

In the past 20 hours I've been bombarded with pro-life propaganda, which I'll consider in reverse order (the letters corresponding to the \$s below): **A**, a FIRST THINGS letter; **B**, a newspaper essay (in today's CCT); & **C**, a worst-case-scenario almost-three-hour film (in the Craigville Tabernacle series, last night).

A
The letter (Aug.-Sept./00 4) argues that the three branches of our Federal government are free to interpret & *act on* the Declaration & the Constitution. Implicitly against Roe V. Wade, the writer argues, against what's being called "judicial usurpation," that we citizens are to obey "the Constitution's fundamental moral principles, especially the right to life"---a preposterous presentistic extension of the political phrase "right to life" to include the unborn. This anachronistic-anarchistic mentality is a green light to anti-"abortuary" violence & irrational anti-democratic rhetoric.

B
A Roman Catholic priest & his "parish's pro-life chairwoman" are attacking a pro-choice letter written by a Jew & supported by me (in the CCT a few days later). The Jew & I have a horror of, & firm argumentation against, government intervention between physician & patient. The essay (1) falsely claims "the Catholic Church has always been outspoken in defense of the sacredness of life." A breathtakingly unhistorical assertion! Cardinal Bernardin's "seamless garment" pro-life (including no death penalty), & the Pope's "gospel of life" (development from his PhD dissertation on the person), are the chief supports for the recent political phrase (parallel with "right to life") "the sacredness of life." (2) The essay uses uncritically, for political punch, the phrase "life is a gift of God" ("whether in the womb, at death or any stage in between"). The RC invests human life with a sacred taboo by biologizing the pregnant but imprecise phrase "image of God," a hermeneutically unjustifiable reification of the metaphor (in the opinion of many of us biblical scholars). (3) While the essay is right that "the law is not always right," the writers are on the edge of saying that the citizens have a higher right to pick & choose which laws they will obey in a "depraved" nation that "allows the killing of pre-born babies." (4) Unfairly, the essay describes the abortion process as not involving a "patient/physician relationship" & as "without medication or counseling or regard for...the longterm mental, physical or emotional health of the mother." Nothing said, of course, of her condition--or the child's!--if she's government-forced to deliver. (5) The essay tries to negate the Jew's analogy to Gandhi's religion causing his wife's death (by refusing antibiotics): religion (said the Jew) should not be allowed to capture law to intervene between patient & physician, frustrating the former's will. The essay shifts the focus from the patient to the fetus. (6) The essay implies, irrelevantly, that antiCatholicism is a driving force behind the pro-choice movement.

C
"The Green Mile" (death walk to the electric chair, "green" because so was the floor of the walk-way) is film fiction aimed to put the death penalty in the worst light with highest pathos, the viewers asked to witness the execution (for double murder!) of a huge black muscle-man, utterly non-violent, who was captured trying to bring life back into two little murdered girls (the real murderer dying on death-row, where he was imprisoned for another crime). "John" was so pro-life he resurrected a dead mouse (in his hands, a bright radiance emanating), by hand also curing Tom Hanks' (his chief guard's) urinary obstruction, & by mouth healing the warden's wife (who was dying of an inoperable brain tumor "deep down, the size of a lemon"), whose mouth was filled with the healing radiance right after he kissed her on the lips.

The supernatural origin of these healings was underscored by the poltergeist-like happenings attendant upon them--lightning, electric bulbs exploding, mirrors cracking, earthquakes. The healers four guards agreed that the tumor disappearance was "a miracle." But at least for self-protection, the author-director has a character say that the healer's power "is just a force of nature," & on occasion "he gave some of his power" to others....Anticipating having to give the order for the healer's electrocution, Tom Hanks said "For the first time in my life I'm afraid of going to hell." "God wouldn't give a gift like that to anybody who could kill a child." "What can I say on the Day of Judgment?"....The black man went to "my heavenly Father," & preferred death to "life here" in prison, which he might have gotten had he been sprung by DNA (this 1999 film was set in 1935)....A patent sermon against the death penalty.

