate education for all young people.

Minnesota Catholics have responded with their own video of loving couples, parents and allies speaking with authenticity in their own unscripted voices, about the manifestation of God, faith, love in their lives and the lives of their families—the disappointment of the church's contradictions with itself notwithstanding. One

prayerfully hopes that the bishops view the Catholics for Marriage Equality Minnesota's video series, allow their hearts to be touched and begin to understand that a strong church in a strong community is one in which together we combat bullying and isolation and affirm the goodness in every person and every family.

SENATOR SCOTT DIBBLE  
*Minnesota State Legislature*

### Allies Of African LGBT Movement Should Empower Activists on the Ground

REV. DR. KAOMA'S ARTICLE on the anti-LGBT activities of US religious conservatives in Africa is part of a conversation that must continue to happen at an even broader scale than it is now in the US ("Exposing Trafficking in Bigotry," Vol. XXXII No. 2). The media attention generated by the Ugandan 2009 Anti-Homosexuality Bill helped expose the agenda being pushed by religious conservatives from the US in Africa and other parts of the world, but this attention died down after the media found a new story to talk about. We must not let this happen.

Dr. Kaoma touches on a few strategies to help combat the homophobic agenda of the religious right, such as bringing activists to the US to receive mentoring and support; providing an opportunity for progressive religious figures, such as Bishop Ssenyonjo, to speak

about their faith and how homosexuality fits into their beliefs; and, most importantly, giving a space to African activists, government officials, civil society organizations, clergy, etc., to come together and discuss this issue openly and respectfully. Dr. Kaoma argues against copying the unethical practices of the religious conservatives, specifically in befriending African political leaders to influence policies. This point is critically important to highlight.

Our role should be to foster, as Kaoma states, the "organic social structures that will further the rights of all Africans equally." As allies of the African LGBT movement we should do this by learning and understanding the political structures in each of the African countries, and then empowering activists on the ground to speak out against homophobia, not only in religious and social settings but in political ones as well. That way, we cannot be accused of imposing our notions of governance and morality on the African continent. We are instead working within their system to promote and defend human rights.

JERUSHA BURNHAM  
*Uganda Program Officer /  
Grants Administrator  
Fund for Global Human Rights*

### Bill Donohue's Empire State Building Flap Did Not Honor Mother Teresa

JON O'BRIEN'S ARTICLE regarding the Catholic League, Bill Donohue and

*Letters may be edited for clarity and length.*

his “tempest in a teapot” about the Empire State Building made a good point (“The Empire Strikes Back,” Vol. xxxii No. 2). Try to imagine all of the suffering Mother Teresa saw in her long life among India’s poor. Now try to imagine her, or any one who helps the impoverished, getting worked up over a purely symbolic gesture involving light bulbs in a skyscraper halfway around the world.

It’s a shame to see anyone’s faith or work trivialized in this way.

DAVID CLOHESSY

*Director*

*SNAP, the Survivors Network  
of those Abused by Priests*

### **Donohue’s Controversy Comes at the Expense of the Vulnerable**

THANKS FOR JON O’BRIEN’S fine piece on Bill Donohue’s endless whining and its real purpose—enriching him, not helping Catholicism (“The Empire Strikes Back,” Vol. xxxii No. 2).

Donohue is a shrill—but savvy—self-promoting businessman. By creating and stoking largely insignificant or imaginary controversies, he rakes in almost \$400,000 a year in Catholic money. But along the way he bullies and insults many, even those who are already in pain.

He’s especially vitriolic toward clergy sex abuse victims and their loved ones and supporters.

In Donohue’s eyes, victims can virtually do nothing right. If they

call police, they’re “vengeful.” If they take civil action, they’re “greedy.” If they speak publicly, they’re “grandstanding.” If they don’t, they’re “cowardly.”

If one comes forward alone, the accusation is “unsubstantiated.” But if one speaks up after several others have already accused a priest, then the allegation is “piling on.”

If a victim accuses an active parish priest, he or she is “trying to bring down” a cleric. But if one accuses a deceased priest, he or she is being “unfair” because the alleged abuser can’t defend himself.

Fortunately, most Catholics are unaware of Donohue. Many others just ignore him. But a loud few seem to share his unhealthy, self-serving obsession with railing against even the most obscure alleged insult to the institutional hierarchy.

Finally, Donohue’s priorities are sadly skewed. He worries far more about perceived slights to the hyper-sensitive emotions of some adults (especially by high-profile media figures) but largely ignores the very real harm done to the bodies and souls of a great many children (especially by child molesting clerics and their corrupt church supervisors).

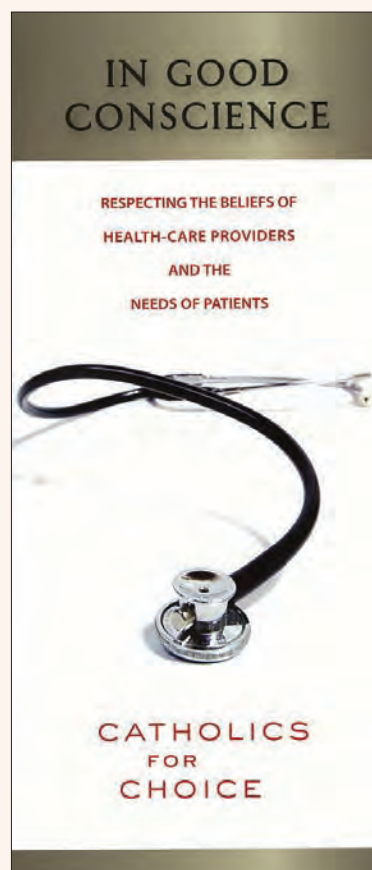
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# The Church and Abortion

## Priests for Life Head Suspended by Bishop

FATHER FRANK PAVONE, the priest who has been the leader of the antichoice organization Priests for Life

show appropriate obedience to his bishop. It seems that his fame has caused him to see priestly obedience as an inconvenience to his unique status and an obstacle to the

things we did," that is, the activities of PFL, which already have an operating budget of \$10 million—larger than the budget of the diocese, according to CatholicCulture.org.

Father Pavone has responded by asserting that outside auditors have found no fault with PFL's financial records. He has also indicated that he is searching for a way to continue his anti-

Rome, asking questions as to ... what is being done with the monies."

Priests for Life was the subject of an Opposition Notes publication from Catholics for Choice. *Faithless Politics: Priests for Life Defies Constitution and Conscience*, describes Priests for Life's finances and relations with other clergy as well as Pavone's media activities. It is available at [www.catholicsforchoice.org](http://www.catholicsforchoice.org).

## Proposed Abortion Ban Rejected by Polish Parliament

AFTER AN ANTICHOICE petition unsuccessfully sought a complete ban on abortion, Poland's law—one of the most restrictive in Europe—still allows women to access the procedure under certain conditions.

In July, a Polish anti-choice organization, the PRO Foundation, collected signatures to make abortion illegal under all conditions. Currently, abortion is available under three circumstances—serious fetal abnormality, danger to a woman's health or "illegal activity" (e.g., rape). In practice, many women face serious challenges when trying to obtain an abortion in Poland. Out of the 150,000 illegal abortions Polish women have each year, 10–15 percent occur outside the Polish borders. The European Court of Human Rights sanctioned Poland in May for refusing a woman access to genetic tests, which made her miss the time limit for a legal abortion.



Father Frank Pavone, the leader of Priests for Life who has been suspended from active ministry outside of his Texas diocese, speaks outside the Supreme Court building in 2009.

(PFL) since 1993, has been suspended from active ministry outside of his home diocese of Amarillo, Texas, by Bishop Patrick J. Zurek.

In a letter sent to all the bishops in the US on September 9, Bishop Zurek said the reason for the recall was that "Father Pavone has gradually lost his need to

possible international scope of his ministry."

Part of the controversy is related to the financial dealings behind the scenes at Priests for Life, including the money raised for a proposed seminary that was never built. Instead, Pavone told an Amarillo television station that the seminary funds were used for "the

choice work, which may include founding a new religious order.

The finances of PFL affiliates Rachel's Vineyard and Missionaries of the Gospel of Life are also under scrutiny as part of what Monsignor Harold Waldow, vicar of clergy for the Diocese of Amarillo, calls a "conversation ... with the Holy See in



The move to eliminate abortion access was supported by the Polish bishops' conference and some obstetricians and gynecologists from the Catholic Association of Polish Medical Doctors. The motion went before parliament in late August, where it was narrowly defeated.

"An absolute ban would likely have a devastating impact on Polish women and society. Catholics can and do, in good conscience, support access to abortion," stated Anka Grzywacz, who lives in Poland and represents Catholics for Choice Europe.

## Church and Contraception

### Theologians and Catholic Policymakers Support HHS Improved Access to Contraception, Oppose Bishops' Stance

IN LATE SEPTEMBER A dozen leading Catholic theologians in the United States sent an open letter to Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Kathleen Sebelius voicing their support for the inclusion of coverage for family planning in the Affordable Care Act. The letter said that the proposed regulations for contraception as a preventive health service align very closely with Catholic teachings on social justice because the "well-being of women, including their reproductive healthcare, is a Catholic value."

The message was part of an effort led by Catholics for

Choice to promote the authentic Catholic position on family planning and conscience. This was an important initiative, given that the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) had provided homilies and parish bulletin inserts as part of their efforts to oppose the HHS regulations.

The theologians refuted the bishops' campaign for more expansive conscience clauses—allowing religious institutions to opt out of offering contraception coverage for their employees—pointing to a Catholic emphasis on conscience, one that rejects coercion. Saying that they "see no medical or religious justification for exempting employers from paying for some necessary aspects of women's healthcare" the theologians affirmed that there was "no Catholic teaching to support selective fairness."

The letter was published in *Politico* at the same time as a letter from prochoice Catholic politicians speaking out against the religious exemption clause appeared in *The Hill*; both *Politico* and *The Hill* are influential daily newspapers read by leaders in Congress and the administration. Progressive Catholic organizations sent their own letter expressing concern over the harmful effects refusal clauses have on employees' right to follow their own conscience on family planning, which was published in the *National Catholic Reporter*. Interfaith and secular nonprofit groups

along with individual Catholics from across the country also responded to a call for action and sent their comments to Secretary Sebelius urging her to reject the bishops' demands for more refusal clauses.

### Hospital Merger Threatens Louisville's Reproductive Health Access

A PLAN THAT WOULD MERGE the University of Louisville Hospital and Jewish Hospital with St. Mary's Healthcare and a division of Catholic Health Initiatives has created a storm of controversy over the implications for the community's reproductive healthcare.

Because the hospital would be governed by the Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care, abortions, contraception, sterilization and

condoms would no longer be provided.

While Dr. Edward Halperin, dean of the university's School of Medicine, originally said that the same level of care would be provided at the new facility, a new proposal would have women seeking tubal ligations redirected to another site, Baptist Hospital East.

### Catholic Hospital Bars Contraception Information for Cancer Patients

THE CALVARY MATER Hospital in Newcastle, Australia, has been told to stop offering contraception information for women participating in clinical trials for a cancer medication derived from thalidomide, which is known to cause severe birth defects. The manufacturer of lenalidomide says the risk of

## Come Again?

"The scientific evidence of how same-sex attraction most likely may be created provides a credible basis for a spiritual explanation that indicts the devil."

Lawyer Daniel Avila wrote in an October 28 column for the *Boston Pilot*, posing explanations for the origins of homosexuality. On November 4, Avila resigned his position as policy adviser at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), where he worked for the Subcommittee for the Promotion and Defense of Marriage, which works against same-sex marriage.

"The teaching of Sacred Scripture and of the Catechism of the Catholic Church make it clear that all persons are created in the image and likeness of God and have inviolable dignity," said Avila in his resignation statement, which specified that his column did not represent the position of the USCCB.

A USCCB spokeswoman, Sr. Mary Ann Walsh, affirmed that "the church has not posed any theory" about the origin of same-sex attraction.

The *Pilot*, for its part, removed the article from its website and also issued an apology "for having failed to recognize the theological error in the column before publication."

limb and heart deformities is so serious that female patients must have two negative pregnancy tests before starting treatment, and then use two forms of contraception to prevent pregnancy. Even women whose male partners have had a vasectomy should use a condom, reported the *Sydney Morning Herald*. The hospital, run by the Catholic hospital network Little Company of Mary Health Care, will allow a “statement of reproductive risks” that contains no mention of contraception—though it will advise women not to get pregnant. The restrictions only apply to written information; doctors could still speak to patients about contraception.

Dr. Michael Seldon, a staff specialist hematologist at Calvary Mater and a Catholic, is considering defying the ruling. “I’ve got to say it certainly shakes your faith,” he told ABC News Australia, citing a Christian duty involving “service to others and putting yourself aside for the values of other people.” He said providing written information is key because “when you mention the word ‘cancer’ 99 percent of people switch off; they don’t hear anything else you say.”

## Church and State

### Bishops Create Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty

ON SEPTEMBER 30 THE United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) announced the formation of



Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan, who has expressed his disagreement with the passage of New York's same-sex marriage legislation, greets crowds outside of St. Patrick's Cathedral after celebrating mass in New York.

© REUTERS/JESSICA RINALDI, 2010

a new ad hoc committee to address what the bishops claim are widespread threats against religious freedom. In justifying the need for the committee, the bishops argued that some federal standards—including rules for grantmaking and healthcare provisions—should not be applied to Catholic institutions.

The committee, which will be headed by Bishop William Lori of Bridgeport, Connecticut, aims to promote the USCCB's public policy agenda on several issues—most of them related to sexuality and reproductive health.

Coincidentally, September 30 was also the day that the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) closed comments about its proposed regulations regarding the inclusion of family planning as a preventive health service—which

currently would apply to some religious institutions and have been hotly contested by the USCCB.

### New York Passes Same-Sex Marriage Law

THOUGH THE BISHOPS OF New York expressed “worry that both marriage and family will be undermined” by the passage of the same-sex marriage bill, the legislation—championed by the state's Catholic governor, Andrew Cuomo, and supported by many Catholic lawmakers and citizens—was approved in June. A 2011 poll conducted by Quinnipiac University and reported in the *Washington Post* found that the majority of New York Catholics support same-sex unions, as do most Catholics overall.

One of the key votes for the legislation came from Catholic senator Mark Grisanti, who openly

discussed his decision-making process as a Catholic legislator, saying on the Senate floor that he “could not deny a person, a human being, a taxpayer ... the same rights that I have with my wife.”

Archbishop of New York Timothy Dolan said he'd “been a little down,” since the measure passed in July. Yet he is quoted in the *National Catholic Reporter* as saying “to the gay community, I love you very much,” and felt compelled to apologize for statements that might have implied otherwise.

### Bishops Issue Voting Guidelines that Largely Fail to Influence US Catholics

A NEW POLL OF US Catholics revealed that only 16 percent have ever heard of the bishops' document, “Forming Consciences for

Faithful Citizenship,” the voting guidelines prepared every four years for Catholic voters, according to the Religion News Service. And just three percent have actually read the document, which includes language against prochoice candidates.

The detailed information prepared for the faithful seeks to influence the “Catholic vote” often courted by politicians as “swing voters” who can potentially be decisive in elections. However, three-quarters of the poll’s US Catholic respondents said that the bishops’ guide had “no influence at all” on how they voted in the 2008 election.

### Poland Asks Holy See to Hush Controversial Monk

THE POLISH GOVERNMENT sent a diplomatic note to the Holy See complaining about the remarks made before the European Parliament by Tadeusz Rydzyk, a Polish Redemptorist monk. Rydzyk called his country “uncivilized” and close to “totalitarianism” after he was fined for illegal fundraising. Jerzy Buzek, currently the head of the EU Parliament and former prime minister of Poland, characterized the monk’s comments as “scandalous and unacceptable,” according to the Associated Press. The current prime minister, Donald Tusk, told the *Wall Street Journal* that Rydzyk “won’t face discrimination, but also won’t enjoy any privileges.”

This was the first time the Polish government has



Rev. Tadeusz Rydzyk, the controversial Polish monk, operates the ultra-conservative Radio Maryja and the television station Trwam.

appealed directly to the Holy See. A Vatican spokesperson has said, however, that Rydzyk was speaking on his own account and thus his words did not involve the Holy See.

Rev. Rydzyk is a well-known media figure in Poland, where he operates the ultra-conservative Radio Maryja and the television station Trwam. He has come under fire before for his alleged anti-Semitic statements caught on tape in 2007, when he disagreed with a deal to compensate Polish Jews for property confiscated by the communist regime, insinuating that Jewish people are greedy. His recent allegation that “since 1939 Poland hasn’t been ruled by Poles” but by people “who don’t have a Polish heart” is in a similar vein to sentiments expressed by anti-Semites who fear powerful

Jews because they are not “real Poles.”

### Philippines Bishops Face Fallout from Donations Scandal

THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS’ Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) has been dogged by criticism about its donation practices, which include the alleged distribution of luxury cars to clergy. With some bishops called before Congress to explain the hierarchy’s handling of finances, Bishop Nereo Odchimar, president of the bishops’ organization, said, “The CBCP is willing to face the legal consequences.”

The committee investigating donations from the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) to bishops has found “there is corruption at the PCSO,” which “continues to give

out funds outside of what the laws have mandated” according to the *Manila Bulletin*. One of the most notorious allegations is related to the practice of using charity funds to buy SUVs for bishops. PCSO chairwoman Margarita Juicio has stated that former President Gloria Arroyo allegedly used the charity to give seven Mitsubishi Pajeros to bishops as a way of garnering support from the church.

“I asked [for] personal funds from the president,” Bishop Juan de Dios Pueblos said of his request for a vehicle. “Whoever she asked ... that’s no longer my concern.” At first, Bishop Pueblos asked for a new 4x4 as a “birthday gift,” but he later said it was to help him reach community health centers in isolated areas. Based on a 2009 report, the PCSO is not supposed to donate luxury vehicles or SUVs.

## Church Reform

### Austrian Priests Make “Appeal to Disobedience”

CHURCH REFORM IS ON the minds of a significant number of Austrian priests—as many as 15 percent have been willing to stand up against orthodox views on the priesthood and the status of divorced Catholics. “Rome’s refusal to take up long-needed reforms and our bishops’ inactivity not only allow but force us to obey our consciences and make ourselves independent,” stated the “Appeal to

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Roman Catholic bishops in the Philippines take an oath at the start of a Senate hearing on the misuse of charity funds from state lottery proceeds to buy vehicles.

Disobedience,” an announcement signed by more than 250 Austrian priests this June.

As reported by *The Tablet*, a Catholic magazine in the UK, the manifesto from the Austrian Priests’ Initiative for church reform signified a break with church doctrine on issues such as the ordination of women and married men. Led by Msgr. Helmut Schüller and representing over 300 priests, the group supports the option of a “priestless Eucharist” and “competent lay faithful and women RE [Religious Education] teachers” as a way to make up for the priest shortage.

They also planned to extend Communion to all “people of goodwill.” This could include “remarried divorcees, members of other Christian churches and, in certain cases, Catholics who have left the church.”

The deputy head of the Austrian bishops’ conference, Bishop Egon Kapellari of Graz-Seckau, quickly issued a statement in response to the appeal, calling it a “selective view of the overall situation in the Austrian Church” that will “seriously endanger the identity and unity of the Catholic church.”

In addition, the issue of women’s ordination has also come up in other areas within the last year, including Australia and the United States. Australian Bishop William Morris was removed from office by the pope after mentioning women during a discussion about the severe priest shortage in his diocese. More recently, approximately 150 US priests signed a letter—organized in part with Call to Action—in support of Father Roy Bourgeois, who has refused to back down from his stance in support of women’s ordination.

### **Visitation of Women Religious Did Not Encourage Dialogue, According to Archbishop**

ARCHBISHOP JOSEPH TOBIN criticized the canonical advisors who were part of the Vatican’s visitation of institutes of women religious in the United States, saying that fostering rumors that certain communities might be closed is “like Fox News: they keep people coming back because they keep them afraid.”

One of the phases of the visitation, announced in 2009, is to “learn more about the ways in which women religious contribute to the welfare of the church and



society.” Further, Cardinal Franc Rodé said that the Vatican was interested in discovering why the number of women religious has fallen so dramatically since the 1960s.

According to Catholic News Service, Tobin, the secretary of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, said that the visitation “didn’t really favor” dialogue with the religious communities. He also indicated that the “trust” that is currently lacking between US religious communities and the Vatican wouldn’t be “recovered overnight.”

