Love One Another

by Archbishop Jerome Listecki, archbishop of Milwaukee

For a long time now, I have felt that we have entered a post-Christian era in the history of western civilization. There is almost an embarrassment about being a Christian and a denial of the roots that Christianity has provided in the development of our society. In the European society, the Euro community refused to acknowledge the historical significance of Christianity in the development of European society. The pope made an impassioned plea for that recognition, but it fell on deaf ears. Now we have a European community that is clinging to its roots, as it is slowly being destroyed by its own hubris.

Here in the United States, we are apparently a European “wannabe.” We have been slowly disavowing ourselves of any connection to religion and separating ourselves from any symbols which may be offensive, though they have been in existence for decades. Part of it can be attributed to the tyranny of the minority—one person is offended by a statue or a picture reflecting some religious symbolism, and off we go to an activist court for social reconstruction—the sensitivity of the one is imposed on the many.

Oh! But we have separation of Church and state, they say (actually only by judicial edict). There was no separation when the religious hospitals were providing care in areas the government could not or would not. Nor when religious charities were providing for the homeless long before state welfare organizations were instituted.

Separation seems to be a concept of when we need you it’s “okay, please participate” and when we don’t “get out of our political way because we don’t need to be tainted by your religious zeal.” Religion is treated like the intellectually challenged adults that, in less enlightened times, would be kept separate from the family for fear of embarrassment and from the social elite who might think less of them.

As Catholics, we have weathered the governmental and societal bashing that has taken place for 2,000 years. We survived the Roman Empire, the monarchies, the “-isms,” of Nazism, communism and self-proclaimed “rationalists.” And we will survive the rejection of our own society and its continued attempt to muffle our voice and isolate us from the decision-making table. We will pay a price. But, we will not do so without preaching and teaching the truth.

The recent decision of the Supreme Court legalizing same-sex marriage is sad because it once again takes upon itself the redefinition of the word. This time it’s “marriage.” The definitions of words seem to not matter to the court. The simple truth

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From the beginning he created them, males and females were told to go forth and multiply.

In our brave new world, we can generate human beings in a test tube—no one need know who the father is. A surrogate can be used, as would an incubator, in order to fulfill the desire for a child by two males. The terms “mother” and “father” are now subject to redefinition. Perhaps it will take a village to raise the children, especially if they will not have identifiable role models. But, we have permitted same-sex individuals to claim marriage as a right at the cost of family deconstruction and role model redefinition.

I haven’t even broached the subject that God ordained marriage. From the beginning he created them, males and females were told to go forth and multiply. Jesus Christ, through His Church has established marriage as a sacrament, and it is evident in Her teachings how essential the understanding of marriage between a man and a woman is to the faith.

I know that you have often heard the term “cafeteria” Catholic. This is a Catholic that picks and chooses what is convenient in the teachings and ignores the rest. The Supreme Court decision was made by a court composed of six Catholics, with the majority opinion rendered by Catholic judge, Justice Anthony Kennedy (supported by another Catholic, Justice Sonia Sotomayor). Perhaps, he remembered another Kennedy claiming that he would not be guided by the pope or the teachings of the Church once he was elected president. The four dissenters were Catholic with an excellent dissenting opinion rendered by Justice Antonin Scalia (concurring Chief Justice Roberts, Justice Thomas and Justice Alito).

This was not the first time that a terrible decision was influenced or rendered by a Catholic on the Supreme Court. Chief Justice Tawney in the Dred Scott decision actually inferred that a slave, a man, a human being, was just a piece of chattel and must be returned to the owner. This decision was the seed of Civil War and the decision of the court to define a man as property. And Justice Brennan, the only Catholic on the high court, influenced the Court in the Roe v. Wade decision, voting with the majority. This decision denied any rights to the child in the womb which has led to the destruction of more than 50 million lives since 1973 (read The Brethren: Inside the Supreme Court by Bob Woodward and Scott Armstrong).

We will not be assuaged from what the Church teaches, and I believe it calls for even greater courage in the face of this rejection of truth. Ever the social critic, Cardinal Francis George may have been right when he said that he would die in his bed, his successor will die in jail and the one who follows his successor will die a martyr in the public square. He envisioned the social upheaval in our society as a mounting persecution of the Church. I will willingly wear the orange jumpsuit, if it means standing up for the truth and the Catholic faith.

