

Family & ProLife News Briefs

January 2023

New Year & New Start To Promote the Dignity of Human Life

Rally for Life - in D.C. or Home State?

Many supporters of human life again will be attending the national **March for Life** in Washington, DC, on Friday, January 20th. Especially positive are the ever-increasing numbers of high school and college students who enliven the whole day with their singing, praying and enthusiasm for the goal of respecting life from conception to natural death. Others arrive the day before and attend programs, galas and evening church services.

One notable program, **Life Fest**, is being sponsored by the Knights of Columbus and the Sisters of Life who invite everyone to attend a morning rally featuring dynamic speakers, music, Holy Mass, and more. Held at the D.C. Entertainment and Sports Arena, the program runs 7:30-10:30 am on Jan. 20th, right before the March for Life.. **LifeFest2023.com** asks: Why Life Fest? The answer: Because Every Human Person Is Made in God's Image; Because Our World Is Crying out for Healing; Because Love Is the Answer.

Some state respect life groups are planning rallies for later in the year. For example, New Jersey is planning a **Rally for Life** on Saturday, June 24, 2023, 11 am - 1 pm, outside the State House Annex in Trenton to celebrate the anniversary of the Dobbs Supreme Court decision that overturned *Roe v. Wade*.

What Do Love & Marriage Mean Today?

For most people today, "marriage is about love." The precise meaning of the word "love" is never spelled out too clearly, but most people seem to simply agree with President Barack Obama, who said that "love is love." But this rejects thousands of years of wisdom about male-female relationships. Until very recently marriage was identified not as a sexual-romantic union dissolvable at will but as an subordination of feeling and "personal happiness" to the goal of a stable family for the raising of children. Today, both in no-fault divorce and in universal **cohabitation**, our society has clearly embraced the "love" union model, except ironically we now call it ... marriage, out of cultural nostalgia or for the sake of respectability.

Our culture rejects that "marriage is between a man and a woman" when the dominant understanding rejects as essential the possible bearing and raising of children (and thus sexual difference). But research indicates that both **male and female parents serve best** the welfare of children.

Today's views reflect an inadequate understanding even of love itself. Ultimately, if one reflects deeply about the experience of love, one discovers what Servant of God Luigi Giussani called "the law of life":

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Marriage & Divorce Declined in 2020

How did the pandemic affect existing marriages and relationships. While both marriage and divorce rates fell by double digits in 2020, a few more years of data are needed to determine the longer-term impact. 74% of married couples surveyed in late 2020 felt the pandemic strengthened their marriage, and 82% said it made them feel more committed.

Among singles, 74% are now looking to find a partner who wants to marry. This is the second year in a row where far more singles are eager for a committed long-term relationship compared with the prepandemic survey of 2019. Young people are much more inclined to focus on attributes that increase the odds of long-term relationship **success**. For years "physical attractiveness" has ranked among one of the topmost desirable attributes in a potential partner. This year, it has been knocked out of the top five most-desired traits. Instead, 92% of singles now rank "emotional maturity" & "comfortably communicating their needs & wants" among the most important traits. And the top attribute most singles are looking for is someone they can **trust and confide** in. This bodes well for longer, healthier relationships.



An important factor **keeping marriages together** is a strong desire to want the relationship to succeed. Just like most things in life, even in a relationship, if you really want it to work, you will pick the right priorities and make the right trade-offs to increase the odds of success. Also important are kindness and generosity—to yourself and your partner. [excerpted from Shar Dubey, *Wall St. Journal*, 12/15/22]

Adoption Fills a Mother's Waiting Arms

As I hold my youngest baby in my arms, I am grateful for the choices his **birth mother** made that led him to become a part of our family. I'm thankful for the radical hospitality she showed by carrying him for nine months and doing all she could to keep him healthy and safe. I'm thankful for the hours she spent poring over the profiles of waiting families and discerning which one she wanted her son to join. I'm especially thankful she chose us!

I'm thankful for the brave love shown by all my sons' birth mothers and for all those women who choose life for their children. Being asked to be the mother of another woman's child is the greatest gift I have ever received. If we can promote adoption as a good and **empowering choice for mothers** to make when they're unable or unwilling to welcome a child, adoptions will

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Life is fulfilled only in making a complete, unconditional gift of self. This is what people really, though confusedly, seek in affective relationship. A love that can end is not a completely true love, because a gift that can be revoked is not a true gift.