In addition to the draft of the report submitted by Mother Mary Clare Millea, the apostolic visitor appointed by the Vatican, another 400 reports are expected from visitors to many of the religious communities in the United States. Tobin said that there is a growing movement among women religious who seek reconciliation but believe “it can’t be imposed by the Vatican.”

### **Vatican Mandates Publication of Article in US Theology Journal**

THE US-BASED JOURNAL *Theological Studies* was compelled to publish an article presenting the hierarchy’s view on marriage as a rebuttal to a 2004 article questioning church teachings on marriage and divorce, according to the *National Catholic Reporter*. Bypassing the usual process that requires an article undergo editing and peer

review, the journal’s editor, Fr. David G. Schultenover, printed the article in the June 2011 edition with the note “except for minor stylistic changes, the article is published as it was received.”

Theologians who asked not to be identified claim that *Theological Studies* has been pressured by the Vatican since the 2004 publication of “Indissolubility of Marriage; Reasons to Reconsider” by noted theologians Fr. James Coriden, a canon lawyer, and Franciscan Fr. Kenneth Himes, which asked “if church teachings remain persuasive” regarding divorce.

The *Reporter* says that, “the Vatican finally mandated that *Theological Studies* publish” a rebuttal by Jesuit Fr. Peter F. Ryan and theologian Germain Grisez.

The article characterizes the revised standards at the journal as a “new editorial policy that singles out theology not in keeping with official church teachings,” and says Coriden called this policy and the bypassing of normal editorial channels “a terrible precedent.”

## **Church and Sexual Abuse**

### **Irish Prime Minister Rebukes Vatican, Holy See’s Ambassador to Ireland Recalled**

IN A SPEECH MADE BEFORE the Irish Parliament in July, Prime Minister Enda Kenny expressed his outrage over the Vatican’s mishandling of the sexual abuse crisis. Kenny was reacting to the systematic cover-up of abuse allegations in the diocese of Cloyne, which the prime minister said “exposes an attempt by the Holy See to frustrate an inquiry in a sovereign, democratic republic as little as three years ago, not three decades ago.” The Cloyne report says that the Vatican was “entirely unhelpful” to any bishop who wanted to respond to sexual abuse allegations, according to the *Irish Times*. Nine of the 15 abuse cases reported between 1996 and 2005 were not reported to civil authorities by the diocese.

Kenny further chastised the hierarchy for its chronic “managing” of the scandal

going back many years, saying “the Vatican’s reaction was to parse and analyze it with the gimlet eye of a canon lawyer.” Ireland will be targeting all abusers through its Children First initiative, under which Kenny made it clear that civil law “will always supersede canon laws.”

According to the Religion & Ethics Newsweekly television show, only about 25 percent of Irish Catholics go to weekly mass, but by any estimate, Catholicism is still a big part of the culture. Kenny’s speech has been very well received by Irish laypeople as well as many clergy. The Vatican’s recall of Archbishop Giuseppe Leanza, the Holy See’s representative in Ireland, shows that the relationship between the church hierarchy and Ireland is on much rockier ground.

One of the most controversial aspects of the newly contentious relationship between the authority of the Catholic church and Irish law is Kenny’s challenge to the confessional seal. The prime minister intends to introduce legislation to make withholding information about child sexual abuse a criminal offense, even for priests who gained the knowledge during the sacrament of confession. A Catholic News Service report says that the Vatican is adamant about maintaining the confessional seal, but has shown a “cautious openness” to the possible legislation.

See page 44 for more on Ireland and the Vatican.

## **Come Again?**

Running on her ultra-conservative Catholic credentials in the recent Irish presidential election, Rosemary “Dana” Scallan did very poorly, garnering only 2.9 percent of the vote. In an article in the *Herald* (Ireland) the unsuccessful candidate’s spokesman said, “Dana has always had a niche market and there’s no doubt she was seen as a metaphor for the Catholic church.”

We know that the Catholic church’s popularity is suffering in Ireland, but we didn’t realize that it was quite so bad.

## Missouri Bishop Robert Finn Indicted in Child Abuse Case

BISHOP ROBERT FINN OF Kansas City-St. Joseph was indicted by a county grand jury for failing to report suspected child abuse. Bishop Finn and the diocese itself were both charged with the misdemeanor in mid-October in relation to the now-notorious Father Shawn Ratigan's May 2011 arrest for allegedly possessing child pornography.



Bishop Robert Finn of Kansas City-St. Joseph was indicted by a county grand jury for failing to report suspected child abuse.

Catholics in the Kansas City-St. Joseph diocese have expressed a lack of confidence in Bishop Finn's handling of child abuse cases, despite his recent apology for not reporting Ratigan, whose behavior had alerted the local Catholic school principal with "significant red flags" that might "fit the profile of a child predator," according to a letter quoted in the *National Catholic Reporter*. The letter was included in a report that eventually made its way to Bishop Finn, who later admitted he did not read it until a year later.

After a suicide attempt in

December, Ratigan was removed from active duty and then sent to a convent, where he continued to have contact with children and Finn did not monitor him. Diocesan chancellor Msgr. Brad Offutt called the priest's attending events with children after being instructed not to "a flag of the reddest color," according to an independent report commissioned by the diocese known as the Graves Report. It was only in May 2011 that charges

were filed against Ratigan and parents became aware he was charged with possessing child pornography.

Before the child abuse scandal, Bishop Finn made a name for himself as one of the few bishops allied with the conservative sect Opus Dei. In a 2009 essay featured in the *National Catholic Reporter*, Finn submitted a lengthy explanation of his worldview involving the "Church Militant," which called the mission of the church "constant warfare" and characterized pluralism and those that believe in tolerance as having a live and "let die" perspective.

## Vatican Will Submit Long-Awaited UN Report on Treatment of Children

THE VATICAN WILL SUBMIT a report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child this fall—14 years late—said Archbishop Silvano Tomasi, the Holy See's Permanent Observer to the United Nations.

A 2011 Amnesty International report brought attention to the Vatican's tardiness in submitting the document as part of a trend it characterized as "the enduring failure of the Catholic church to address" the sexual abuse scandal. The Vatican was among the first to ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child but has delayed submitting the progress report, which is one of the provisions of the convention, since 1997.

Tomasi said that the report would be available in "September or October," according to the Associated Press. Roy Brown of the International Humanist and Ethical Union said, "It will be interesting to see if they come clean on this.... We've been waiting for this report for a very long time." Tomasi, recognizing that he made a similar promise in 2010, admitted to reporters that "imminent, in the tradition of the church, it's a very long time." As of early November, the report has not yet been released.

## Vatican Releases Sex Abuse Files in Transparency Move

THE VATICAN HAS PUBLISHED internal files on the Vatican Radio website after a federal

court in Portland, Oregon, ordered the turnover of documents related to an abuse case from the 1960s.

A lawsuit has been filed against the Vatican for allegedly transferring the late Rev. Andrew Ronan from Ireland—where complaints related to sexual abuse had been lodged by parents—to the US, where the abuse in question occurred in late 1965 or early 1966, according to the alleged victim's recollection.

Jeffrey Lena, lawyer for the Holy See, said the documents proved the Vatican learned about the abuse after it allegedly occurred in the US and took immediate action to dismiss Father Ronan. Lena denies that the Holy See was involved with any of Ronan's transfers.

Nevertheless, the documents released by the Vatican reflect that Ronan's order, the Friar Servants of Mary, had received allegations of abuse as early as 1959, motivating them to transfer him twice.

Jeffrey Anderson, the lawyer for the alleged victim, has stated that the 1,800 pages released by the Vatican did not include all relevant documents. Further, Anderson characterized the relationship between the Holy See and parish priests as an employer-employee relationship. According to an Associated Press article, if this employer relationship is proved, it could make the suit an exception to the rule that usually bars legal action against foreign sovereign powers like the Vatican. ■

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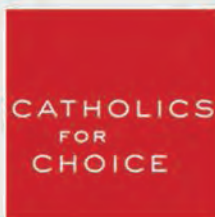
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**SUZIE BASSI** is a Catholic and a former Illinois state legislator where she served for 12 years. Before that she was a high school teacher and served as a district school board member.



**SUSAN BEVAN** is the national co-chair of the Republican Majority for Choice. She is also a lawyer who has practiced in California, Illinois and New York and has served as an active board/advisory board member for many organizations.



**BOB CARPENTER** is the vice president of American Viewpoint and has worked in state party management, campaign management and legislative affairs in several states.



**KELLIE FERGUSON** is the executive director of the Republican Majority for Choice where she oversees all PAC and c(4) aspects of the organization. Prior to joining RMC, she was the chief of staff and campaign advisor to State Senator, Lt. Gov. and Gov. Jane Swift (R-MA).



**AMY KAUFMAN** is the director of government relations for the Republican Majority for Choice. She is a former president of Saint Louis University College Republicans and Vice President for the State of Missouri College Republicans.



# Prochoice Republicanism

A ROUNDTABLE

JOINTLY CONVENED BY

CATHOLICS FOR CHOICE

AND THE

REPUBLICAN MAJORITY FOR CHOICE



**ROSEMARY MULLIGAN**

is a Catholic and an Illinois State Representative for Des Plaines. First elected in 1992, she is currently serving her ninth term in the Illinois General Assembly.



**CANDY STRAIGHT**

is the national co-chair of the Republican Majority for Choice and a co-founder of the WISH List. She has also worked with former Gov. Christine Todd (R-NJ), Gov. Chris Christie (R-NJ) and former Mayor Rudy Giuliani (R-NY).



**PATTI MILLER**

(Moderator) is a former editor of *Conscience*. She has written extensively about the role of Catholicism and abortion in US politics.

FAR TOO MANY PEOPLE caricature the Republican Party and individual Republicans when it comes to reproductive rights. Because of the stance taken by the party leadership, the public assumes that there is some inherent contradiction between being a member of the GOP and supporting reproductive choice.

While research shows that this is not the case, recent legislation proposed at both the federal and state levels has certainly done little to counteract this idea.

During the debates over the federal budget and family planning funding, a policymaker's stance on reproductive health issues was often reduced to a litmus test—Republicans rejected family planning, while Democrats had a much better chance of being supportive of choice—though the parties were far from unanimous on the issue. We at Catholics for Choice are familiar with this type of political shorthand that would characterize all Catholics as antichoice.

In reality, Republicans are much more diverse on choice issues.

- A Harris Interactive poll in 2010 found that 84 percent of Republicans agreed with the statement “every woman on the planet deserves access to quality maternal and reproductive health.”
- The National Family Planning and Reproductive Health Association commissioned a survey in May 2011 and found that 73 percent of Republicans supported funding for the Title X program.
- Republican Senator Scott Brown of Massachusetts delivered a clear message during the budget debate: “I support family planning and health services for women.” He said that legislation proposing to cut Planned Parenthood funding spending went “too far.”

Clearly there are Republicans who believe, as Richard Nixon did, that “if family planning is anything, it is a public health matter.” It’s a simple conviction that has far-reaching consequences for policy, but can still tolerate diverse political views. What do these policymakers and voters feel about their fellow party members who claim to speak for them when they speak against reproductive health access?

**I**n October 2011, Catholics for Choice and the Republican Majority for Choice convened a roundtable conversation with prochoice Republicans about reproductive health issues and the party—past, present and future. An edited transcript follows.

**PATTI MILLER:** *Why are you a prochoice Republican and what Republican values inform your position?*

**ROSEMARY MULLIGAN:** This is my 19<sup>th</sup> year as a state legislator in Illinois—I ran as a prochoice Republican, and I represent a pretty conservative district. To me, being prochoice means that you have the ability to make decisions on your own, and the government should not tell you what to do.

This next session is one of the few times during my time in the legislature that we’re going to have fewer prochoice

people there than we’ve had before, even though we have Republican leaders who are considered prochoice. But the anti-choice lobby is really going after new people that are elected, and they’re beating them up. Cardinal Francis George is a real activist against us.

**SUZIE BASSI:** Rosemary and I served together for 12 years. I also ran as a prochoice Republican, and recently lost in the primary on the choice issue. To me, true Republicanism is smaller, smarter government; it takes care of those who need to be taken care of. And it’s about personal responsibility—keeping the government out of our private lives and our bedrooms, period.

**CANDY STRAIGHT:** The Catholic church in Newark, New Jersey, headed by Archbishop John J. Myers, is just as strident

as what you describe in Illinois. The “we’re right, everyone else is wrong” attitude of the hierarchy has gotten to the point where most people ultimately ignore them. But some of my Catholic friends are put in a very difficult position.

**SUZIE BASSI:** The hierarchy can really affect a politician—had I been in one of the other parishes in my district, I might not have lasted 12 years in the legislature. I had a Democratic colleague who is leaving the Illinois legislature partially because she was almost ostracized from her church due to her votes on choice.

**PATTI MILLER:** *The classic Republican position on individual responsibility and liberty is clearly aligned with reproductive choice. Why is it so difficult to get that position heard?*

**SUSAN BEVAN:** I’ve heard it’s because the party has evolved. I say the party has *devolved*. The party isn’t what it was when I became a Republican 50 years ago. Now, there are no exceptions for individual belief. “Republican” is often conflated with the rejection of choice.

**KELLIE FERGUSON:** Things started to change within the Republican Party under the Reagan administration. During a convention there was a clear political spin on this issue that carried with it a large bloc of antichoice or far-right mainly religious voters who you could count on. A majority of mainstream Republicans look at the economy, they look at jobs—choice is an issue, but is not the only reason to vote.

**CANDY STRAIGHT:** Chris Christie, the governor of New Jersey, who is antichoice, is too liberal for the Republican Party because he believes in exceptions allowing abortion for rape, incest and life of the woman. He doesn’t fit the stereotypical Republican position on those three issues and some Republicans say this is unacceptable. And this relatively small group of people believes it speaks for all Republicans, when really it’s just loud and noisy and persistent.

**BOB CARPENTER:** When they say that they're the voice of the Republican Party, they are, in fact the voice of the Republican Party. They're the ones who vote in primaries. They're the ones who elect the party central committees and the state central committees. We've allowed them to do that, because moderates don't turn out as reliably at the polls as people with more extreme positions do. On a cold, snowy Monday night in Iowa in January, it's a tried and true fact: a rock-solid, conservative Republican is going to trudge through the snow to sit in a damp church basement, whereas a moderate is going to find 10 other things to do besides going to a caucus.

**SUZIE BASSI:** Moderates are moderates because they don't get all fired up about some of these right-wing issues. Instead



GOP presidential candidate Barry Goldwater supported *Roe v. Wade* and later joined the National Republican Coalition for Choice.

LIFE/PUBLIC DOMAIN ARCHIVES.

**The fact that the antichoice Republican movement has begun to encroach into the territory of family planning and emergency contraception is actually a huge opportunity.**

they care much more about the economy, they're much more focused on jobs and infrastructure and on taking care of those who can't take care of themselves.

**ROSEMARY MULLIGAN:** The other issue is, in order to get them out there you have to raise inordinate amounts of money. So you have to have a good following already, or a good ability to raise money.

**PATTI MILLER:** *Why do you think it's still important to stick to the prochoice position in the face of this opposition?*

**KELLIE FERGUSON:** Our prochoice Republican approach to platform issues like spending on family planning and prevention is to find a way to leverage private resources to couple with public resources. Then the full burden is not on the taxpayer.

We have a different approach to a myriad of issues that make us both Republican and prochoice. Some people say, "You're prochoice; just become a Democrat." Well, if we did that we wouldn't be holding true to the values that we believe in. And we believe that the prochoice position is very much in line with the history of the Republican Party.

I think one of the problems is that some people say, "Let's just leave this to the Democratic Party to solve." The parties are defined as Republicans versus Democrats, with Democrats as prochoice and Republicans as antichoice, even though the polling doesn't say that. These oversimplifications have really held back reproductive health legislation.

**SUZIE BASSI:** I'm not a Democrat. Fiscal responsibility is critical, and that's part



Senator Scott Brown (R-MA) commented during the 2011 budget debate that legislation proposing to cut Planned Parenthood funding spending went "too far."

© REUTERS/HYUNGWON KANG, 2010

and parcel of solid Republicanism. But so is the right of the individual to make their own choices. Many of us have really struggled with that. But just because I happen to believe in the right of the individual to make their own decisions does not mean that I should be shifting to the Democratic side of the aisle.





Ronald Reagan, seen here as governor campaigning for president with his wife, Nancy, liberalized abortion laws in California.

**I say the party has devolved.** The party isn't what it was when I became a Republican 50 years ago. Now, there are no exceptions for individual belief.

**PATTI MILLER:** *The Tea Party, with its focus on the economy, has been very successful. But the reality is that antichoice laws have a huge economic impact, both on individuals and families and on taxpayers. Why is fiscal responsibility not given more weight in terms of reproductive choice?*

**SUSAN BEVAN:** I could be wrong, but I think the whole issue of contraception, particularly the move to defund Planned Parenthood, is because much of Planned Parenthood's clientele is poor, and I don't think the Tea Party cares about the poor. By attacking Planned Parenthood, they're really attacking family planning services for the poor.

I have a friend who was very incensed by one of our news items because it said something about how we should be supporting Planned Parenthood and the provision of contraceptives to those who can't afford

them. My friend said, "Well, they don't pay for my Lipitor." And I said, "No, they don't, but they pay for their Lipitor, and there are a lot of health expenses that you pay for that you might not want to pay for."

**KELLIE FERGUSON:** In the recent fight in Congress over Title X family planning funding, the Republican Majority for Choice took a long look at the numbers and tried to come up with statistics to help us talk to Congress and to the general public about the economic impact of some of this legislation, which is based on very short-term thinking. The federal government saves money by maintaining clinics that use a combination of state and federal funding.

**AMY KAUFMAN:** It's tough right now because there are leaders throwing out such strong and misinformed antichoice arguments. Yet there are also Republican legislators

on the Hill who understand our message and the realities behind the rhetoric.

The point is, though, that we need to put those numbers out there because it's amazing how many of these legislators do not know the realities of what's in a given bill, or the numbers that show how preventive services are a key part of the solution.

**SUZIE BASSI:** There's so much misinformation going around. When we tried to address sex education in the legislature there were those who totally mischaracterized it and said we shouldn't be giving contraceptives to kindergartners. In reality, we were working on age-appropriate sex education. But it took 12 years to get the legislation passed.

**ROSEMARY MULLIGAN:** There are a lot of issues that are side-stepped because it still comes down to local control. For instance,

in Illinois, local school boards decide about sex education—the legislation we pass doesn't override their decision.

**CANDY STRAIGHT:** It's gotten to the point where one sector of the antichoice movement doesn't care what they say. For example, Michele Bachmann made that comment linking the HPV vaccine to mental retardation.

**SUZIE BASSI:** She later qualified the remark by saying someone else had told her that, but to make a patently false statement like that on a national scale, that's outrageous.

**SUSAN BEVAN:** There's a physiological reason why that sort of thing works. An article I read said that humans are designed to retain a certain amount of information, which we do pretty efficiently. We only remember the core of



this information, so finding out later that a statement like Bachmann's is false doesn't usually penetrate into our memory of it. So even though she's retracted what she said, the inflammatory statement sticks with people. That's why negative advertising is so effective in campaigns.

**PATTI MILLER:** *Can you pinpoint when you started to see this shift? Was it a particular election where you remember that all of a sudden logic was no longer effective in reasoning with other Republicans?*

**SUSAN BEVAN:** I grew up in Washington State. My parents were precinct committee people, and my mother, who was a nurse for an OBGYN and very prochoice, recalled single-issue lobbying even then, back in the '70s. She said the antichoice faction would come into the state legislature and they would push, push, push on their issue. And then as soon as their issue was off the board they left the state house; they didn't care about any other topic.

**ROSEMARY MULLIGAN:** In 1989 we had one of the first prochoice congresswomen for the state of Illinois, Mary Jo Arndt. She was one of the first prochoice national committeewomen for the Republican Party and was backed by many people who believed in choice. Today, some of the groups that she founded have been infiltrated by antichoice people, and it's suddenly not as important to have prochoice candidates. We had a big fight on our hands protecting those values in places where they were once not questioned, and if you didn't have money, it made the task very difficult.

**CANDY STRAIGHT:** When Pat Robertson ran for president in 1988, that was a seminal moment obviously, and then we had Pat Buchanan in '92. But specifically I think it was in the 1980 convention in Detroit, where the party adopted an antichoice platform.