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It's not about zealotry — it's about life

BY REV. MARCEL BOUCHARD
and PATRICIA STEBBINS
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The July 17 My View column by David E. Fisher was exceedingly well-written and entertaining, as one might expect from a published author. However, the passage from "keyed cars, Gandhi and penicillin" to a justification for abortion becomes disconnected somewhere along the route.

The argument is made that objection to abortion is chiefly the domain of "religious zealots." Since the Catholic Church has always been outspoken in its defense of the sacredness of life, it is to be presumed the reference was to our denomination. In fact, people of all faiths (or none) — Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Muslims, atheists — are active in the pro-life camp.

Why is it that when environmentalists launch a defense of the baby seals, the right whale or the piping plover they are not identified by their religion? Nor are members of Planned Parenthood or the National Abortion Rights Action League identified by their religion when they vigorously promote the cause of "choice" or support political candidates and parties who espouse their views. It is only those opposed to the poisoning, dismembering or pre-birth brain suctioning of the unborn who are identified as dogmatic fanatics. Their arguments are merely "religious rhetoric." Their contention that life is a gift of God, whether in the womb, at death or any stage in between, is ridiculed as me-

Their contention that life is a gift of God, whether in the womb, at death or any stage in between, is ridiculed as medieval fanaticism.

CAE - *in the pro-life movement*

In truth, the pro-life movement is made up of people and is growing daily, largely because humans of all races, ethnicity and beliefs have become increasingly sickened by the slaughter of innocents, particularly via partial-birth abortion. It is a fact that most members of the Supreme Court have given their blessing to this dreadful procedure and that our president and some senators support it also.

But how "in touch" are they with the people? What does matter is that they are acting in direct opposition to the will of their constituents. Frequent polls indicate that the great majority of Americans are opposed to partial-birth abortion.

The American Medical Association

has loudly and frequently stated that "there is never any legitimate reason to perform" this procedure. In the event a mother's life is in danger, there are more immediate and prudent medical options available, including Caesarean section. When the choice is to undergo the grueling, three-day partial-birth procedure, obviously the only objective is to deliver a dead infant.

Does the fact that abortion is legal make it right? Consider Prohibition. Consider slavery. The law is not always right. Having become so depraved, as a nation, that we allow the killing of pre-born babies, there are now those who believe the next step is to permit mothers and fathers to choose to euthanize children up to three months of age if they do not wish to keep them. Would this be an acceptable "right" also? What method would we use to kill a smiling, gurgling infant in arms? Is the baby one can see and touch more precious than the one only two inches from birth?

And let us consider the statement that "if a woman needs an abortion it is a matter between her and her doctor."

This fallacy equates abortion with medical needs. Mr. Fisher cites the death of Mahatma Gandhi's wife, whose husband refused to allow "unnatural, foreign drugs into her body."

This is a comparison of apples to oranges — seriously ill Mrs. Gandhi was deprived of life-giving medicine, while abortion is the taking of a healthy life. Abortions are usually sought by women who do not want their babies

and in most cases, the woman goes directly to the abortion facility, where she is taken to a room and her child is aborted by someone she has never seen before. There is no patient/physician relationship here. We are not speaking of treatment for a medical illness, of diagnoses, "antibiotics to prevent blood poisoning" or performing life-saving surgery. We are speaking of the deliberate taking of a human life — without medication or counseling or regard for either the child or the long-term mental, physical and emotional health of the mother.

Further, to state that this "religious rhetoric" does "not belong in a doctor's office" is somewhat astonishing, since physicians, surgeons and numerous studies all readily agree that a person's religious faith is a strong factor in aiding recovery from illness.

Sadly, it takes a whole lot more than a prayer to help a woman recover from the emotional trauma of abortion.

The medical profession practices the art of life, of healing. Abortion is the practice of producing death.

Millions of people believe that in unwaveringly opposing and speaking out against abortion, their voices will eventually bring a new era of morality and justice for the unborn. Please God, let it be soon.

The Rev. Marcel Bouchard is pastor of Corpus Christi Roman Catholic Church in East Sandwich. Patricia Stebbins is the parish's pro-life chairwoman.