This is the deeper reason why the bearing of children (at least as a possibility) is intrinsically part of the definition of marriage, making it a “natural” institution rather than a mere legal fiction. The birth of a child cannot be undone & literally “incarnates” the parents’ love.

Catholics need to keep advocating for public policies that support childbearing and reward parents who live with their children. But the more fundamental task is to give witness (in a society that has largely forgotten it) to the “great mystery” of the natural coming together of man and woman in a fruitful, indissoluble union.

[excerpt from Carlo Lancellotti, Commentaries, 12/9/22]

Hiding Truth Through Euphemism

For more than 50 years, pro-abortion activists have used euphemisms to hide the various horrible aspects of abortion. The Associated Press Stylebook sets the usage and grammatical format for hundreds of news agencies, laying out style and terms in an alphabetized book several hundred pages long. “Do not use the term ‘late-term abortion,’” the stylebook said in a December post on Twitter. “The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists [ACOG] defines late term as 41 weeks through 41 weeks and 6 days of gestation, and abortion does not happen in this period.”

“This is absurd,” said *LifeNews*, a pro-life group. “When SCOTUS came up with three trimesters in 1973, late-term was understood to be post viability or the 3rd trimester. **Redefining it to be the 6 days before term is not medicine**; it’s propaganda designed to gloss over late-term abortions.” Another on Twitter said: “Is ‘Late-term abortion’ too aggressive a way to describe stabbing a viable unborn baby in the heart with a needle containing potassium chloride & delivering its lifeless corpse? The ghouls populating our elite class traffic in euphemism because they have nothing else.”

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops wrote: “Partial-birth abortion is the term Congress has used to describe a procedure that crosses the line from abortion to infanticide. The doctor delivers a substantial portion of the living child outside his mother’s body — the entire head in a head-first delivery or the trunk past the navel in a feet-first delivery — then kills the child by crushing his skull or removing his brain by suction.” [excerpt from Joseph Curl, DailyWire.com, 12/8/22]

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I was staring at my phone, weeping.

[This is what Kate Bachelder Odell wrote in the *Wall St. Journal* (12/14/22) in reviewing a book on motherhood by Jessica Grose.]

“My second son, then 7 days old, had flunked his hearing screening at the hospital, and since then I’d been harassed via emails, texts and phone calls that he needed more testing and might be deaf. It would ultimately prove a false alarm, but I couldn’t know that as I stared down at my baby. My husband corralled everyone in this mass meltdown into bed. It would be unwise, he told me, to continue reading about cochlear implants on the internet.”

The demands, uncertainties and complex emotions that accompany the arrival of children can be intense and overwhelming. Ms. Grose concedes that raising children is easier now than in the past. She also says today’s parenting is “uniquely difficult in the amount of information we get about what we’re supposed to be doing.” A clinical psychologist reports many of her clients **cite social media as a source of their “anxiety, jealousy, shame, guilt.”**

In a revealing remark, one psychology professor tells Ms. Grose that “being forced to stop or reduce working” during the pandemic “took an emotional toll on moms.” But women often divert time or attention away from paid labor when they have kids. For most, the relationship will be far more valuable later in life than the few years of marginal retirement contributions they’d gain from working while paying for expensive child care.

Overwhelming moments arrive, then pass. What you can handle will expand; what overwhelms you now will soon be routine. Life will be suffused with far more focus, substance and meaning and less self-absorption. Children will prevent you from pursuing personal ambitions at all costs—and thank God for that guard rail.

Aside from just having a ministerial preference for the unborn, we also serve the poor, the imprisoned, the marginalized, the oppressed, the sick and the aged. Whatever we need to do to uphold the image and likeness of God in humanity is what we do. Deacon Kevin Cummings, Archdiocese of Kansas City, KS, on the pro-life apostolate, Deacons of Hope, that he started with Deacon Doug Hemke, Kansas City-St. Joseph Diocese, Missouri.

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certainly rise.

I pray that when faced with an unplanned, unwanted or crisis pregnancy, women will choose life for their babies and see adoption as an empowering choice. I pray, too, that a waiting mother’s empty arms will soon be holding a baby of her own.

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