On that occasion Mary Dent Crisp, the co-chair of the Republican Party, clashed with her counterpart, saying that

## Pharmacy Refusal Clauses



**ROSEMARY MULLIGAN:** I think there is a big problem with the professional regulations that oversee pharmacists—I have a big argument with them. I don't think pharmacists should be allowed to use conscience to opt out of filling a prescription for either contraceptives or emergency contraceptives, unless there is someone else in the pharmacy to fill the prescription.

For emergency contraceptives in the case of rape—I passed a law on that issue—you have 72 hours in which the medication will be effective. And the first hours in that period are more critical.

Eventually we had to force Catholic hospitals to comply with the rules mandating that they provide the emergency contraceptives to women who had been sexually assaulted. If you're an employee of a Catholic hospital, the policy was that you could not tell a rape victim about emergency contraceptives. I had a big problem with that. Finally we were able to set a standard that required employees to share this information. They had to be able to tell patients where they could get emergency contraception within the 72-hour window, even if it was midnight.

This is only one example of the conditions that exist in the reproductive health world that are detrimental to women's health. But as a Catholic I do believe in the right of conscience. You should have a right to make those decisions yourself; you should not be dictated to by the church.



**SUSAN BEVAN:** My husband is Italian, and we have an Italian cousin who is a pharmacist in Rome. I asked her what would happen if, as a Catholic pharmacist in a Catholic country like Italy, she told somebody that she wasn't going to give them birth control. And she said, "I would lose my job. I couldn't do that."

adopting an antichoice position would be a slippery slope for the party. It was at that point that she broke off and started the Republican Prochoice Coalition. Since then, changing a word of the antichoice language within the platform is virtually impossible. As Bob said, the folks that are elected as delegates to the convention—and specifically to the platform committee—are the more socially conservative or socially extreme members. They will give up just about any other issue to ensure that the antichoice platform within the party remains.

**KELLIE FERGUSON:** Over the last 20 or 30 years the antichoice movement has taken

small but focused steps to make this issue ingrained within the party platform. It worked because they weren't willing to let any other issue trump it.

**CANDY STRAIGHT:** At the platform committee in 2000, then-candidate Bush wanted to get elected. He was willing to change the platform to put in an addendum that said something to the effect that people of good conscience can disagree on abortion. I was on the platform committee and Tommy Thompson was the head. The future Governor Thompson and I worked on the platform text late at night, and we put in the addendum without anybody ever seeing



During the 2000 presidential election campaign, candidate George W. Bush expressed willingness to change the party platform and include an addendum noting that people of good conscience could disagree about the availability of abortion.

**PATTI MILLER:** *In terms of building local support, are there some constituents who don't see choice as an issue that's important for them—particularly younger women?*

**SUZIE BASSI:** My daughter is 36 years old, and it's a very important issue to her, but it's not something that she's willing to go out and campaign on. She's got young kids; she's working. One of the things that I've seen over the last few years, the older folks are getting tired, they're tired of fighting the battle. The younger ones are too busy to fight it and they take their reproductive choice for granted.

**SUSAN BEVAN:** Right. They don't believe it is going to hurt them. They don't believe that they could lose it.

**ROSEMARY MULLIGAN:** I'm going into my 19th year in the general assembly and I

**And this relatively small group of people believes it speaks for all Republicans, when really it's just loud and noisy and persistent.**

it. It went in, but if the whole committee had voted on the addendum, it probably wouldn't have passed. That's one of the last times I know of anybody trying to push for prochoice language in the party platform.

There was one other time I can think of: a member of the platform committee at another convention offered an amendment to add a couple of words. They essentially said that we accept and respect that members of our party may have differing opinions on social issues, and it passed.

As far as I know that is the last time that anything has ever been changed. This amendment didn't take out any of the existing antichoice language, and in fact, this "accept and respect" language was put in as a preamble, not specifically within the choice section of the platform. And there was even a fight over those few words, "accept and respect." A

number of delegates on the platform committee said they might respect their counterparts, but they won't accept the position. In the end, we were successful, and the amendment was accepted, but I think that's the last time that we've had any sort of language that somewhat welcomed choice in a Republican platform.

**PATTI MILLER:** *How has it damaged the larger prochoice movement to not have a viable Republican voice on these issues?*

**SUZIE BASSI:** Part of the problem is that we don't have a spokesperson, someone who's high enough up in the Republican Party to say, "Hey, this antichoice position is not part of Republican values." Barry Goldwater said the individual has the right to his or her own personal responsibility, but now Republican leaders are trying to tell party members what to believe and how to live.

can't help but think—I'm a pretty loud Republican prochoice person, and who will take over for me? Yes, I think it is harder to get prochoice women there; the antichoice ones are more vocal. One of my colleagues, a young gentleman who was on our staff, was targeted by the anti-choice people, who posted a video of him making statements that would put him in jeopardy with prochoice constituents.

**SUZIE BASSI:** A number of people who might have been interested in running for office have seen the kinds of campaigns that I went through and have said, "I won't put myself or my family through that."

**PATTI MILLER:** *How does that bode for the future approach of Republicanism? Are you an endangered species at this point?*

**KELLIE FERGUSON:** The question that comes up over and over is, "If you are

# I am a Young, Prochoice Republican

By Amy Kaufman



I am 25 years old and have always considered myself politically aware. I have always identified myself as a Republican because I firmly believe in

limited government, free markets and a strong national defense. My stance as a prochoice Republican stems from my conviction that the government does not have the constitutional authority to legislate private behavior. My support for family planning and reproductive health is based on my belief in limited government and fiscal restraint, rather than on a feminist ideology or emotional considerations.

Working at the Republican Majority for Choice (RMC), I feel very strongly that prochoice Republicans are leaving the party because a fringe movement is currently screaming the loudest, spreading a falsified version of reproductive choice issues. RMC's lobbying efforts on Capitol Hill have revealed that a significant number of legislators have failed to fully investigate bills like the "No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act." Legislators need to be educated on reproductive health basics like the Hyde Amendment, cost-saving

analyses and the additional services provided by health clinics that offer abortion care. The antichoice wing of the party has tried to preempt access to choice through their rhetoric and misinformation. Legislators must be exposed to the common-sense realities associated with women's need for accessible reproductive health services, and this must be done well before campaign season. We must be proactive and persistent in educating legislators on the financial, political and social benefits of choices.

For instance, Virginia's state legislature recently passed a bill to impose restrictive structural requirements on abortion clinics. The financial implications of requiring specific models of sinks, certain measurements for hallways and regulated temperatures for exam rooms are likely to force many of the state's clinics to close for long periods of time, if not for good. This will force many women and families to utilize state-run health facilities. Since many Republicans denounce reforms to our healthcare system as well as socialized medicine, their attacks on choice are ironically assuring that more people will depend on federally funded services. Moreover, decimating the number of clinics will drive up states' costs as the majority of clinics embrace public-private partnerships to

subsidize costs for low-income patients.

In reality, antichoice Republicans are ratcheting up the cost of health services while they renege on the promises made by their anti-healthcare reform platform. Recently, a GOP candidate for president reminded voters that the healthcare system that has taken shape under President Obama would extend the waiting periods that exist before a healthcare provider interacts with patients. They further stated the dangers of this system by using a cancer diagnosis as an example because such a condition's treatment protocol is time-sensitive. However, the same can be said for reproductive health services, for instance, the treatment windows for providing emergency contraception and detecting conditions such as sexually transmitted diseases or cervical cancer.

Because of what my principles and my common sense tell me, I remain a prochoice Republican. I believe these arguments and facts should be brought to legislators well before antichoice bills are introduced and political campaigns launched. Policymakers would have more time to be educated before they vote, and they would do so knowing they would be held accountable for the real-world implications of their choices, instead of resting on rhetoric.

prochoice, then why don't you just become a Democrat?" I think the prochoice community has sort of adopted the viewpoint, "Well, Democrats are just better on these issues. So let's just elect Democrats."

The problem is, politics is cyclical. Even if you work well with the Democrats while they are in power, Republicans will eventually take control at the federal level and many of the state levels. If you don't do anything to educate the

Republicans, when that party is back in control, this isn't an issue that they are inclined to be friendly on.

Democrats and the prochoice movement in general need to create a better argument focusing on economic issues and on the realities of the long-term impact of this antichoice legislation that has been passed recently.

Reproductive health needs to be a two-party issue. And I'm not saying that we are ever going to have a majority of

Republicans that are elected as prochoice. You don't need a majority. You need a bloc of Republicans who understand the real implications and who can talk to the leadership to prevent this small, extreme group from trying to zero out family planning funding. As a community, by not supporting the middle-of-the-road, maybe not 100-percent, but 80-percent prochoice Republicans, I think we're missing a big opportunity.

**SUZIE BASSI:** I agree. Republicans have to be willing to work with people who agree with 80 percent of the prochoice position.

The Democrats seem to do a much better job of that but both the prochoice and antichoice movements tend to feel like if you are not 100 percent with them, then you are against them. And I think that is really dangerous, and that is where you lose the moderates and the independents.

**SUSAN BEVAN:** The problem is, many Planned Parenthood supporters are Democrats, and most people that are at the top of the Planned Parenthood food chain are Democrats. They have ignored Republicans and have not invested in

hope that we could expand our movement. Perhaps we could bring some women back into the fold, those who are so turned off by the extreme views of the people at the top of the party right now.

**CANDY STRAIGHT:** I believe that the issue that they want to go after now is whether or not Planned Parenthood commingles funds. Many facilities, but not all, do provide abortions, but the question they keep asking is whether the funding streams are commingled. Planned Parenthood has never been criticized about their accounting practices by the federal government.

The right wing is going to go after Planned Parenthood's financial practices

the territory of family planning and emergency contraception is actually a huge opportunity, because we know that the vast majority of Americans are supportive of birth control and family planning. The fact that some antichoice legislators are creating these extreme bills to begin to chip away at these basic services gives us an opportunity to say, "This is all part of the choice debate; choice is not just about abortion."

These attacks on choice show what we have said for a long time: once the antichoice community passes restrictions on abortion and abortion-related negative legislation, they are going to move on to birth control. I once believed it was not going to happen. It is happening. And

**At the platform committee in 2000, then-candidate Bush wanted to get elected. He was willing to change the platform to put in an addendum that said ... that people of good conscience can disagree on abortion.**

trying to build some kind of moderate Republican constituency because these people may not be 100 percent with them on every choice issue.

**ROSEMARY MULLIGAN:** I think it also depends on who's running your local Planned Parenthood. Our down state people, as well as the women from Planned Parenthood who lobby in our capital, are much more open to talking to people who may not totally agree with them.

The prochoice lobbyists in our capital, the women that lobby from Planned Parenthood, are much more open to discussing with people, and I always feel that once you bring them into the fold, you still have time to work on them to make them more cooperative on other boards or to sell them on the issues they're not ready to change their minds on.

And if we were to do that and were able to move away from this demand for 100 percent agreement, then I would

in a big way, and they are going to make a very big issue of it. I hear moderate Republicans begging me to beg Planned Parenthood to divide into two organizations: one that only provides family planning, and then the other organization that provides abortion. They see this as a way to convince everyone who doesn't believe the funds are not in some way commingled. I believe this will be the next big issue we have to face.

We have to be careful with what happens and how those potentially divisive issues go forward, and what we let go forward. We tend to be reactive and the antichoice people are more proactive in going after goals. I think we need to develop a more proactive position about contraception, preventing unintended pregnancies and other areas where substantial support already exists within the party.

**KELLIE FERGUSON:** On our side, I think that the fact that the antichoice Republican movement has begun to encroach into

that may be a way for us to wake people up: not only can choice really be gone someday, in terms of the right to abortion, but accessing birth control can become even more difficult. That hits people a little closer to home—more people use birth control than need an abortion. So it gives us a larger audience and shows how extreme the antichoice movement and organizations have become. ■

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# The Secret History of the GOP and Choice

By Catholics for Choice



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In the late 1960s, Congressman George H.W. Bush (left) was known for his moderate personal views, which were not always popular among his conservative Texas electorate. He earned the nickname “Rubbers” because of his support for family planning. He is pictured with former president Gerald R. Ford, who was also a strong supporter of federal funding for family planning.

**I**F AMERICANS TODAY OFTEN READ “Republican” as “antichoice,” GOP leaders from just a few years ago would have balked at this political shorthand, and probably taken their party to task for many of its recent initiatives against reproductive choice. For example, in 2011 the GOP proposed to defund the 40-year-old Title X Family Planning program, which provides contraceptive and related services, such as cervical cancer detection, to some

five million low-income women a year. In doing so, current Republican leaders are trying to dismantle a program that was essentially created by Republicans. Not only was the GOP the pro-family planning party for decades, but its support of individual rights and a modern approach to sexuality led to widespread GOP support for abortion rights, especially in the critical early period of abortion legalization. How many in the Republican party became divided from

the very principles of its tradition is a story that was written little by little, carefully shaped by strategists and politicians at least as much as it was driven by a small but determined ultra-conservative cabal that rose through the ranks. But the roots of the current attack on reproductive choice do not go very deep in Republican history.

On the contrary, the origins of Republican support for reproductive choice lie not only in the basic tenets of republi-

canism, but also in the sociodemographic makeup of the Republican Party before its leadership was hijacked by the Christian Right. For much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the GOP was the party of upper-middle-class Protestants. These individuals, who were generally more socially progressive than the rest of the population, were the first group to, in large numbers, adopt birth control to limit family size. From the 1920s until the 1960s, it was these wealthy, progressive Republicans who led efforts to legalize and promote birth control. At the time, distributing contraceptive information was illegal under federal law and many states banned the sale or distribution of contraceptives. Well-off

federal funding went to providing birth control to poor women and that birth control never became easily accessible in public clinics. This kept birth control out of the hands of Catholics, who were at the time mostly poor, recent immigrants with little knowledge of contraceptive methods, and other poor women. The bishops wielded so much authority on this issue that in 1921, New York Archbishop Patrick Hayes got the police to raid a meeting of the Voluntary Parenthood League on the grounds that a public discussion of birth control was harmful to society.

Despite opposition from the bishops, birth control acceptance grew dramati-

President George H.W. Bush, whose father, Connecticut Senator Prescott Bush, had been active as a fundraiser for the Planned Parenthood Federation of America. Rep. Bush helped secure the first federal funding dedicated to family planning for the poor in the 1967 budget. House Minority Leader Gerald R. Ford, another future Republican president, was also a strong supporter of federal family planning funding. When Richard Nixon became president in 1969, one of the first things he did was call for the passage of a national family planning program with the support of Bush's Republican Research Committee Task Force in Earth Resources and Popula-

**If the current environment within the Republican Party is hostile to choice, then it is the result of a deliberate strategy—convincing Republican candidates for office that they had to adopt an antichoice position to get elected.**

women could get birth control from private doctors, but poorer women who couldn't afford private doctors had no access to birth control.

Katherine Hepburn's mother, Katherine Houghton Hepburn, who led efforts to legalize contraception in Connecticut in the 1920s and 1930s, epitomized the type of wealthy, well-educated, progressive Republican drawn to the birth control movement. John D. Rockefeller III, the grandson of John Rockefeller and brother of Vice President Nelson Rockefeller, whose social moderation and fiscal conservatism gave birth to the moniker "Rockefeller Republican," was another prominent Republican supporter of birth control. He founded the Population Council in 1952 to build support for US funding of international family planning efforts.

The most outspoken opponents of efforts to legalize contraception were the Catholic bishops. They couldn't do much about rich women who got birth control from private doctors, but they wanted to make sure that no state or

cally throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Beginning in 1930, most of the major Protestant denominations declared the use of birth control—at least by married couples—morally acceptable. In 1960 the Pill debuted and in 1965 the Supreme Court decided that the government could not ban married couples from using contraceptives. Liberal Protestant birth control reformers like John D. Rockefeller began prodding Congress to fund contraceptive services for poor Americans. Some were motivated by altruism and others by concern about the population burden on the earth's natural resources or the burgeoning welfare rolls as out-of-wedlock pregnancy increased.

The Democratic Johnson administration cautiously supported the idea but was afraid to lead on the issue because of fear of a backlash from the bishops. Catholics had become an essential part of the Democratic electoral coalition and Johnson could not afford to alienate them. As a result, leadership on the issue fell to progressive congressional Republicans, led by Congressman and future

tion. In 1970 the Family Planning Services and Population Research Act was passed with overwhelming bipartisan support, creating the Title X Family Planning program.

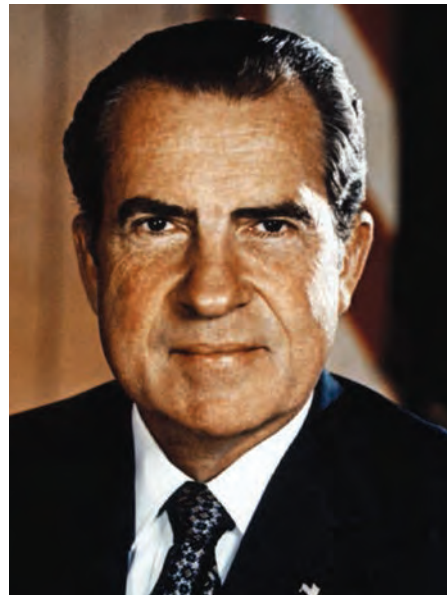
At this time there was a movement underway to liberalize the laws governing the circumstances under which abortions could be performed because the procedure was banned by most states except to save the life of a woman. Many of the early leaders of this abortion reform movement were the same progressive Republicans who supported family planning. The movement tied into the Republican belief in limited government, particularly in people's personal lives, and the generally progressive sexual ethic of upper-class Protestants. California Republican Gov. Ronald Reagan signed one of the first abortion law reform bills in the nation into law in 1967. New York Republican State Assemblywoman Constance Cook wrote and successfully steered the passage of the landmark bill that repealed New York's abortion ban in 1970, presaging *Roe v.*

*Wade*. In addition, one of the co-founders of Catholics for Choice, Joan Harriman, was a Republican.

But beginning with the legalization of abortion in New York and picking up steam after the historic *Roe* decision in 1973, the issue of abortion increasingly became intertwined with partisan politics. It was the Nixon administration that first politicized the issue when it recognized the potential for the abortion issue to separate conservative Catholics from their home in the Democratic Party. During the run-up to the 1972 presidential election, Nixon publicly voiced his support for the largely Catholic “right to life” movement and New York Cardinal Terence Cooke’s efforts to repeal New York’s liberal abortion law. In an attempt to attract the “Catholic vote” in the 1972 presidential election, Nixon also disavowed the findings of his own presidential commission on population, which was chaired by Rockefeller, when it recommended liberalizing the abortion law and distributing contraceptives to minors.

By the 1976 presidential election, the Republican Party was courting a coalition of socially conservative voters, including Catholics, worried about crime, taxes and “moral decline.” This last was a code word for legalized abortion and other issues related to increased rights for women, like easier divorce and less stigma attached to premarital sex. That year the party took an official stance against abortion rights when its platform called for a “constitutional amendment to restore protection of the right to life for unborn children.” Republican presidential nominee Gerald Ford, who was prochoice and a long-time supporter of family planning, found himself in the position of having to disavow abortion rights to secure the nomination, although he personally backed the more moderate position of returning the issue to the states rather than a constitutional amendment conferring rights on fetuses. The rise of the Christian Right as a major power broker within the party during the presidential election of 1980,

largely on an antiabortion platform, solidified the antiabortion position of the Republican Party and assured that no future GOP presidential nominee could publicly back abortion rights. This included George H.W. Bush, who had been a strong supporter of family planning and opposed a constitutional amendment to ban abortion but, like Ford, avowed an antiabortion position by the time he ran for president.



In 1969 one of Richard Nixon's first acts as president was to call for a national family planning program, the future Title X program.

The Republican Party may have been officially antiabortion at the top level by 1980, but there remained a viable pro-family planning Republican presence in Congress throughout the 1980s. This translated into bipartisan support for both domestic and international family planning programs. There was also a substantial Republican vote in favor of choice that derailed attempts to pass a constitutional amendment to ban abortion; for example, House Minority Leader Robert Michel (R-IL), who served as party leader from 1981 to 1995, was prochoice. That began to change in the 1990s with the ascent of the Christian Coalition, which rose from the ashes of Pat Robertson’s failed 1988 presidential bid and the Christian Right’s disen-

chantment with moderates like Bush who had failed to push a strong antiabortion agenda.

Beginning in the early 1990s, the Christian Coalition launched a strategy to take over the Republican Party that would move the GOP far to the right. Led by strategist Ralph Reed, the organization worked from the ground up to elect far-right, religiously conservative candidates, concentrating on school board elections, state legislatures and Republican Party committees—races with low turn-out where a concerted effort could bring a minority candidate to power. Control of state legislatures gave the GOP and the Christian Coalition control over redistricting, allowing them to create more safe seats for social conservatives. The Christian Coalition also launched a sophisticated voter identification effort and produced influential voter guides identifying socially conservative candidates that were distributed through church networks. In 1994, the Republicans took over the House for the first time since 1954—largely fueled by religiously conservative voters, who comprised 33 percent of the electorate, up from 18 percent in 1988.

The situation began to deteriorate for Republican moderates at that point, notes former Rep. Connie Morella (R-MD). “Under Mr. Gingrich you had a movement to the right and an effort to get into the bedroom and control what goes on there,” she says. Immediately following the 1994 mid-term election, the US Catholic Conference, the National Right to Life Committee (NRLC) and the Christian Coalition began meeting to craft a legislative wish list to capitalize on the conservative ascendancy. They designed a strategy to chip away at abortion rights through a number of avenues, such as trying to ban a rarely used late-term abortion procedure they termed “partial-birth.” They also began conflating abortion and family planning, claiming that US funding for family planning services both domestically and overseas freed up money to allow abortions to be per-

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formed. This signaled the end of traditional GOP support for family planning.

The antichoice agenda now included defunding organizations like Planned Parenthood and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), which received US funding for contraceptive services but provided abortions with separate money; reinstituting President Ronald Reagan's Mexico City policy, which required any nongovernmental organization that received US family planning money to refrain from performing or promoting abortion with their own

scorecards—things like the UN Population Fund and population programs—and scoring them as if they were abortion votes, things really changed. Because of the influence of the Christian Coalition, Republicans needed to have 100 percent on all these scorecards. If you opposed abortion but voted for UN family planning funding, you got 90 percent, and that was unacceptable,” he said.

Suddenly the moderate, pro-family planning Republican was an endangered species, especially in leadership positions. By 1998, every single candidate for

issues became the tool of choice for conservatives to challenge moderate Republicans in primaries. “The opposition organized around choice issues in my district. It was very polarizing,” notes Porter, who survived three primary challenges in the 1990s from antichoice candidates. While Porter was in a moderate district and able to maintain his seat, moderate Republicans in other districts were replaced by far-right candidates throughout the 1990s, shrinking the number of GOP moderates in office.

“In the 1990s we had about 45 members who were moderate Republicans. They didn't all vote prochoice but a number of them did. Now it is down to just a handful,” notes Morella. In 1999, a vote to restore \$25 million in funding to the UNFPA after the agency had been defunded by conservatives attracted nearly 50 Republican votes. But a 2003 vote to protect UNFPA funding received only 30 GOP votes. When Rep. Mike Pence offered a measure to defund Planned Parenthood in February 2011, only six Republicans opposed it.

Today, what used to be the party that supported reproductive choice increasingly looks like the party that is more than willing to make choices for others, especially women. But if the current environment within the Republican Party is hostile to choice, then it is the result of a deliberate strategy—convincing Republican candidates for office that they had to adopt an antichoice position to get elected. In reality, there are millions of Republicans—policymakers and constituents—who support some prochoice positions but who feel they are alone. The prospect of articulating those views will continue to be daunting as long as the myth of the antichoice Republican Party, and some extreme voices from within it, remain unchallenged.

Only by understanding the roots of the current antichoice position within the GOP can advocates of choice on both sides of the aisle seek to encourage and work with prochoice Republicans to advance the prochoice cause for all Americans. ■



John D. Rockefeller III, center, pictured with President Dwight D. Eisenhower, right, founded the Population Council in 1952 to build support for US funding of international family planning efforts.

money; and repealing the Title X Family Planning program.

In the mid-1990s, the Christian Coalition and the NRLC began scoring votes on domestic and international family planning issues on their influential congressional vote scorecards, which were used by many religious and conservative voters to make their electoral choices. According to Robert Gustafson, who served as chief of staff for moderate, pro-choice Illinois Republican Rep. John Porter at the time, this was a pivotal moment in GOP politics. “When the very conservative groups started including international family planning on their

the three top GOP leadership posts scored 100 percent on the Christian Coalition's scorecard, which rated bills that would require parents to be notified when minors were provided contraceptives through Title X family planning clinics, as well as legislation that would deny US funding to overseas NGOs that performed or provided information about abortions.

Gerrymandering also contributed to the problem, according to Morella and former Rep. John Porter (R-IL), referring to the practice of creating ideologically pure districts where the race is basically won or lost in the primary. Reproductive

# Why a Prochoice Activist Would Choose to Remain Republican

By Ann Stone

**O**VER THE LAST 20 years the question asked of me perhaps more often than all others is, “Why are you still a Republican?”

If the person inquiring is pro-choice, I usually reply that they should want folks with views like mine to remain in the party, or things would be worse. Everyone, regardless of their party affiliation, should want dissenting voices to push back at party meetings and at National Conventions every four years. For example, we have successfully fought back against harsh measures aimed at cutting off party money to our candidates and leaders who support choice.

But that response is only part of the answer. I am still a Republican for other reasons as well, some of which may surprise you.

First, the Democrats talk a good game but don’t often deliver. I first got publicly

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**ANN STONE**, national chairman of *Republicans for Choice*, founded *Republicans for Choice PAC* in 1990 in the aftermath of the *Webster* decision with the endorsement of almost 500 elected and appointed Republican officials at the local, state and federal levels. She was named one of the women who changed politics by *Campaigns & Elections* magazine.



Ann Stone, founder and national chairman of *Republicans for Choice*.

active in the prochoice movement after the *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services* decision in 1989, which affirmed a Missouri law restricting the use of state funds and resources for abortion. At that time, many of the most antichoice states in the nation were led by Democratic governors, or Democratic-controlled legislatures. My own home state of Virginia was one such example. State legislator Joe Gartlan, a Democrat, led the antichoice forces in that General Assembly.

It was therefore our intention through *Republicans for Choice* to help folks look past the party label and focus on what the real position was for any particular candidate. That mission still holds true today. Not many realize that US Senate Majority Leader, Democratic Senator Harry Reid, is antichoice.

Also, the Democrats controlled the House and Senate for years, as well as the eight years post *Roe v. Wade* (four under Carter and four under Clinton) in which the Democrats also controlled the White House. In that time there was ample opportunity to pass laws to protect *Roe* and overturn the Hyde Amendment ... but they did not.

Second, supporters of reproductive choice, like me, remain in the GOP because we show by our very existence that the fight over a woman’s right to choose is *not* a Republican/Democratic issue, nor even a conservative/liberal issue. It truly is an issue between those who trust and respect women, and those who do not. Many in *Republicans for Choice* have been allies with antichoice on other issues. That’s why we were named “the most dangerous group in the prochoice movement” by the antis. We did not fit neatly into their box.

As the late outspoken antichoice journalist Bob Novak once told me, “Folks hate it when you are on (Crossfire) against them. They find it hard to yell at you on this issue since you have often been on the same side on other fights like against communism.” As a result, two iconic conservative publications, *National Review* and *Human Events*, have repeatedly tried to demonize me. Their personal attacks were almost laughable since I had been the marketing manager for *Human Events* right out of college, a fact that was left out of their “profiles” on me.

Third, I remain a Republican because our party, when it is on the right track, does offer some great elected leaders. As a small businesswoman as well as a pro-

choice, is allowed on stage in all the debates when he was voted out of office, but a successful two-term prochoice governor, Gary Johnson, is not. Fred Karger, who is also a prochoice contender, is a long shot but in many ways has as much right to the stage as Herman Cain did from the beginning—albeit Cain’s star has risen since the Florida straw poll.

There are some other pleasant surprises among our other candidates but I will leave that for another time. But therein exists an opportunity for the prochoice and women’s movements in dealing with the GOP. I have found on more than one occasion if you don’t treat our antichoice officeholders like the

summed up as, “The government that governs least, governs best,” but that doesn’t paint the complete picture. Real Republicans represent their party’s founding principles born out of the slavery abolition movement. Theirs is a belief in the positive things that the strength of the human spirit, when unshackled, will soar and achieve. It is a belief that individuals will ultimately make the best decisions for themselves, their families and their country. Those early Republicans fought for the most basic individual rights for all—regardless of color and later, regardless of gender.

Yes, it was out of the mostly Republican abolition movement that the struggle for women’s suffrage was launched.

**The fight over a woman’s right to choose is not a Republican/Democratic issue, nor even a conservative/liberal issue. It truly is an issue between those who trust and respect women, and those who do not.**

choice activist, I want leaders who believe in keeping government out of both the bedroom *and* the boardroom. We have people like Senators Susan Collins, Olympia Snowe and Scott Brown; members of Congress Charles Dent, Richard Hanna and Judy Biggert; and scores of others who stand up for our rights in both worlds. It is much tougher for them to stand strong on this issue than it is for any elected Democrat, and for that they have my undying gratitude and respect.

In addition, we have at least two presidential candidates running this year who are prochoice Republicans. The most credentialed is former New Mexico Governor Gary Johnson, who left that office and is still immensely popular in his state (no small feat). We have worked to ensure he is allowed on stage for the presidential debates so our voice is heard.

It is unconscionable that Rick Santorum, who is a former senator and anti-

enemy they may surprise you. It is amazing how many of them, when you ask why they are antichoice, will give you their personal, often religion-based, reasons for their position. However, they often add, “But I wouldn’t feel comfortable making that decision for a woman.” When I point out if they favor letting the woman decide, that is a prochoice position, they seem stunned. But it confirms what past polling tells us: up to 69 percent of Republicans think the decision should be made by the woman, not the government. With “leaners” we have seen it go up to as high as 80 percent. That is the real Republican position. Let me further expand on that point in my last reason for staying in the GOP.

I am still a Republican because I represent the real core founding principles of what it means to be a Republican: to live one’s life with minimum interference by government and equal rights and access to the opportunities enjoyed by all.

Some say these principles are best

It is a twisted irony that the party that first pushed for women to be trusted with the vote now does not seem to trust women to make the most basic decisions about their own health and reproduction.

Susan B. Anthony, who was arrested for proudly casting her vote for Ulysses S. Grant and the entire Republican ticket in 1872, would be appalled that her party does not now trust her to make a decision about abortion, one of the most personal decisions a woman can face.

Contrary to those on the other side of this issue who claim Susan B. Anthony for their own, Anthony would never have stood for this affront to women. Any fear she had about abortion in her lifetime was due to the hazards posed by that era’s risky procedures that made both abortion and frankly, childbirth, a threat to women’s lives. No, she would have said first and foremost, as we do today in the prochoice movement: above all “trust women.” ■



# Fighting for Women's Lives in Argentina

**MAKING THE CONNECTION  
BETWEEN ABORTION  
RIGHTS, HUMAN RIGHTS  
AND PEOPLE POWER**

**By Marta Alanis and  
Jacqueline Nolley Echegaray**

**R**eproductive rights advocates in Latin America have fought for decades against some of the most damaging abortion laws in the world. Throughout the region, women and their families suffer because the ability to securely terminate a pregnancy—even when medically necessary to save the life of a pregnant woman—is only available to those with the financial resources and socioeconomic status necessary to obtain a safe, but illegal, abortion from a trained medical practitioner, or who can afford to travel outside the region to a country where abortion restrictions are much less onerous.

There have been two significant victories in recent years—the partial legalization of abortion in Colombia in 2006, and the legalization of abortion under all circumstances up to 12 weeks of pregnancy in Mexico City in 2007. Nevertheless, abortion remains arguably the most heavily restricted medical procedure in the region. Five countries (Chile, the

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**JACQUELINE NOLLEY ECHEGARAY** is international program associate at *Catholics for Choice*.



President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner of Argentina won re-election in a landslide victory on October 23, 2011.

Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua) prohibit it entirely, no matter what the circumstances, and the overwhelming majority of other countries in the region criminalize the procedure generally, with exceptions made only in limited cases—to save the life of the pregnant woman, perhaps, or sometimes when the pregnancy is the result of rape or incest.

Restrictions notwithstanding, public health officials estimate that approximately four million abortions take place in the Latin America-Caribbean region every year. All but the wealthiest women either seek out abortion practitioners who are poorly trained and equipped, or literally take matters into their own hands, sometimes by taking abortion-inducing drugs, or via home remedies

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such as herbal teas, toxic chemicals and other concoctions. As a result, in country after country, unsafe abortion is a leading cause of maternal mortality and is responsible for upwards of 20 percent of maternal deaths in the region as a whole, according to a 2010 report from Human Rights Watch.

In Argentina, one of Latin America's wealthiest and most modernized countries, 30 percent of maternal mortalities occur due to unsafe abortion. Although terminating a pregnancy in Argentina is illegal under most circumstances, between 460,000 and 600,000 abortions take place in the country each year according to estimates from the Ministry of Public Health, and approximately 80,000 women are hospitalized every

effort that originated squarely within the country's broad-based women's movement, and which, through the efforts of thousands of volunteers all across the country, succeeded in creating what heretofore has almost always eluded the reproductive rights movement across the world: creating a mass movement for abortion rights as a matter of social justice, and as intrinsic to the common good.

A generation ago, Argentina began emerging from a period of state-sponsored repression known as the Dirty War, in which as many as 30,000 political dissidents and others were disappeared, and thousands more were killed. The conflict, which ended in 1983 with the transfer of power from Argentina's last military dictatorship to a democrati-

Today's demand for abortion rights in Argentina is grounded firmly in this tradition of popular organizing, activism and people power. Its philosophical origins, however, lie squarely within the country's women's movement, and specifically in the National Women's Conferences convened annually by the movement. These conferences are particularly notable because of their size (25,000 women attended the 2010 conference) and because of the diversity among the participants (students, housewives, laborers, artists, religious women, atheists, militant feminists, lesbian activists, transsexuals and more, hailing from all parts of the country, both rural and urban). As such, unlike in some countries where the women's movement is margin-

**Such a liberalization of Argentina's abortion laws would represent nothing less than a revolutionary leap forward for women's rights.**

year in need of treatment due to post-abortion complications.

No doubt about it—unsafe abortion is a major public health and human rights problem in Argentina, as in the rest of Latin America. Unlike other countries in the region, however, Argentine activists appear to be poised on the brink of a major breakthrough, one which could:

- legalize abortion for any reason up to 12 weeks of pregnancy;
- make it available at all times during pregnancy in cases of medical necessity, rape, incest or serious fetal malformation; and
- require the government to provide abortion services free of charge as part of Argentina's government-sponsored public healthcare plan.

Such a liberalization of Argentina's abortion laws would represent nothing less than a revolutionary leap forward for women's rights in that country. Just as importantly, it would also mean the triumph of a decade-plus-long organizing

cally-elected, civilian leader, would prove to have a deep and lasting impact on the national psyche, especially with regards to a respect—some might say reverence—for human rights and a passionate rejection of the violation of these rights by the government.

Despite the indisputable dangers associated with political activism during times of internal conflict, such activities have long been a cornerstone of Argentine society. Arguably the country's most powerful human rights advocacy group, the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo, began marching in the main square of Buenos Aires once a week in 1977 demanding information about their missing children at the very height of the Dirty War and at great personal risk. More recently, political activism in Argentina surged at the time of the collapse of the country's economy in 2001, which sparked massive protests across the country, the organization of worker's cooperatives and feminist collectives and, ultimately, the election of progressive governments in succession.

alized or seen as severely out-of-touch, in Argentina it is truly a mass movement representing the interests of millions of women.

During the National Women's Conference in 2004, in a plenary attended by delegates representing each of Argentina's provinces, participants issued a call for a national campaign to advocate for the right to abortion. The following year, at the urging of the Cordoba-based organization Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir (CDD), a longtime member of the women's movement with a focus on reproductive rights, the National Campaign for the Right to Legal, Safe and Free Abortion was launched. Its purpose was to spur the creation of a mass national movement for abortion rights, to advocate for these rights in every way possible and at every level, until the objectives of the campaign—captured succinctly in its name—are achieved.

Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir Argentina has long played a critical role in efforts to legalize abortion in Argentina. As women who reject the idea that

support for reproductive rights is inconsistent with their Catholic faith, CDD Argentina refuses to allow the church hierarchy's draconian pronouncements on abortion go unchallenged by other people of faith. CDD Argentina's activists are highly visible in the fight for reproductive rights, and both their direct advocacy efforts targeting policymakers as well as their ongoing, behind the scenes support have been key to the campaign's success.

It is estimated that 76 percent of the Argentinean population is baptized Roman Catholic, which amounts to approximately 30 million people. As elsewhere in the world where Catholics are in the majority, the church hierarchy has enjoyed unmerited influence over government policy in Argentina, particularly in the case of policies related to sex and sexuality. Contraception was illegal in Argentina until 1985 (not coincidentally, until just after the fall of the country's last military dictatorship). Numerous efforts have been made since then—some of which have succeeded, albeit temporarily—to once again criminalize all or some forms of birth control. In 1998, following a visit to the Vatican and a private meeting with Pope John Paul II, then-president Carlos Menem decreed March 25 the Day of the Unborn Child and later declared that “the defense of life” was “a priority for Argentina's foreign policy.”

However, some members of the church leadership made a major political miscalculation in Argentina by throwing in their lot with the oppressive military dictatorship that ruled the country during the Dirty War. The case of Christian Von Wernich is particularly notorious. In 2007, Father Von Wernich was convicted as an accessory to a number of crimes against humanity while serving as chaplain of the police force of the state of Buenos Aires at the height of the conflict, including 31 counts of torture and 7 counts of homicide. Numerous allegations of support for the dictatorship, and even of direct involvement in its cruelty against civilians, by

the highest levels of the church hierarchy have been made as part of the historical clarification process that has taken place in Argentina during the past 30 years. To date, only the charges against Father Von Wernich have resulted in a conviction.

The defiance and insensitivity of some members of the hierarchy during recent years to the lasting pain caused by some of the darkest chapters in Argentinian history have not served the church well on the whole. One bishop in particular, Antonio Baseotto, has made a number of insensitive statements, including “it was a war, and in a war it is impossible to avoid excesses,” in reference to the crimes against humanity

committed by the government against the Argentine people. On another occasion, Bishop Baseotto suggested that the country's minister of health should have a stone hung around his neck and be thrown into the sea—the exact fate which befell thousands of victims of the military regime, who were thrown from airplanes into the Atlantic ocean during the infamous “flights of death.”

Beyond being insensitive, such comments are remarkably ill-conceived politically, given that prevailing public opinion in Argentina is now decisively set against the perpetrators of state-sponsored repression. During just the past decade, Argentina has investigated

## Views on Changing the Law on Abortion in Argentina

### NATIONAL PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY

In October, Catholics for Choice commissioned a survey of Argentines' views about abortion and the Catholic hierarchy's role in public policy as lawmakers consider liberalizing the country's abortion law. The results of the poll, conducted by Belden Russonello Strategists LLC, are summarized below.

In this country where some 75 percent of the population is Catholic, many Argentines:

- Favor abortion being legal
  - when a woman's health or life is at risk ..... 81%,
  - when the pregnancy is a result of rape ..... 80%, or
  - when the fetus has severe abnormalities ..... 68%;
- Support access to reproductive healthcare services for women ..... 78%;
- Reject the idea that Catholics have a moral obligation to vote against candidates who support legal abortion. .... 70%;
- Approve of the fact that women in Argentina have legal access to contraception ..... 68%;
- Disagree that Catholic candidates have a religious obligation to vote in accordance with the Catholic bishops ..... 63%; and
- Believe the views of Catholic bishops are not important to their decision about whom to support ..... 57%.

Despite the fact that abortion is largely illegal and almost completely unobtainable in the country, many Argentines:

- Know someone who has had an abortion ..... 34%, including
  - personal acquaintances such as a friend or neighbor ..... 16%, and
  - family members ..... 7%.

The full survey results are available in English and Spanish at [www.catholicsforchoice.org](http://www.catholicsforchoice.org).



approximately 1,500 people for their role in perpetrating crimes against humanity during the Dirty War. The armed forces, which for much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century exerted control over the population, either directly as dictators or indirectly through civilian authorities, have lost the esteem of the nation.

Whatever social, political and economic unrest has occurred in Argentina since 1984, human rights have served as a consistent rallying cry across practically all sectors of society. Far from being theoretical or the exclusive domain of lawyers and judges, human rights have taken on the sort of visceral meaning that perhaps can only come from surviving an eight-year-long reign of terror in which thousands upon thousands of innocent

particular note, during the debate over same-sex marriage, which became legal in Argentina in 2010, President Fernandez “staked her political reputation on passing the law against the intense and sustained opposition of the church, deepening her often bitter feud with the country’s Catholic hierarchy,” as reported in *Time* magazine. When criticized by the Archbishop of Buenos Aires for supporting same-sex marriage, Fernandez replied that his statement was “really reminiscent of the times of the Inquisition.”

The waning influence of the Catholic hierarchy and the concurrent increase in respect for human rights have been key to the success of the National Campaign for the Right to Legal, Safe and Free Abortion. The founders of the campaign

“I aborted, so did we,” became an early slogan of the campaign, which sought to insert the voices of women who had terminated a pregnancy into the public arena for the first time in Argentina—and to emphasize that their situation is not unique. The campaign went to work spreading this message on the streets, in universities, in parliament, within civil society organizations, in individual homes and in the media, effectively shattering the taboo associated with discussing abortion.

As the campaign spread, it developed a new slogan to express exactly what it is fighting for: “Sex education to make informed decisions, contraceptives to avoid abortion, and legal abortion to avoid death.” Using this slogan, the

**Unlike in some countries where the women’s movement is marginalized or seen as severely out-of-touch, in Argentina it is truly a mass movement.**

people were rounded up, tortured in clandestine prisons and then simply disappeared, leaving hundreds of thousands of people and their families shattered.

Argentina’s president, Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner, and her husband, Nestor Kirchner, who preceded her in office, have made getting to the bottom of the human rights violations of the past a cornerstone of their administrations and of their political identities. Their administrations have excavated former clandestine detention facilities, several of which have been converted to museums and memorials to the memory of the victims of the regime, and pursued the criminals of past regimes with gusto. Under Fernandez’s government especially, human rights have unquestionably assumed the stature of other, more traditional government priorities, such as national defense and the economy.

In another departure from the past, the Kirchners have also clashed publicly numerous times with the hierarchy of the church, seemingly at little to no expense to their popularity or public image. Of

recognized from the very beginning that in order to achieve abortion rights in practice rather than only in theory, they would have to somehow succeed in changing ideas about sex and motherhood deeply entrenched in the culture of their country, as well as the general public’s attitude regarding abortion and sexuality. Then, and only then, would the campaign succeed in convincing large numbers of Argentines to openly support abortion rights, and to join a mass movement for these rights.

First, the campaign set out to break the silence and challenge the shame around abortion, which has long prevailed in Argentine society. It began by partnering with activists representing a number of key social movements in Argentina, from 12 of the country’s 23 provinces, with the idea that these activists would raise demands for abortion rights within their own organizations and movements, thereby attracting new allies, and the geographic diversity in the group would help build a truly national, rather than capital-based, movement.

campaign has succeeded in attracting the support of thousands of people from across the country, as well as important strategic allies in Congress, within the Fernandez administration, in the media and academia and among the leaders of Argentina’s powerful human rights organizations.

Fighting for the rights of women legally entitled to terminate a pregnancy, but who are prevented from doing so by state officials, has been a priority of the campaign since its inception. These cases, in which the pregnancy is the result of rape, or the pregnant woman needs to terminate the pregnancy or risk losing her life, spotlight just how inaccessible legal abortion is, and the additional pain and hardship that women and girls in these circumstances suffer due to the intransigence of some public officials who refuse to comply with the law. In the past, women in these situations were largely too ashamed to demand their rights; more recently, thanks to the work of the campaign, many women, girls and their families have come forward,

denouncing the delays and road blocks they experience when requesting this health service to which they are legally entitled and demanding their rights be respected. From an organizing standpoint, these cases have served to demonstrate to the general public how even women and girls who are legally entitled to an abortion suffer, generating sympathy for pregnant women who face such difficult situations and disgust for public officials who shirk their human rights responsibilities.

As a case in point, in 2007 *Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir Argentina*, the Latin American and Caribbean Committee for the Defense of Women's Rights (CLADEM) and the Instituto de Género, Derecho y Desarrollo (INSGENAR) filed a joint petition before the UN Human Rights Council alleging that the Argentine government had committed a number of human rights violations against a young woman known as LMR when it denied her an abortion. LMR, who at the time of the pregnancy was 19 but, due to a mental disability, possessed the mental capacity of an 8- to 10-year-old child, was raped by an uncle and became pregnant as a result. Despite clearly meeting the requirements for a legal abortion in Argentina, she was repeatedly denied the right to terminate her pregnancy by a series of government officials. Eventually she was forced to undergo a clandestine abortion. In April 2011, the Human Rights Council found that the Argentine government had violated a number of LMR's human rights, including the right to be free from cruel and inhumane treatment.

Having made respect for human rights central to her political identity, and to that of her administration, President Fernandez's government had little choice but to accept the ruling of the UN council. In so doing, the government acknowledged that the denial of legal abortion amounts to a human rights violation, giving the ultimate credibility to the campaign's efforts to link the right to abortion with one of the defining principles in Argentine society: respect for human rights.

The National Campaign has succeeded in building a broad-based, mass movement for abortion rights. It has succeeded in attracting a number of important allies in the most important sectors of Argentine society and supported individual women in their efforts to exert their right to a legal abortion. With one of its most fervent opponents, the Catholic hierarchy, considerably weakened by its own tainted history, recent flubs and

which 80,000 women are not hospitalized for post-abortion complications; and in which women are not compelled to take their health and lives into their own hands because their government refuses to provide them with the reproductive healthcare services they need.

It is too soon to tell whether or not abortion will be decriminalized in Argentina anytime in the near future; however, it is not too soon to acknowl-



Legislative attempts to liberalize Argentina's abortion law passed their first hurdle during a committee meeting on November 1.

missteps and conflict with the country's current, popularly elected leader, the campaign has been successful in framing the debate around abortion rights as a debate about human rights in a country in which human rights matter deeply.

The campaign is now positioned—alone amongst all reproductive rights movements in the region—to achieve the decriminalization of abortion in Argentina. In 2010, a bill co-authored by the National Campaign was introduced into the lower house of the Argentine legislature with the support of 50 co-signers. Since that time, the bill has become the rallying point for the movement, a practical statement of a collective vision for a new reality in Argentina, one in which the estimated 500,000 clandestine abortions performed there each year emerge from the shadows of the black market; in

edge the resounding success of the National Campaign in utterly reshaping the landscape and culture around abortion in Argentina. In a region which continues to suffer from the effects of some of the most stringent restrictions on abortion in the world, the case of Argentina offers hope that the factors which have so frequently derailed efforts in other countries—lack of public support for abortion rights, opposition from religious fundamentalists and lack of political will in support of abortion rights—can be effectively overcome. Most importantly, the Argentine case demonstrates that it is possible to reshape how people think about abortion, bringing it out of the shadows of shame and desperation and into its rightful place as a human right essential to the health and well-being of women. ■

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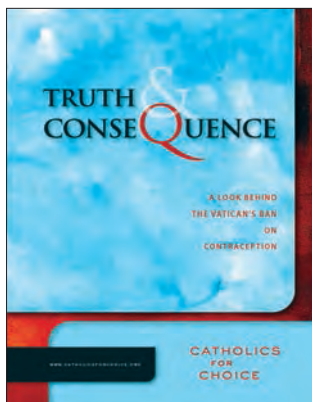


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Those who support the passage of the Reproductive Health Bill have held regular rallies in support of the bill throughout the Philippines, including this one in Manila.

# Drawing, and Crossing, the Line

CATHOLIC FILIPINOS CHALLENGE THE HIERARCHY'S REJECTION OF THE REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH BILL

By Chi Laigo Vallido

**A**N OFFICIAL OF THE CATHOLIC Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) said in April of this year, “Advocates of the reproductive health (RH) bill are no better than

**CHI LAIGO VALLIDO** is one the seven founding members of C4RH and currently works at the Forum for Family Planning and Development as its advocacy and communications specialist. She is also an independent documentary filmmaker.

terrorists because the measure could lead to the death of innocents.” This quote, from an article that was published by the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, the country’s leading newspaper, is but one of many derogatory statements hurled against pro-reproductive choice advocates. Practically every mass in the country includes RH either in a special prayer or a homily. Thanks to the forum provided by the church, the Catholic hierarchy has helped raise awareness about the RH Bill

by connecting the issue to people and communities. But the problem with the hierarchy’s involvement is that it has never presented any credible facts as to why the RH Bill should be rejected. Instead, the bishops resort to name-calling and threatening pro-RH Catholics—especially elected officials—with excommunication if they support the measure. Not even the president of the Philippines has been spared from such threats.

The statements of certain bishops are sometimes so nasty that pro-RH advocates have opted not to react to such absurdities. Archbishop Jose Palma, president of the CBCP, once expressed his dismay that there are legislators willing to vote for the passage of the RH Bill. In an interview with the *Inquirer* he said, “If people vote because of money then it’s almost like becoming Judas.”

#### THE STATE OF RH IN THE PHILIPPINES

What puzzles many prochoice groups is the way the bishops are treating the issue of reproductive health. For an institution that is well-connected with the people and the community, the Catholic church in

- The potential to reduce by half the risk of death for newborns and infants through birth spacing; and
- More than 7,800 infant deaths annually that could be prevented through family planning.

#### THE FIGHT TO PASS THE REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH BILL INTO LAW

The Philippines is a country where more than 80 percent of the population is Catholic. Of its 15 presidents, the only non-Catholic former president was Fidel V. Ramos, a Protestant. The strong Catholic upbringing of many Filipinos has shaped popular thinking and beliefs, especially in matters of population,

nance with clear Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) assuring the ordinance would go into effect.

After 14 years of advocacy work and mobilization, the support of the president and his cabinet is the game-changer that RH advocates have been waiting for. Even the media thinks that RH is a hot topic. It is so popular that three of the major TV networks in the country have organized live debates between the pro- and anti-RH factions. Newspaper columnists continue to write commentaries about RH and the once-unpopular issue is now headline material.

The RH bill is now being deliberated in both houses of Congress, where it has

**Judging by the surveys, most Filipinos made a decision about reproductive health long ago. The institutional church in the Philippines is simply choosing to remain blind to this reality.**

the Philippines has lost touch with the realities and needs of the people. Even scientific evidence generated by officially commissioned surveys from the government—as well as those of the World Health Organization, the United Nations and universities—is being misrepresented as a conspiracy masterminded by multinational corporations and foreign powers determined to implement their own agenda in the country.

According to 2009 estimates from the Guttmacher Institute, the Philippines has:

- 3.37 million pregnancies each year;
- 1.82 million unintended pregnancies, 90 percent from women using traditional methods of contraception or none at all;
- A maternal mortality rate of 162 per 100,000 live births or 11 women dying each day from pregnancy and childbirth complications;
- Over 33,000 children who die within the first month of life;

family planning and RH. Since the 12<sup>th</sup> Congress, or as early as 1998, parliamentarians have pushed for a policy on RH. But certain Catholic groups and members of the Catholic hierarchy have been very active in blocking any government support for legislation or funding that would promote comprehensive access to contraception or any form of support for RH.

In the 2010 national elections, the CBCP and Catholic groups campaigned against pro-RH candidates, including President Benigno Aquino III, who was vocal about his support for informed choice and responsible parenting through family planning. But even if his candidacy was not supported by the church, Aquino won the election with an overwhelming margin against his anti-RH opponents. The current Speaker of the House, Feliciano “Sonny” Belmonte Jr., is an ally of the president and was former mayor of Quezon City, the first city in the country to pass an RH ordi-

been included among the 13 priority bills of the current administration.

#### CATHOLICS SPEAK OUT FOR REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH RIGHTS

The CBCP is very sensitive about certain words nowadays—terms like choice, contraception, family planning and reproductive health. They are so concerned about RH that they have branded a very simple desire to have the ability and means to plan one’s family as sinful and evil. In the bishops’ eyes, to assert one’s reproductive choice and have access to RH services is wrong and immoral.

The CBCP has issued sweeping statements that Filipino Catholics are against comprehensive reproductive health access and will never support the measure. Nevertheless, the principal authors of the RH Bill are Catholics, as are many pro-RH advocates. Since the bishops started making idle threats and spreading misinformation to advance their point of view, many Catholics have had enough.



In August 2008, seven friends working in different nonprofit organizations launched the Catholics for RH Speak Out! Movement. They chose to inaugu-

rate the campaign in the historic Intramuros district in the city of Manila, where the oldest Catholic churches in the Philippines are located, including the

headquarters of the CBCP. From just seven individuals, the movement has grown to hundreds of members and volunteers across the country.

## Champions of the Reproductive Health Bill

Here are some of the champions who have become popular targets of the Catholic hierarchy and its supporters. This list does not represent all of the movers and shakers in the campaign for the RH Bill in the Philippines.



**CONGRESSMAN EDCCEL LAGMAN** is the representative from the 1<sup>st</sup> District of the Province of Albay.

His principal advocacy activities include reproductive health and population development; full and speedy implementation of the agrarian reform program and prioritizing education; and the promotion of the rights and welfare of students, teachers and non-teaching personnel. He also crusades for the criminalization of abductions and the promotion of human rights. He is the principal author of the RH Bill in Congress.



**SENATOR PIA CAYETANO** is the co-author of Senate Bill 2865 or the Reproductive

Healthcare Act of 2011. She is the youngest woman elected in the history of the Philippine Senate. Senator Cayetano is a staunch advocate of women's empowerment, health and the environment.



**SENATOR MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO** is the co-author of Senate Bill 2865. She is a lawyer and has

a Masters in Theology. At a relatively young age, she has held ranking positions in all three branches of

government—executive, legislative and judicial. She served as presiding judge of the Regional Trial Court at Quezon City, as Immigration Commissioner and as Agrarian Reform Secretary. She was also a legal officer of the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, and a consultant for the Philippine embassy in Washington, DC.



**DR. JUNICE DEMETERIO MELGAR** is the Secretary General of the Reproductive Health Advocacy Network

(RHAN), the biggest alliance of NGOs advocating for the passage of the RH Bill. She is also a medical doctor and executive director of Likhaan (Linangan ng Kababaihan, Inc.), a women's health and reproductive rights NGO that operates community-based primary healthcare centers focused on women in poor urban and grassroots communities.



**RAMON SAN PASCUAL** is the executive director of Philippine Legislators Committee on Population and

Development (PLCPD) a nonprofit advocacy foundation that works with policymakers in the development of laws that promote population and sustainable development, among other issues.



**ROBERTO ADOR** is the executive director of the Family Planning Organization of the Philippines (FPOP), one of the oldest NGOs in the country, which provides health and family planning services to people around the Philippines.



**BENJAMIN DE LEON** was one of the first members of Catholics for RH. He is president of the Forum for Family Planning and

Development and was recently appointed by President Aquino as commissioner of the Commission on Population.



**DR. EDELINA DELA PAZ** is the president of C4RH. She is also the executive director of Health Action

Information Network and a professor at the University of the Philippines College of Medicine.



**RED TANI** is president of Filipino Freethinkers, a membership organization that promotes reason, science and secularism

as a means of improving every Filipino's quality of life.



**DR. ESPERANZA CABRAL** was the secretary of the Department of Health under the previous administration of Gloria Macapagal Arroyo.

She made headlines when she publicly expressed her support for RH even when the president was against reproductive health. As a private citizen, she continues to speak out in public forums calling for the passage of the RH Bill.

As the group grew in numbers, the members decided to change the name to Catholics for RH or C4RH. Today, they continue to conduct forums and encourage dialogue in schools and communities with the help of supportive nuns and priests, spreading the message that support for RH does not run counter to the Catholic faith. The group also provides informative, scientifically based materials that correct the common misinformation about reproductive health, contraceptives, family planning and the RH Bill.

The group's work has not gone unnoticed. As C4RH has grown in popularity, it has gained notoriety among the bishops and their conservative Catholic supporters, who call the group's name an oxymoron. The CBCP website even issued a disclaimer about the group, with one bishop calling the members of C4RH "fake Catholics." But what does it mean to be a "true" or authentic Catholic? Is the CBCP the authority on who is and isn't? In jest, C4RH members said that their practical proof of being a Catholic is their baptismal certificates, but it is the



CHI LAIGO VALLIDO

The Pro-RH Bill campaign has been documenting expressions of support for their cause.

### The Founding Members of C4RH:



**LUZ FRANCES CHUA** is the executive director of C4RH. She has worked for many years in various NGOs. One of her positions was with Womenlead, an NGO established by feminist lawyers that supports women who are victims of abuse, provides empowerment programs and works with the Leadership Development Mechanism for Mobilizing RH (LDM-Philippines).



**MAGDALENA LOPEZ** is former country manager of Leadership Development Mechanism for Mobilizing RH (LDM-Philippines) of the Institute for International Education (IIE).



**HELEN ORANDE** has been working in the NGO sector for more than 10 years. She is the former executive director of Hands on Manila, an NGO that harnesses the spirit of volunteerism to assist poor communities in the country.



**RICKY TRINIDAD** is a full-time lecturer at Adamson University who also worked as project officer at the Health Action Information Network (HAIN), one of the oldest NGOs and RH Resource Centers in the country involved in health education, research and training.



**JOYCE VALBUENA** is a former project director of HAIN and helped manage a series of advocacy trainings on religion, gender and sexuality among RH advocates. She is now based in Vancouver, Canada.



**CHI LAIGO VALLIDO** works at the Forum for Family Planning and Development as its advocacy and communications specialist. She is also an independent documentary filmmaker.



**NILDA DE VERA** is the program director at HAIN. Nilda is a nurse who worked for many years in refugee camps for the International Organization on Migration before returning to the Philippines to work for HAIN.

CBCP that's making a joke out of the institution and the principles of being a Catholic. If blind obedience is their measure of what constitutes a true Catholic, then Catholic support of the RH Bill is a clear sign that many have begun to see the light.

In the latest national survey conducted in June 2011 by the Social Weather Stations (SWS), eight out of 10 Filipinos agree that family planning is "a personal choice of couples and no one should interfere with it." Only eight percent of Filipinos disagree that family planning is a personal choice for couples while nine percent are undecided. According to SWS, compared to 20 years ago, agreement with the statement that family planning is a personal choice has risen by 21 percent—up from 61 percent in November 1990 when they had the similar survey. Other surveys conducted in 2009 and 2010 also revealed that a majority of Filipinos are in favor of a reproductive health policy.

### WHAT THE PHILIPPINES CAN LEARN FROM ITS PAST AND OTHER CATHOLIC COUNTRIES

In her book *That She May Dance Again*, Sister Nila Bermisa of the Maryknoll Sisters related the history of the *babaylans*, revered women religious leaders or priestesses of pre-colonial Philippines. The counsel of a *babaylan* was sought by the community on matters of faith and medicine, and she was a close adviser of the Datu, or tribal leader. Before the colonizers arrived, Filipino indigenous



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Speaker of the House Feliciano Belmonte (right), pictured with President Benigno Aquino (center) and Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile, approved a comprehensive reproductive health ordinance when he was mayor of Quezon City—the first of its kind in the nation.

**After 14 years of advocacy work and mobilization, the support of the president and his cabinet is the game-changer that RH advocates have been waiting for.**

culture granted equal status to women and men. According to Sr. Bermisa, tribal laws recognized the social and political rights of women. They were allowed to own property, engage in trade and industry and could expect to be protected against violence and crime.

Women's status changed in the 16<sup>th</sup> century when the Spanish colonizers and friars suppressed the native priestesses with the spread of the Catholic religion. The *babaylans* were demonized by the friars and persecuted much like the witch hunts that targeted women in Europe. Since then, Filipino women have had to fight for their place in society. Even the right to vote was a hard-won battle. While the situation of Filipino women has greatly improved, something as basic as having control over one's own body is perhaps the biggest fight yet to be won.

Father Julian Cruzalta, a theology professor from Mexico, spoke at a national gathering of Catholics for RH in the Philippines. He said, "For RH, it is not Christianity that we have to oppose but this model of understanding Christianity which we call Christendom. It's a system that is patriarchal. For this system, there is only one way of thinking, of dreaming and of living. In Christianity, what comes is pluralism and diversity. That's why Catholic is universal—there is unity, plurality and diversity of peoples."

In Mexico, like some other predominantly Catholic countries around the world, elected leaders have posed resistance to the hierarchy's attempts to dictate matters of state. In Mexico, policymaking is now seen as the domain of policymakers, although the country's bishops are still vocal adversaries of reproductive choice. In Catholic nations

where the hierarchy was once as embroiled in politics as it is in the Philippines, the change began when one legislator or one leader stood up to pressure from religious leaders. Here in the Philippines, RH advocates are pinning their hopes on the current president and the progressive members of Congress.

Judging by the surveys, most Filipinos made a decision about reproductive health long ago. The institutional church in the Philippines is simply choosing to remain blind to this reality. The debate around reproductive health is symbolic of the Catholic church's status in the country at present. What is truly at issue is who determines what it means to be Catholic. The RH bill is catalyzing deep reflection among many Catholics as they decide when to toe the line drawn by the hierarchy and when to cross it. ■



# Nuns vs. Bishops?

THE SAME IDEOLOGY,  
DIFFERENT TACTICS ON  
CATHOLIC HEALTHCARE

By Meghan Smith

**W**hen the Affordable Care Act (ACA) became law in March 2010, the image of a nun accompanied the story in many news outlets—photographs of Sister Carol Keehan, CEO of the Catholic Health Association (CHA), triumphantly raising her commemorative pen from the bill signing ceremony. A headline from Salon.com even went so far as to declare: “Catholic healthcare scoreboard: Nuns and laity 2, bishops 0,” referring to the decision by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) not to support the ACA.

This assessment failed to recognize, however, that CHA, like the bishops, had consistently expressed its complete rejection of reproductive choice, including contraception, abortion and sterilization. The majority of Catholic laity themselves do support the availability of these services. The politics of CHA have

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Sr. Carol Keehan, president and CEO of the Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHA), speaks at a press conference on healthcare reform held by Vice President Joseph Biden in 2009.

© GETTY/ALEX WONG, 2009

been just as critical as those of the USCCB in shaping the current state of healthcare in the US and its influence on policies related to issues of reproductive health.

Policymakers and pundits alike hypothesized that CHA’s decision to support the ACA in the bishops’ absence had provided just enough political cover for those concerned with pleasing conservative Catholics and preserving antichoice voting records to support healthcare reform.

In early 2010, right when the bishops were rescinding their support for the final healthcare reform legislation, CHA sent the first of a series of letters to Congress painting a portrait of healthcare legislation that “prohibit[ed] the use of federal funds for abortion” and “respect[ed] provider conscience rights.” Right before the final passage of the Affordable Care Act, CHA wrote to Congress again, citing its “longtime” advo-

cacy in support of healthcare reform and urging Congress to make doubly sure that any final iterations of the bill absolutely prohibited “federal funding of abortion.”

The bishops, who had taken the all or nothing stance that they would not support final legislation without all of their requirements being met, interpreted this difference of strategy as a personal affront. Cardinal Francis George, then-president of the USCCB, was one of several members of the hierarchy who met with Sr. Keehan to urge her not to support the ACA. In a closed-door meeting in June of 2010, Cardinal George reportedly told his fellow bishops that CHA had inappropriately questioned the bishops’ authority.

Publicly, however, Sr. Keehan and Cardinal George appeared to be making amends as both emphasized their shared commitment to “fixing” the Affordable Care Act by amending it with extreme antichoice policies. Cardinal George effectively issued a public ultimatum to CHA when he told reporters for conservative Catholic media outlets, “One immediate area of possible collaboration is the effort to put the language of the Hyde amendment back into the law, now that we actually have a law. If we can jointly support that change to the law, it would go a long way toward fostering reconciliation.”

CHA continued to cultivate its relationship with political leaders as it began laying the groundwork to implement healthcare reform. President Obama himself addressed the 2010 Catholic Health Assembly meeting in Denver via teleconference, thanking Sr. Keehan for her “extraordinary leadership” and asserting, “Your work, your passion, your commitment helped make the difference” in passing healthcare reform.

Three weeks later, CHA publicly supported one of President Obama’s most controversial appointments—because it was accomplished during a Senate recess without a contentious confirmation process—that of Dr. Donald Berwick as administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. This positioned

him as one of the most powerful architects of healthcare reform implementation.

It would prove to be one of that summer’s less controversial moves by CHA. Another nun was about to be front and center in the ongoing feud between the bishops, CHA and the general public about the role of Catholic healthcare and the Catholic hierarchy in access to reproductive healthcare services in the United States.

Early in the summer of 2010, news broke that Bishop Thomas Olmsted of Phoenix, Arizona, had reassigned and excommunicated Sister Margaret McBride of St. Joseph’s Hospital and Medical Center for her participation in an ethics committee decision that approved the provision of an abortion to save the life of a 27-year-old woman. Olmsted asserted that her actions were in violation of the Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services (ERDS). Despite hundreds of letters of support for Sister McBride, in late December Bishop Olmsted revoked the hospital’s Catholic status, bluntly heading the diocese’s press release with the proclamation: “St. Joseph’s Hospital no longer Catholic.”

The next day, CHA issued a brief statement lauding Catholic Healthcare West—the system to which St. Joseph’s Hospital belongs—for its antichoice credentials through its “protection of life at all stages.” In that statement, Sr. Keehan refuted Bishop Olmsted’s assertion that the hospital ethics committee had violated the ERD statute that prohibits abortion, noting that administrators had saved “the only life that was possible to save.”

CHA was in another “nuns vs. bishops” battle in the media. Again, the organization walked a fine line between appearing to take a reasonable step forward while carefully affirming its commitment to antichoice practices. One month later, CHA made it clear which side of that line it chose. CHA revealed that several highly influential bishops had met with Sr. Keehan to discuss “the authority of the local bishops” in following the Directives. The meeting included Archbishop

Timothy Dolan of New York, president of the USCCB. CHA published a written exchange and alluded to a series of phone calls in which Sr. Keehan assured Archbishop Dolan that CHA had “always” conveyed to its members and staff that local bishops had absolute authority over interpreting the ERDS. She explicitly stated her belief in each bishop’s ability to “develop his own ethical and religious directives if he chooses.” The letter emphasized CHA’s dedication to continuing to work with the USCCB to keep “clinical” decisions in line with each bishop’s ideological interpretation of the Directives.

In response, Archbishop Dolan thanked Sr. Keehan for conceding the bishops’ authority over CHA member hospitals’ personnel in making medical decisions. He then outlined ways in which CHA and the USCCB could collaborate on promoting specific antichoice policies. Making allusions to “speak[ing] with one voice,” the supposed threat of “government intrusion” and employing antichoice rhetoric, Archbishop Dolan said that he and his fellow bishops had “some specific ideas” about how to inject the Affordable Care Act and its implementation with refusal clauses—and that he looked forward to working with CHA to make those ideas come to fruition.

The parallels to Sr. Keehan’s handling of both sides of the healthcare reform debate continued, however. She released a series of statements supporting the healthcare reform law and continued to receive praise from members of the Obama administration—all while affirming her commitment to restricting access to reproductive healthcare services not only in CHA’s member hospitals but in all aspects of healthcare reform implementation.

Sr. Keehan said in January, “We will focus on exactly the same areas as we go forward, reform that protects life from conception until natural death.... Our current reform bill is a good first step. It is not the finished product ... no one will work more closely to monitor implementation of the bill to assure the protection of life.”

By June, Dr. Donald Berwick, whose appointment CHA had backed, delivered the keynote address at a meeting where he praised the organization's dedication to healthcare reform. One month later, Cardinal Donald Wuerl of the Archdiocese of Washington addressed two senior CHA staff. He spoke about the symbiotic nature of the relationship between CHA and the USCCB, the rift between the two during the healthcare reform debate and his conviction that the "real challenge" would be working together to champion clauses allowing "Catholic institutions" to refuse to provide healthcare services such as sterilization and abortion.

In the months since that interview, CHA has worked to realize Cardinal Wuerl's vision of a united USCCB/CHA campaign

hospitals to provide under limited circumstances. Memorably, Sr. Keehan attempted to belittle the effect of the administration's proposed refusal clause by calling it "the parish housekeeper exemption" and making the false claim that these women are "about all it applies to."

On September 22, the Catholic Health Association continued its campaign against contraception by submitting its official comments to HHS. First, Sr. Keehan cited CHA's long-time "support" for the Affordable Care Act and thanked Secretary Sebelius for "the recognition of the need for such an exemption [for religious employers]." Then she requested that HHS broaden the definition of "religious institutions" to allow

The high-profile Sister Keehan is not reflective of the politics or the personality of many nuns, who have often been at the heart of the progressive movement within the Catholic church in the US and abroad. Many women religious have worked tirelessly for the rights of women, the promotion of reproductive choice and the provision of healthcare services with an eye towards equality and personal dignity. One such nun, Sister Margaret McBride, who was excommunicated for authorizing the life-saving abortion at a Phoenix hospital, has been chosen for an award from Call To Action. The progressive Catholic group lauds her "careful work with a complex issue, her courage in a time of censorship and public pressure, and

**Sr. Keehan even attempted to belittle the effect of the administration's proposed refusal clause by calling it "the parish housekeeper exemption" and made the false claim that these women are "about all it applies to."**

promoting refusal clauses. It has also remained uncannily faithful to the hopes outlined by Archbishop Dolan in his exchange with Sr. Keehan in January.

In August 2011, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) included contraception in its new list of services that insurance policies must cover as part of women's preventive healthcare under the Affordable Care Act. The HHS proposed that certain "religious institutions" be exempted from having to cover contraception in their employees' insurance plans, but Catholic hospitals were not included in the definition of "religious institution" outlined by HHS. While applauding the coverage for services such as pap smears and breast cancer screenings, CHA leapt to the forefront of a campaign to greatly expand these refusal clauses. This included broadening them to eliminate coverage for emergency contraception, which even the Directives allow Catholic

Catholic hospitals to refuse to cover contraceptive services and counseling for their more than 700,000 full- and part-time employees. Echoing the bishops, CHA also decried the inclusion of sterilization services and certain types of emergency contraception in the regulations. The tag team made up of the CHA and the bishops was most evident, however, in CHA's endorsement of the USCCB's own comments, in which the bishops focused on attempting to eliminate contraceptive coverage altogether. "We will not address here the issues of whether the mandate itself is appropriate," Sr. Keehan wrote. "The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has persuasively addressed these points in its comments." In yet another instance, CHA thus positioned itself as both a friend to the Obama administration and, with its crafty endorsement of the bishops' positions, an enemy of reproductive health services.

her witness to the need to stand firm in the face of opposition."

It is still too early to know how CHA's continued commitment to walking the line will play out in the most recent debates about contraceptive coverage. It is also too early to know whether this commitment will serve in its favor at the local level, where legislative hearings continue over a proposed hospital merger in Kentucky. CHA continues to explore the possibility of merging with for-profit hospitals across the US.

What remains certain, however, is that the image of Sr. Keehan raising up a pen used by President Obama to sign the Affordable Care Act is part of a larger picture. For reproductive healthcare advocates, it could be worth keeping an eye on which other pens CHA may be angling toward—and whose healthcare services could be signed away in the process. ■



# The Origin of a Thunderclap

WHAT'S BEHIND IRELAND'S NEW TENSION WITH THE VATICAN

By Eamonn McCann

**T**HE VATICAN IS REPORTEDLY not one bit pleased at the Irish government's plans to move its embassy to the Holy See out of the Villa Spada—located in a prime spot on Via Gianicoli Medici overlooking Rome—to use the building as the Irish embassy to Italy instead. It's just a money-saving measure at a time of austerity, insists the Department of Foreign Affairs. But hardly anybody believes that that's all there is to it.

The magnificent 17<sup>th</sup> century structure—once Garibaldi's Roman residence, later the family home of the Agnellis, owners of Fiat—could comfortably accommodate both missions. But the Vatican takes a dim view of countries doubling them up with Italy and thus failing to show proper respect for the Holy See as a separate entity. The word in Dublin is that diplomatic rela-

tions might be conducted in the future from office space elsewhere in Rome.

It remains to be seen whether—even in the aftermath of July's thunderclap report on child sex abuse in the diocese of Cloyne—the government of Enda Kenny will choose to tweak the pope's nose in this fashion. But a number of ministers who just a few years ago would have swooned at the thought of saying boo to a bishop now give every impression of relishing the discomfiture of the church and rather admiring Ireland's daring.

What made Cloyne different from previous exposés was the blunt language the commission used when accusing the Vatican of encouraging the cover-up of a crime spree against children. In 1997 then-nuncio Archbishop Luciano Sterero wrote in a letter that, in the view

of the Vatican, a “framework document” formulated the previous year by the Irish Catholic Bishop's Conference making the reporting of abuse allegations mandatory had given rise “to serious reservations of both a moral and canonical nature.” The document was “not an official document of the Episcopal Confer-

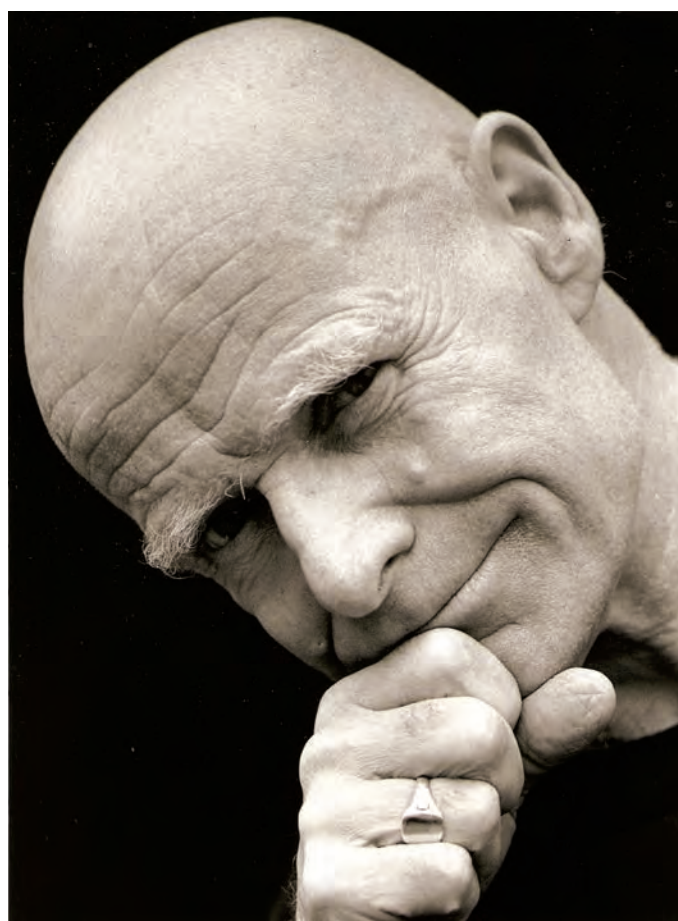


PHOTO PROVIDED BY AUTHOR

The author has been a long-time critic of the role that the Catholic hierarchy in Ireland plays in shaping state policies.

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ence but a study document,” sniffed the nuncio, and had therefore been denied “recognition.”

The Cloyne report found that Sterero’s letter provided the basis for Bishop John Magee and Monsignor Dennis O’Callaghan—the diocesan official responsible for child protection—to refuse to come clean about abuse allegations in the diocese. Instead, the two had, with others, “positively lied” and “deliberately misled” the civil authorities; had created contradictory accounts of discussions of abuse incidents—a true one for the Vatican, a false one for local consumption—had “tried to bury ... evidence of a vicious sexual assault”; and many more infractions along the same lines.

had “exposed an attempt by the Holy See to frustrate an inquiry into a sovereign, democratic republic.... The rape and torture of children were downplayed, or ‘managed,’ to uphold the primacy of the institution.” Instead of paying heed to the evidence of children’s “humiliation and betrayal,” the Vatican’s response had been “to parse and analyze it with the gimlet eye of a canon lawyer.”

The mood of the government in relation to church matters was already soured by Wikileaks’ publication last December of a cable from the US embassy in Dublin. A source related that the Vatican had been angered at earlier requests for information on abuse that might have been forwarded to Rome. The Vatican believed that by allowing a

the people had been relieved of a burden they’d accepted for a lifetime but which had suddenly become unendurable.

The church has had it easy in Ireland for over a hundred years. Its political clout wasn’t won in an ideological battle. The state had been born a good Catholic—tension between conservative and radical tendencies within the Irish national movement was resolved by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in favor of the former. The movement, which assumed power in the south in the early 1920s through the partition settlement with Britain, was already deep-dyed in Catholicism. There was virtually no resistance as Holy Writ was a substitute for secular law. The clergy spread out unimpeded across the country, like

**The church has had it easy in Ireland for over a hundred years. Its political clout wasn’t won in an ideological battle. The state had been born a good Catholic....**

Cloyne was not, of course, unique in any of this.

It was “a remarkable fact,” said the report, that despite the enormous hullabaloo over child sex allegations going back at least 15 years, Magee had taken “little or no active interest in the management of clerical child sexual abuse cases until 2008.”

Bishop Magee is possibly the best-connected churchman in Ireland. He is the only person ever to have been secretary to three popes—Paul VI, John Paul I and John Paul II. He was transferred directly from Rome to Cork in 1987 and was widely believed still to have had the ear of everybody who mattered back at HQ.

These were among the factors which led Taoiseach (Prime Minister) Kenny to launch a startling assault on church governance when introducing the Cloyne Report to the Dáil (parliament) on July 20<sup>th</sup> of this year. The report, he declared,

commission of inquiry to seek this information, the government had “failed to respect and protect Vatican sovereignty.”

Within days of Kenny’s Dáil philippic, Nuncio Archbishop Giuseppe Leanza was recalled to Rome—to help formulate the Holy See’s response, it was said. He has since been reassigned to the Czech Republic. No replacement has been named. There has been no Irish ambassador in place, either, since the retirement of veteran Noel Fahey last June. This is a nicely-timed hiatus as the mandarins of foreign affairs ponder where to locate their future relations with the Holy See.

The Taoiseach’s speech was remarkable stuff in a country where, until recently, the threat of a crack from a crozier had been enough to keep politicians in line. Just as remarkable were the glad-handing and cheers that greeted Mr. Kenny everywhere he traveled over the following days. It was as if the mass of

beaters at a pheasant-shoot flushing out sin. Divorce was criminalized, contraception banned, censorship of newspapers, books and films introduced, dance-halls subjected to strict licensing conditions—“no close dancing”—and clerical control of schools and hospitals endorsed as the natural order of things.

If they’d had to fight for the power which they came to wield, the bishops might have been better prepared for the challenge when it came. Instead, an easy arrogance set in. The cries of suffering children were shut out from the havens of toxic tranquility they’d come to inhabit. As the resentment of the masses ripened towards revolt over the past few decades, politicians, even impeccably conservative politicians like Mr. Kenny, eventually had to pay heed. But the bishops were blind to what was happening around them. And now they may have no way back, no diplomatic solution to a debacle of their own making. ■

# Our Father Who Art in Congress

By Patti Miller

## Bob Drinan: The Controversial Life of the First Catholic Priest Elected to Congress

Raymond A. Schroth

(Fordham University Press, 2011, 432 pp)

978-0823233045, \$32.95

It is a mark of how much the American Catholic church has changed in the last 40 years that it is now inconceivable that a prochoice Catholic priest could be elected to Congress and serve for five terms with the at least tacit approval of his religious superiors. Yet Congress is exactly where Robert Drinan, SJ, served for 10 years between 1970 and 1980, where he was best known as a passionate opponent of the war in Vietnam and as the first member of Congress to file an impeachment resolution against President Richard Nixon. Fellow Jesuit Raymond Schroth chronicles Drinan's life, his political influence and the controversies of his unique career, particularly his support of abortion rights, in *Bob Drinan: The Controversial Life of the First Catholic Priest Elected to Congress*.

Schroth details how Drinan's life in many ways followed the arc of American Catholic life in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Robert Drinan was born into the largely ghettoized Catholic world of Boston in the 1920s. He attended Boston College at a time when Jesuit higher education was

generally considered substandard compared to secular universities and even the Jesuits concluded that their schools tended to produce "pious but useless men." Instead of following his classmates off to World War II, Drinan chose to enter the Jesuit seminary and live largely cloistered from the outside world for seven years in preparation to enter the order. He attended Georgetown University Law School at a time when the school's purpose was seen as "pre-eminently spiritual" and, like Boston College, not necessarily on a par with secular law schools.

But the Catholic experience was changing as upwardly mobile Catholics assimilated into society and the civil rights movement and Vatican II challenged socially-minded Catholics to combine religious belief with social activism. Bob Drinan answered that call. In articles for *America*, *Commonweal* and the *Catholic World* he began exploring issues like civil rights and the proper role of religious belief and commitment in civic life. This last concern was a question that would animate the rest of his life.

Drinan became dean of Boston College Law School and, according to Schroth, subsequently upgraded the quality of faculty, students and instruction, "transforming what had been a

small, local Irish Catholic institution into one that was more 'modern'—inter-racial, ecumenical, mixed and national." The Jesuit's reputation rose nationally as he wrote and spoke to wider audiences about moral issues, none of which was more controversial in the mid-1960s than abortion.

At this time several states began to liberalize draconian 19<sup>th</sup> century abortion laws that banned abortion except if a woman's life was threatened by the pregnancy. The conversation focused on a model abortion law recommended by the American Law Institute that would expand the circumstances under which abortion could be performed to include grave threats to a woman's physical or mental health, fetal deformity and cases of rape or incest. Drinan took the controversial position that it would be better from a Catholic perspective for the law to withdraw completely from the regulation of early abortion rather than to have lawmakers decide which fetuses would live or die—presaging the essentially libertarian argument that would be made by feminists several years later when they campaigned for a woman's right to choose.

It was an inflammatory position for a Catholic priest to take, but Drinan said that while abortion may be immoral from a Catholic point of view, Catholics did not have the right to impose their morality on others in a secular society. Even within the Catholic faith, he conceded that there was not a singular "Catholic position" on abortion law and that Catholics were free to advocate for abortion rights.

It was this position on abortion that would get Bob Drinan into trouble when he was recruited to run for Congress in 1970. The Jesuit had become an outspoken opponent of the Vietnam War and Democratic organizers were looking for a "peace candidate" to challenge the prowar incumbent in Massachusetts' high-profile third congressional district. Drinan was restless in his role at Boston College and wanted more of a voice in the great moral debates of the



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nation. It was a long shot that a Catholic priest could win, but Schroth demonstrates how the unusual candidate benefited from a highly organized campaign effort that made innovative use of polling and targeted outreach, as well as a three-way race.

Bob Drinan became the first Catholic priest elected to Congress (there have only been two), bringing to fruition his journey from the Catholic ghettos of the 1920s to a position as arbiter of the church's new-found engagement in the world following Vatican II. Having a priest in Congress was controversial. Some thought it

permission he needed to run for office by getting the explicit permission of his religious superior but had only the implicit permission of the local bishop, who said he didn't think it was proper for a priest to hold office but declined to actually stop Drinan from running. This shaky foundation would plague him throughout his political career. As the battle over abortion heated up throughout the 1970s, his position became more and more untenable, particularly after he became an outspoken opponent of the Hyde Amendment that limited federal funding for abortions for poor women.

Drinan's congressional career came

obviously sympathetic to Drinan and captures the moral commitment that Drinan could inspire in others, as well as the complexity of a man who was inspirational at large but could be infuriating in person.

At the same time, Schroth seems hard-pressed to reconcile Drinan's pro-choice position. In the end, he suggests that Drinan may have taken his pro-choice stance out of necessity to avoid alienating the liberals he needed to pursue his antiwar, antipoverty vision, or as a result of a deep pragmatism that efforts to recriminalize abortion were likely to fail. He reminds readers that as

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**Schroth illustrates how influential Drinan's position** of “personally opposed but civically neutral” was with Catholic lawmakers. It also earned him the enmity of antiabortion advocates and repeated calls for the hierarchy to discipline him.

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would impinge on his ability to serve as a priest, while others thought it was an inappropriate mixing of religion and politics. For Drinan, his work in Congress—which focused on ending the war in Vietnam, human rights, prison reform and world hunger—was “an extension of his persona, his Jesuit identity.” He viewed himself as a “moral architect” who could use his influence to help realize the church's social justice mission in the world.

Once *Roe v. Wade* legalized abortion in 1973 and the bishops launched an all-out effort to pass a constitutional amendment to recriminalize abortion, Drinan's position that abortion may be immoral but should not be illegal was in direct, public confrontation with the hierarchy. Schroth illustrates how influential Drinan's position of “personally opposed but civically neutral” was with Catholic lawmakers. It also earned him the enmity of antiabortion advocates and repeated calls for the hierarchy to discipline him.

In reality, Drinan was skating on thin ice all along. He had finessed the initial

to an end with the papacy of Pope John Paul II, who personally ordered that he forgo seeking reelection in 1980. It was, according to Schroth, a mark of the growing influence of the antichoice movement, as well as John Paul's determination to restore and enforce hierarchical authority and “doctrinal orthodoxy.” Drinan complied with the order and returned to Georgetown University to teach law, where he would remain for the rest of his life, still active in progressive organizations like Common Cause and working on issues like hunger and human rights.

For Schroth, the central question of the book is how a man as devout and obviously concerned with Catholic teachings on morality as Bob Drinan could countenance abortion. He quotes at length from Drinan's best-known writings on the subject, as well as from the work of his critics and supporters. As with other areas of the book, however, the timeline is sometimes unclear and various parts of the narrative double back or overlap, which makes it difficult to follow his argument. The author is

late as 1991 Drinan wrote of the “true horror of abortion” and likened it to infanticide, saying that hopefully “sometime in the future the nation and the world will realize the legalization of abortion was a dreadful deviation from the majestic rule of law in the United States.”

Schroth can't quite seem to conceive that Drinan might actually have believed that no matter how personally abhorrent he found abortion, both a respect for civil law and for social justice require that it be legal. How else to explain Drinan's late-career, public support for President Clinton's veto of the “partial-birth” abortion ban because it did not provide a health exemption for women—support that he was required to publicly withdraw under pressure from the hierarchy and a firestorm of criticism from the Catholic right.

As rendered by Schroth, Drinan exemplifies a fleeting moment in the history of the Catholic church when social justice and political action were seen as compatible and a complex moral voice rang out in Congress. ■

# Structural Sin: Finances, Abuse and the Church

By Martin Pendergast

## Render unto Rome: The Secret Life of Money in the Catholic Church

Jason Berry

(Crown Publishing Group, Random House Inc., 2011, 420 pp)

978-0-385-53132-0, \$25.00

**N**O AMOUNT OF FINANCIAL compensation can restore the destruction of the human body and spirit endured through the experience of sexual, physical, emotional or spiritual abuse. Similarly, the increasingly vast payments in litigation processes against churches can neither replace nor remove the guilt and responsibility of those who perpetrate such crimes. In some sense, however, both the abused and the perpetrators are victims of the macro-level dysfunctional power system that has been identified in much of the global analysis of the sexual abuse crisis within the Catholic church.

All abuse at its most fundamental level is an abuse of power, be that emotional, spiritual, physical or sexual. This list of words is deliberately ordered, since my own experience of working in the fields of child protection and sexual abuse—mostly outside of a church context—suggests that there is often a pro-

gression through the different forms of abuse, although this may not necessarily be an inevitable process in all cases.

Much research has been conducted at the personal level, investigating causal

factors that incline certain individuals to perpetrate different forms of abuse. We are well aware of the colossal impact on the lives and future well-being of victims. But what of institutions? What factors come into play as we seek to understand how and why certain social systems provide a systemic context for multiple levels of abuse to occur?

What oils the machine of

social institutions like the church, so that such abuse can flourish all too easily? What is the interaction between social and religious values such as truth and honesty, transparency, integrity, repentance, healing and reconciliation?

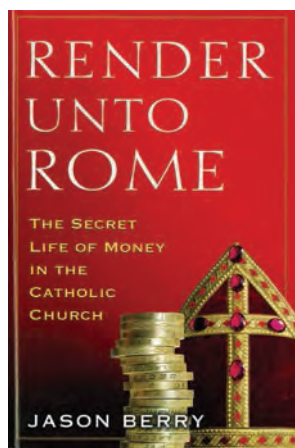
Jason Berry's epic book, *Render unto Rome*, flows from his milestone work, *Lead Us Not into Temptation*, which exposed the extent of the sexual abuse crisis in the Catholic church. Berry sees that money in the Catholic church has a secret life of its own, functioning as a lubricant for the dysfunctional exercise of an ecclesiastical power machine. He does not stop at the immediate concern of how the institutional church and its hierarchy will find the financial resources

to respond to the demands of litigation in the context of abuse. Berry discovers that this is just the tip of an iceberg, with secondary effects on the reorganization and restructuring of the local church in the face of decreasing clergy recruitment and increasing age of those remaining in active ministry.

Berry uses the emerging experience of groups such as Voice of the Faithful (VOTF) and Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests (SNAP) to dig beneath the surface of the financial and pastoral planning strategies, including parish and church closures, adopted by dioceses across the United States in the face of the sexual abuse crisis. He quickly realizes that, as in so many matters, "all roads lead to Rome." The issue doesn't just touch on fiscal mismanagement or concealment at local diocesan levels, but raises questions about the financial relationships between the Vatican, the local church and figures such as the late Father Marcial Maciel, notorious and abusive founder of the Legionaries of Christ.

The Code of Canon Law requires each Catholic parish to have a finance committee, while a parish pastoral council is only recommended. Nevertheless, lack of financial transparency is an issue that goes back to well before the first signs of the sexual abuse crisis emerged. Reform-minded Catholics in the UK highlighted the lack of financial accountability at parish and diocesan levels in a report published in the early 1980s, "Treasures in Heaven," calling for full, annual financial accounts to be published. Even today, there is still not complete transparency and questions remain around issues of ethical investment, use of off-shore financial foundations and trusts. More recently, attention has been directed at how diocesan funds, or bishops' "personal charitable funds," have been used to facilitate the moving around, within and beyond dioceses, of known abusers, including buying them property.

Berry shows that at the most basic level, ordinary Catholics lack trust in what passes for the church's "financial systems," which appear to allow parish and diocesan



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funds to be creamed off before they are even entered into conventional accounting processes. This can amount to “pocket money for Father,” or bishops building reserves—sometimes secretly—used to buy favor with Rome in transactions that appear little better than bribes. Since end-of-year accounts are impossible to come by, questions remain as to the use of Peter’s Pence by the Vatican. This parish collection is funneled directly to the financial support of Rome’s infrastructure. How far does it shore up the Holy See’s deficit, or is it more properly used for the relief of the world’s hungry poor through the Sahel and Populorum Progressio funds established by John Paul II?

feature a wobbly tower of UK pound coins, rather than US dollars. Factual inaccuracies such as suggesting that London’s St. Martin-in-the-Fields church is a Catholic parish, minor as that is, distract the reader and call into question the veracity of some of Berry’s more important allegations. Sideswipes at Maryland’s St. Luke treatment center for priests and religious fail to recognize that a good number of this population have benefitted from the therapeutic interventions offered there and at places like Canada’s Southdown.

There are times when the author seems unable to extricate himself emotionally from his past exposures to the

in three US cities, Follieri’s business director was able to write to one religious order, “because of the Follieri family’s long-standing relationship with senior members of the Vatican hierarchy, the Follieri Group understands very well the imperative of the church and is sensitive to its needs.” Essentially, this entailed purchasing properties from dioceses and religious organizations, renovating and converting them to new uses such as housing or profitable commercial development. With this backdrop, it becomes easy to see how the disposal of redundant churches can offer readily available solutions to the demands of litigation-strapped dioceses.

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**More recently, attention has been directed** at how diocesan funds, or bishops’ “personal charitable funds,” have been used to facilitate the moving around ... of known abusers, including buying them property.

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The author clearly finds few heroes among the US Catholic hierarchy, past or present, but plenty of villains. He scrutinizes now-retired archbishops such as Rembert Weakland of Milwaukee and Roger Mahoney of Los Angeles, as well as Pilla and Lennon of Cleveland, Law and O’Malley of Boston and the present prefect for the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Cardinal Levada, formerly archbishop of Portland, Oregon. At times, *Render unto Rome* reads like a catalogue of everyone you ever wanted to hate in the hierarchy, and only now have the temerity to name. In retrospect, I personally believe that Berry misrepresents the commitment of Benedict xvi to deal with the Maciel case in particular, and the wider sexual abuse crisis in general.

To say that this is a “curate’s egg” of a book—not totally redeemed by its good qualities—is probably an understatement. Sweeping statements sit alongside almost obsessive preoccupations with financial details, leaving this reviewer slightly bemused that the cover should

abuse crisis in order to focus objectively and factually on “the secret life of money in the Catholic church.” He allows himself to be taken far too easily down side-alleys that leave the reader bewildered, asking, “And your point is?” Of course there is an international dimension to much that has happened with the Vatican’s response to the global crisis of sexual abuse in the church, but Berry doesn’t seem to recognize when to halt his travels. At times, readers may be unsure whether they are reading a blockbuster novel, or a real attempt to mark a crucial chapter in the church’s contemporary history.

Berry does better with his observations about Cardinal Angelo Sodano—not least his role in protecting Marcial Maciel, as well as the financial dealings of the cardinal’s nephew, Andrea Sodano, with the Follieri Group—which are important in understanding the level of dysfunction which was allowed to thrive during the pontificate of John Paul II.

Gaining contracts for the acquisition of over \$100 million of church property

It is a pity that Berry did not wait a little longer before publishing *Render unto Rome*. As well as allowing time for much more judicious editing, further developments in the Maciel saga could have been included, such as that legal recourse seems to have succeeded in forcing the Legionaries of Christ, and the Vatican itself, to be accountable to a US court in some aspects of the case. If the author had wished to pitch the book’s context beyond that of the American church, as is frequently the impression from the international snapshots he gives, then the Vatican’s response to the Apostolic Visitation of the Irish church, due to report shortly, could well have been relevant.

If nothing else, *Render unto Rome* should remind bishops, religious superiors, the Vatican itself, as well as reforming activists, that the days are long gone when holy veils can be drawn over—not just dysfunctional systems—but the structural sin within the church, which enables such horrendous levels of abuse to persist. ■



# Toward a Middle Road: Two Directions in the US Catholic Church

By John Hushon

## The Social Mission of the US Catholic Church, A Theological Perspective

Charles E. Curran

(Georgetown University Press, 2011, 196 pp.)

978-1589017436, \$26.95

**A** NEW BOOK BY THEOLOGIAN Charles Curran is always eagerly received. This volume is no exception: a brief social history of the theology and praxis of the social justice tradition in the US Catholic church—its hierarchy, its communities and organizations and its individuals—does not disappoint. No history of any nation's Catholicism can ignore the Vatican, so Rome does figure prominently in this domestic tale. In the case of the US, whose Catholic history is rather short, a retrospective must also include all that occurred *before* and *at* Vatican II—the watershed Vatican conference (1962-1965) that sought to bring the church into the modern world. Curran bridges both sides of Vatican II.

The earliest church was built on two major themes arising from the Gospels, as can be seen in the Letters of Paul and

the Acts of the Apostles. On the one hand, it was supposed to heed the call of Jesus to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, house the homeless and care for the poor (what Curran refers to as “taking care of our own”). On the other

hand, churches were to prepare for the *perusia*, or end times. The formation of the diaconate as a way of expanding the church's reach in society was a tangible expression of the first theme. However, as the church aged and institutionalized, caring for the vulnerable seems to have become less important—Catholic clergy and hierarchs focused on the future, on

the salvation of souls in the next world and removal from this one. The social mission, one of the two paths laid for the church by the Gospels, was downgraded.

Curran's method for studying ecclesiology—the nature and structure of the church—is clear and illustrative. First, he examines the Catholic church in a given period by taking a brief historical look at a few examples of social missions. Second, he considers the sociopolitical context, identifying the key actors—lay, clergy or hierarchy. And third, he exam-

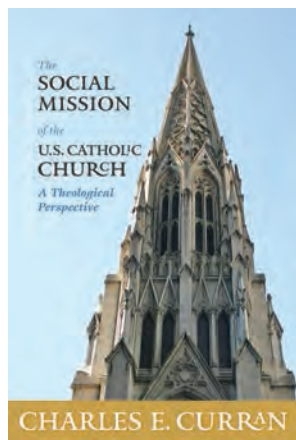
ines the interaction of all these elements to determine a practical theology of the church's social mission.

He begins with a brief description of early US Catholicism at a time when Catholics were few in number, lived mostly in Maryland and tended to be well-off. These Catholics were conformist, reflecting both the values of the society in which they lived and the prevailing ecclesiology—which emphasized salvation, not worldly matters. This attitude apparently mirrored Vatican views and policies toward the New World at that time.

Curran then jumps to the “immigrant” church—the Catholicism of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that began to play an increasing role in American life. At this time, the two themes of the early church are both present in the US church: the responsibility to take care of our own (with schools, hospitals, orphanages, churches, social organizations) and a removal from the world, specifically the political world. In the latter view, the church's job was to shape the individual in order to save his or her soul, not the world. Some of the results of this thinking were: the growth of Catholic ghettos (as Catholics shunned integration—or perhaps were forced into them); the condemnation of unions; the various efforts to cleanse or ban books and movies or label them with advisory codes; and the later support of world peace, world government and pervasive anti-Communism. Catholics were not in the forefront of the movement for worker rights, women's suffrage or racial justice because their focus was elsewhere.

Later in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Catholics were still defined by a parochial social mission—take care of our own. As the 20<sup>th</sup> century progressed, however, Catholics became increasingly involved in the country's broader social and political life, particularly when confronting secular literature and cinema, global wars and communism.

In the period before Vatican II, Catholics in the United States were indeed



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shouldering the responsibility to care for other Catholics, but this insular social mission occurred with a tacit acceptance of hierarchical direction. The laity was always “helper” or “volunteer” in this vision—not manager or strategic planner. Catholics were nevertheless less isolated than before, and were more likely to assimilate into US society. Secarian institutions, then—the Catholic hospitals, Catholic charities, Catholic schools and Catholic organizations built up over the last century—were thus poised at the threshold of change. The increasing integration of Catholics into political and social life set the stage for a major change of direction. John F. Kennedy, president; John Courtney Murray, Jesuit theologian; Pope John XXIII and Vatican II all helped steer Catholicism in that direction.

Murray argued that a Catholic’s role was to work for a world that is conducive to salvation—to reflect God’s plan and to recognize the humanizing force of the Holy Spirit. Vatican II articulated similar ideas—that the church is mystery and sacrament, not an institution, and that it includes all people of God. The church’s mission was to work for the reign of God on earth (which requires that *all* the people of God do their part) in addition to its salvific or redeeming purpose (a mission which mostly engages the clergy and hierarchy). Further, Vatican II described creation as divine, which means that the church must be in the world and must work for justice and peace without trying to replace civil society or make it subservient.

All of these concepts caused a revolution in the social mission of the church—particularly in the US where educated people did not reject institutionalized religion, as was the case in increasingly secular Western Europe. This upheaval created a need for new ways of thinking and making judgments, one that was based upon natural law principles but which implied a certain humility. The need for this new attitude stemmed from the recognition that moral certitude or “one right answer” is not always possible

# Bookshelf

## **The Feminist Politics of US Catholic and Iranian Shi’i Women**

*Elizabeth M. Bucar (Georgetown University Press, 2011, 201 pp)*

On a visit to Iran, the author met with a woman, active in politics, who sharply rejected the word “feminist.” This experience was the beginning of *Creative Conformity*, which asks “Does such a thing as cross-cultural feminist politics exist?” The words of Ayatollah Khomeini and Pope John Paul II—who both spoke often about womanhood—provide a backdrop for case studies of Shi’i and Catholic women, who sometimes use traditional models like Fatimah and Mary to frame their experiences.

## **Reproductive Health and Gender Equality Method, Measurement and Implications**

*Guang-zhen Wang (Ashgate, 2010, 226 pp)*

Women’s reproductive health discussions used to be overshadowed by a biomedical approach that focused on avoiding illness more than on attaining a positive state of well-being. The work of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the International Conference on Population and Development, however, was based on the assumption that a rights-based approach would lead to concrete improvements in women’s overall reproductive health. This book attempts to find empirical support for this idea by examining data from 137 developing countries. This evidence supported the hypothesis that gender equality and maternal-child care were predictors of women’s reproductive health in these areas, although some dimensions had stronger correlations than others.

## **Reproduction, Globalization and the State New Theoretical and Ethnographic Perspectives**

*Carole H. Browner and Carolyn F. Sargent, editors (Duke University Press, 2011, 312 pp)*

This collection of anthropological essays depicts reproductive issues as the intersection where the individual and the collective shape each other. In this context, globalization can mean anything from the introduction of new reproductive technology to the movement of families from one continent to another. Contributors examine subjects like in vitro fertilization and Islam; sex tourism and gender in the Caribbean; HIV & AIDS and motherhood in India; reproductive choices among European migrants; and family planning policy in Mexico.

*(continued on page 52)*

in complex situations that are mixes of morality, economics, politics and sociology. Curran notes that when the church engages with the world, it must recognize all of these nuances.

Curran’s work, as a social history and not a moral treatise, focuses on *praxis*—examining the changes on the ground in several areas—Catholic healthcare, education, efforts to promote structural social change, sexual conduct, worker rights and delivery of charity. Around Vatican II, Catholic hospitals began to operate in a for-profit environment. Catholic charities needed to compete with numerous other charities for con-

tributions and for government grants. Catholic education became increasingly less sectarian. And, as the church’s people and institutions began to engage with the larger American society, questions begin to be raised about what is uniquely Catholic. What dogmatic teachings are essential parts of being Catholic? Can a Catholic hospital teach about and distribute contraception? Can a Catholic support a war deemed to be unjust? How much religious education is required in a classroom made up of mostly non-Catholic students? And, of course, how does a Catholic hospital deal with abortion?

# Bookshelf (continued from page 51)

## **Church, State and Society An Introduction to Catholic Social Doctrine**

*J. Brian Benestad (Catholic University of America Press, 2011, 500 pp.)*

The subtitle to this book is perhaps a little misleading. While *Church, State and Society* does address some of the social teachings from the Catholic tradition, a few unexpected themes get thrown in the mix. There is a perplexing chapter on law and public policy that seems to place such an emphasis on feeling sorrow as part of the human moral process that “mood brighteners”—which may mean antidepressants—are considered to be a threat to our humanity. Equally facile is the use of the “slippery slope” idea that abortion leads to atrocities on a par with Nazi Germany. Catholic social doctrine may have been better elucidated if the author did not range so far afield from the church documents cited in the less editorial sections of the book.

## **Secrecy, Sophistry and Gay Sex in The Catholic Church The Systematic Destruction of an Oblate Priest**

*Richard Wagner (The Nazca Plains Corporation, 2011, 254 pp.)*

Richard Wagner was an Oblate priest on his way to completing a PhD—paid for by his order so that he could minister to the gay community—when a television interview falsely portrayed him as questioning clerical celibacy. The book is an autobiographical account of the controversy over Wagner as an openly gay priest and his subsequent parting of ways with his order. Those who have been following the hierarchy’s ineptitude in handling the sexual abuse crisis will be interested in this case study, which details the way miscommunication and lack of vision within the church leadership impact one person’s life. The book includes Wagner’s doctoral dissertation on a selection of gay priests and their sexuality.

The last chapters are all set out as mini-histories of the social mission, focusing on specific case studies and applying Curran’s established methodology to each. These case studies include the peace movement (How far does “just war” go in the nuclear age?); the César Chávez Farm Worker movement; Catholic Charities (Are they a charity or a force for social change?) and finally, Catholic healthcare.

Some theological (and practical) questions arise. In pursuing a social mission, is the church an enabler and provider, or is it a role model? Does it teach, do or teach by doing? Who speaks for the church, and how can the expertise of the speaker be judged when the positions are mixed—a combination of moral, economic, social and political? Some would suggest that the church has no competency in many of these areas and thus has no role. Others suggest that the church’s moral position requires that it demand that society conform its secular activities

to a moral standard. Curran, predictably, endorses a middle road: Anything that affects humanity and its communities is a legitimate moral issue, calling for a moral judgment—and therefore providing a legitimate place for the church to state a moral position. The Gospels are mediated through humans. But, the more specific the pronouncement and the more complex the issue, the more important it is that the church representative recognize all the judgmental elements at play—moral, economic, social and political—as well as the limitations of a speaker’s expertise in some of those aspects. For the church to find its way through these complicated terrains it needs both judgment and humility.

In the final chapter, Curran applies this “middle road” judgmental method to the bishops and abortion, recounting the US Catholic church’s history with this topic. Abortion was not really an issue for Catholic public debate until about 1970—and especially after *Roe v.*

*Wade* in 1973. Prior to that time, contraception was the major issue for Catholics. The bishops entered into the abortion debate at a time when the laity were largely ignoring moral teaching on artificial contraception—and were beginning to question the moral authority of the hierarchy in general.

In terms of abortion, the episcopacy focused initially on the rights of the fetus and the welfare of the mother. The issue was cast as a “civilization” issue, not a Catholic issue. For a while it seemed that Cardinal Bernardin’s “consistent ethic of life”—which focused on a wide range of quality of life issues and the role of church and government in dealing with those topics—was gaining ascendancy. But after his death, the church (under Boston’s Cardinal Bernard Law and New York’s Cardinal Edward Egan) began down the path of abortion as the primary issue, then the only issue—to the exclusion of all others. So inflexible was this view that the Catholic church began to be associated with certain antichoice conservatives whose records on other social issues were not compatible with most Catholic social teaching. This led to well-publicized denials of the Eucharist, election instruction sheets and homilies featuring polemics on single-issue voting—as well as a total refusal to consider any compromises which might reduce the total number of abortions.

The book ends with questions about whether the Catholic hierarchy had absorbed some of the lessons that it should have learned from Vatican II. The “humility” in the absence of “one right answer” that Curran sees as crucial in the post-Vatican II world is difficult to square with the hierarchy’s current focus on abortion above all other concerns—even the Catholic concept of social justice. Curran may travel down a “middle road” in his search for a contemporary Catholicism, but as scholarship shows, the Catholic church in the US has not always gone down one path—sometimes it has pursued “taking care of our own,” and sometimes it has focused on other priorities. ■



# Catholicism and Poland's National Soul

By Malgorzata Halaba

## Faith and Fatherland: Catholicism, Modernity, and Poland

Brian Porter-Szucs

(Oxford University Press, 2011, 296 pp)

978-0195399059, \$55.00

**B**RIAN PORTER-SZUCS' *FAITH and Fatherland: Catholicism, Modernity, and Poland* is a comprehensive study of Poland's Catholic church over the last two centuries. It explores the development of different schools of thought within the church, as well as the complicated relations between the church and the state at different stages in Poland's history.

It is not an exaggeration to say the book is a must-read for Polish scholars and politicians alike because it deals beautifully with a number of stereotypes that contemporary Poles—Catholic or non-Catholic—have to face.

One of these preconceptions is that Poland equals Catholicism—that the Catholic church has always been the cradle of Poland's independence and national spirit.

Porter-Szucs easily proves that both of these ideas are slightly exaggerated, to put it mildly.

First, there has been a great deal of religious diversity in Poland over the centuries. Until the end of the 18<sup>th</sup>

century, the Republic of Poland and Lithuania was a mixture of Catholics, Jews, Eastern Orthodox, Protestants, Armenian Catholics and even Muslims.

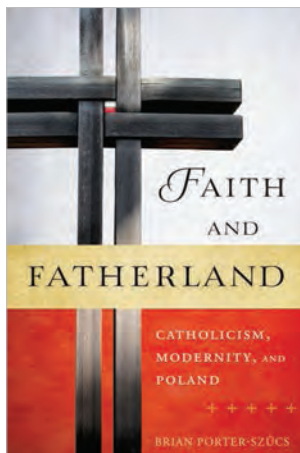
Many of today's Poles also believe that ever since the 19<sup>th</sup> century—when Poland was partitioned and occupied by Russia, Prussia and the Habsburg Empire—the church has been the center of national resistance and played a key role in saving “Polishness.” This is not quite true, Porter-Szucs argues—religion was far less important to “national survival” than is usually assumed. Even during the worst years of denationalization, the

church was never the only space within which Poles could express and cultivate their ethnicity. In fact, sometimes the opposite was true: the “official institutions of the church tended to oppose the patriotic cause throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the Catholic hierarchy became one of the few consistent bastions of loyalty in partitioned Poland,” Porter-Szucs says. He adds that the strong link between faith and fatherland emerged only in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and that “it would be many decades before it became unquestioned common sense that Poles were necessarily Catholic.”

However, this popular myth does seem to be set in stone when it comes to the church in Poland's present political and social life and the hierarchy's strong influence over contemporary destinies. The overwhelming conviction that the Catholic church played a pivotal role in regaining Poland's independence and “preserving the nation” subsequently led to the general acceptance that the church leaders have the final say over every issue—be it abortion, contraception, in vitro fertilization, education or a TV program. The hierarchy, on its side, has started to believe the nation would cease to exist save for its constant intervention.

Obviously, such an attitude has led to serious consequences, especially for women's reproductive rights. In Poland, abortion and contraception have long been less of an individual matter and their repression more like a national *raison d'être*, replacing the threat of personal damnation with the danger of national decline. Thus, Porter-Szucs says, when the debate over abortion and birth control intensified in the 1990s, ending with an abortion ban, the focus moved from religious judgments of individual women who have abortions to abortion being discussed as a matter of public policy with consequences for the national soul.

The view that childbearing is not a matter of individual choice, but rather an obligation toward the nation, is strengthened by the cult of the Virgin Mary. On Polish soil this has developed into the female ideal: the Mother-Pole (Matka-Polka). “This cultural figure was characterized by her ability to stand astride the public and private realms: she had a powerful and sometimes domineering nature, but was defined by her service to others; she played a vital role in the life of the nation, but she remained entirely within the domestic sphere.... She was characterized by a limitless ability to endure suffering, as she gave up her own pleasures and dreams so that the nation might survive,” Porter-Szucs writes. The Matka-Polka stereotype—



**MALGORZATA HALABA** is a Warsaw-based reporter for Dow Jones Newswires as well as a financial correspondent. She has also worked as an interpreter and a marketing consultant.

# Reports Worth Reading

## **Committed to Availability, Conflicted About Morality: What the Millennial Generation Tells Us about the Future of the Abortion Debate and the Culture Wars**

*Public Religion Research Institute, 2011*

While it pays special attention to Americans who came of age around the year 2000, this report examines the attitudes about abortion among multiple age groups, religious backgrounds and political affiliations. The large number of opinion surveys summarized here provide much useful data, but “Committed to Availability” is also a useful reminder that most people’s views on the issue are both complex and dependent on the way the question is asked. Interestingly, one of the beliefs with the most support across racial, religious and political lines is the idea that it is wrong for religious leaders to publicly pressure politicians about their stance on abortion.

## **6th Annual Global Parliamentarian’s Summit Conference Report: Balancing the Scales of Women’s Lives in the Countdown to 2015**

*Canadian Association of Parliamentarians for Population and Development (CAPPD), 2010*

This useful overview of the 2010 meeting of the CAPPD provides French and English summaries of key presentations. Themes include the Millennium Development Goals, indigenous health and HIV/AIDS.

## **Current Status and Directions for Advancement of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Central and Eastern Europe**

*Astra, 2011*

There is a growing gap in reproductive health between Eastern and Western Europe that goes deeper than healthcare systems in the process of reform or national financial challenges. This report from Astra, a group of reproductive health advocates and advocacy organizations working in Central and Eastern Europe, attempts to pinpoint some of these differences, and concludes that in some countries, reproductive health and women’s rights in general are not seen as a priority.

In most countries from the region, contraceptives are not covered by public health insurance. Even in places where abortion is legal under some circumstances, there is little choice in abortion methods, poor infection control and often the only method of pain relief is general anesthesia. The report examines these conditions in light of European laws and international agreements related to sexual and reproductive health, most of which are non-binding.

still alive today—helps explain why today’s Poles are so attached to a sharp division of gender roles and why feminism remains relatively marginal, according to the author.

All the above doesn’t mean *Faith and Fatherland* is addressed solely to the Polish audience—not at all. For foreigners, the book offers an insight into Poland’s history seen through the lens of the Roman Catholic church. Without this insight one would find it difficult to comprehend a phenomenon like Father Rydzyk’s Radio Maryja broadcasts—which have been called a loudspeaker for the fundamentalist branch of the church or for Poland’s streak of anti-Semitism. The truth is, the contemporary trends visible in the Polish church, deeply rooted in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the prewar years, remained in cold storage during the Communist regime, but they blossomed after the collapse of the system in 1989. It is difficult to decipher the church’s role in modern-day Poland without tracing the story outlined in this book.

But, as Porter-Szucs argues, it would be a mistake and an oversimplification to see Polish Catholicism as a tradition generating nothing more but xenophobic nationalism. In addition to the Polish-centric rhetoric, there has always been a parallel school of thought promoting an open and progressive church. The relationship between ideas and ideologies on one hand, and social groups and individuals on the other, is a subject of frequent misunderstanding and one of the central themes of the book.

“This confusion inspires people to ask how a religion of peace could lead a person to commit an act of violence, how a progressive ideology could draw people to authoritarian politics, how conservative beliefs could coexist with transgressive personal behavior, and so on,” the author writes. Such a view is based on a mistaken tendency to see ideology as a static entity that shapes people instead of being shaped by them.

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MUZEUM SIECESII/POLISH NATIONAL MUSEUM, POZNAN.

Wlastimil Hofman, "Madonna with Starlings," 1909.

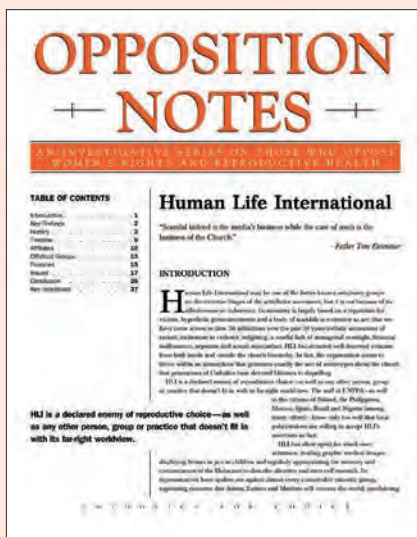
The view that childbearing is not a matter of individual choice, but rather an obligation toward the nation, is strengthened by the cult of the Virgin Mary. On Polish soil this has developed into the female ideal: the Mother-Pole (Matka-Polka).

"Once we recognize that people *participate* in ideological formations, *appropriate* theological concepts, and *utilize* doctrinal claims, we realize that every large *ism* is a vehicle for thought and action, but never the cause," Porter-Szucs says.

That's why the modern, open Łagiewniki Church as well the Toruń Church—Radio Maryja's headquarters—can easily exist within the bounds of the same Catholic tradition here in Poland. As the author concludes, "Neither is more genuinely Catholic than the other because both participate in legacies developed over the past couple of centuries."

Despite being a lapsed Catholic converted into an atheist, I never miss an opportunity to expand my knowledge of Poland's ruling religion and its many undercurrents, especially because good, critical or simply unbiased books about Catholicism are still a rarity here. Reading *Faith and Fatherland* was a real feast for me, and it is recommended for both Poles and non-Poles who want a fresh perspective on the role of a church that has never been synonymous with the Polish state. ■

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## Index: Republicans Are Prochoice (continued from back cover)

Sources: (a) Harris Interactive, "Americans for UNFPA Women's Global Health Survey," September 2010, in Population Action International, "Review of Polling on Family Planning," 2010. (b) CNN poll conducted by ORC International, September 2011. (c) National Family Planning and Reproductive Health Association, "Family Planning Facts: Poll Finds Support for Access to Contraception," July 21, 2009. Exact wording "four in five Republicans." (d) Lake Research Partners, Poll for National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association and Communications Consortium Media Center, May 2011. (e) Hart/ViaNovo, "Support for International Family Planning and Reproductive Health Programs," March-May 2009, in Population Action International, "Review of Polling on Family Planning," 2010. (f) World Public Opinion, "American Public Opinion and Global Health," May 20, 2009. (g) Public Strategies, "Reproductive Health Care Poll of Republicans and Independents," 2008. (h) Lake Research Partners, "Election Night Population Action Omnibus," November 2010, in Population Action International, "Review of Polling on Family Planning," 2010. (i) Hart Research, "Planned Parenthood Polling," 2010.



*"I went into marriage all starry-eyed about how [Natural Family Planning] NFP was going to be an aid to our communication ... and then wound up sad, lonely and wondering what was wrong with me and my marriage when NFP seemed not only to be interfering with the way I wanted to mother my children, but actually hurting my relationship with my husband on occasion."*<sup>1</sup>

—Danielle Bean, mother of eight, writing in the conservative magazine *Crisis* about Natural Family Planning in practice.

*"Opening up the ministry of the church to lay people, to married people, to priests—to women. In other words, not confining it to the male celibate priesthood as we've had in the past, because clearly that is not working now so we have to begin to think in different ways. But the Vatican is increasingly forbidding any discussion on that."*<sup>2</sup>

—Reverend Tony Flannery, leader of Ireland's Association of Catholic Priests, naming some of the changes the Catholic church hierarchy does not want to confront.

*"It's hard to imagine that a girl who remains involved with Girl Scouts into young adulthood won't eventually learn of the connections her organization has with 'prochoice,' pro-contraception and 'reproductive freedom' groups.... That will inevitably create contradictions between her Catholic faith and her Scouting experience."*<sup>3</sup>

—Auxiliary Bishop James D. Conley of Denver, quoting a youth minister's concerns that girls are being "influenced" by the Girls Scouts USA's views on reproductive health.

*"What troubles me more is that parts of the hierarchy knuckle under to these loudmouths because they're afraid of being berated themselves."*<sup>4</sup>

—Jesuit Klaus Mertes of Germany, about the effect of a "self-righteous minority in the church" trying to silence those who want answers from the bishops about their poor response to the sexual abuse scandal.

*"If he still does not change, the church can speak to him, which is done through the bishop. [The bishop] exercises the authority of Christ. Christ then says that if that person is still obstinate and will not change, treat them as a tax collector or Gentile. Expel him."*<sup>5</sup>

—Bishop Samuel Aquila of Fargo, ND, giving his perspective on how the church should deal with Catholic politicians who support abortion rights.

*"If we are afraid to energetically denounce the abominable laws regarding the new global ethos, regarding marriage, the family in all of its forms, abortion, laws in total opposition to the laws of nature and of God ... then the prophetic words of Ezekiel will fall on us as a grave divine reproach."*<sup>6</sup>

—Cardinal Robert Sarah, in a sermon to seminarians at the Community of St. Martin.

*"As recently as the 1970s, almost 90 percent of Irish Catholics went to Mass at least once a week. Today, the number is closer to 25 percent. And in some parts of Dublin, just 2 or 3 percent of self-described Catholics regularly go to church."*<sup>7</sup>

—PBS Religion and Ethics Newsweekly discusses Ireland's decreasing mass attendance in the television feature, "Decline of the Irish Catholic Church."

*"I think that violence against homosexual persons is not acceptable and should be rejected, even though this does not imply an endorsement of their behavior."*<sup>8</sup>

—Archbishop Silvano Tomasi, the Holy See's permanent observer at the United Nations, emphasizing that the church does not support violence against LGBT individuals.

<sup>1</sup> Danielle Bean, "Five Ways I Don't Love Natural Family Planning," *Crisis Magazine*, July 8, 2011. <sup>2</sup> Deborah Potter, "Decline of Irish Catholic Church," Religion & Ethics Newsweekly, July 15, 2011. <sup>3</sup> Auxiliary Bishop James D. Conley, "The Good about Girl Scouting, and a Caution," *Denver Catholic Register*, June 1, 2011. <sup>4</sup> Holger Stark and Peter Sensierski, "'We Kept Quiet about Sexual Abuse for Too Long,'" *Der Spiegel*, July 28, 2011. <sup>5</sup> Steven Ertelt, "Catholic Bishop: Boot Pro-Abortion Politicians from Church," LifeNews.com, August 16, 2011. <sup>6</sup> Matthew Cullinan Hoffman, "Vatican Cardinal: Divine judgment will fall on priests who do not oppose abortion, homosexuality," LifeSite News, July 25, 2011. <sup>7</sup> Deborah Potter, "Decline of the Irish Catholic Church," Religion and Ethics Newsweekly, July 15, 2011. <sup>8</sup> George Vogt, "Vatican Official: UN Gay 'Rights' Agenda Endangers Church's Freedom," *Catholic World News*, July 8, 2011.

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(References on page 55)