I guess one doesn’t have to worry whether or not any Catholic judge or Catholic elected official would be compelled to follow the teachings of his or her faith. Unfortunately for some, it’s just a window dressing that can change with the seasons (political pressure, popular opinions and the polls). That’s a sad commentary on the effect of faith because so much truth and goodness (dignity of the human being) is found in the richness of a faith that mandates us to love one another.

See with God’s Eyes,

Reprinted from the July 26, 2015, bulletin of St. Isaac Jogues Parish, Hinsdale, Ill.
Supreme Court Decision on Marriage “A Tragic Error” Says President of Catholic Bishops’ Conference

WASHINGTON, JUNE 26, 2015—The U.S. Supreme Court decision, June 26, interpreting the U.S. Constitution to require all states to license and recognize same-sex “marriage” “is a tragic error that harms the common good and most vulnerable among us,” said Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Kentucky, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

The full statement follows:

Regardless of what a narrow majority of the Supreme Court may declare at this moment in history, the nature of the human person and marriage remains unchanged and unchangeable. Just as Roe v. Wade did not settle the question of abortion over 40 years ago, Obergefell v. Hodges does not settle the question of marriage today. Neither decision is rooted in the truth, and as a result, both will eventually fail. Today the Court is wrong again. It is profoundly immoral and unjust for the government to declare that two people of the same sex can constitute a marriage.

The unique meaning of marriage as the union of one man and one woman is inscribed in our bodies as male and female. The protection of this meaning is a critical dimension of the “integral ecology” that Pope Francis has called us to promote. Mandating marriage re-definition across the country is a tragic error that harms the common good and most vulnerable among us, especially children. The law has a duty to support every child’s basic right to be raised, where possible, by his or her married mother and father in a stable home.

Jesus Christ, with great love, taught unambiguously that from the beginning marriage is the lifelong union of one man and one woman. As Catholic bishops, we follow our Lord and will continue to teach and to act according to this truth.

I encourage Catholics to move forward with faith, hope and love: faith in the unchanging truth about marriage, rooted in the immutable nature of the human person and confirmed by divine revelation; hope that these truths will once again prevail in our society, not only by their logic, but by their great beauty and manifest service to the common good; and love for all our neighbors, even those who hate us or would punish us for our faith and moral convictions.

Lastly, I call upon all people of good will to join us in proclaiming the goodness, truth and beauty of marriage as rightly understood for millennia, and I ask all in positions of power and authority to respect the God-given freedom to seek, live by, and bear witness to the truth.


Website Information

We received information from our web host that many of the e-mails of people who receive our e-newsletter have “bounced back.” People often change their e-mail addresses, and we do not receive the updated information. Please take a minute to go to www.catholiccitizens.org and sign up again with your e-mail address. Every year over 30,000 people receive our e-newsletter which is sent out every weekend. It covers local, national and international Catholic news that you don’t want to miss! Sign up now!
Statement of Archbishop Blasé J. Cupich, Archbishop of Chicago

June 28, 2015—This week the Supreme Court of the United States issued two rulings with particular meaning for the Catholic Church.

In the first, the Court preserved subsidies for the 6.4 million low-income Americans who depend on them to purchase health insurance under the Affordable Care Act. We have issues with provisions of that legislation and will continue to advocate to preserve our religious freedom. However, we understand that for millions of individuals and families, most of them the working poor, this decision preserves access to health care and the promise it offers of a healthier, longer life.

In the second decision, the United States Supreme Court has ruled that two persons of the same sex have a constitutional right to marry each other. In doing so, the Court has re-defined civil marriage. The proposed reason for the ruling is the protection of equal rights for all citizens, including those who identify themselves as gay. The rapid social changes signaled by the Court ruling call us to mature and serene reflections as we move forward together. In that process, the Catholic Church will stand ready to offer a wisdom rooted in faith and a wide range of human experience.

It is important to note that the Catholic Church has an abiding concern for the dignity of gay persons. In fact, the Catechism of the Catholic Church says: “They must be accepted with respect, compassion, and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided.” (n. 2358). This respect must be real, not rhetorical, and ever reflective of the Church’s commitment to accompanying all people. For this reason, the Church must extend support to all families, no matter their circumstances, recognizing that we are all relatives, journeying through life under the careful watch of a loving God.

It is also important to stress that the Supreme Court’s redefinition of civil marriage has no bearing on the Catholic Sacrament of Matrimony, in which the marriage of man and woman is a sign of the union of Christ and the Church. In upholding our traditional concept of marriage, we are called to support those who have entered into this sacred and loving bond with God and each other.

This will be especially important for the members of our own Church as we walk together, respectful not only of the political demands of equality, but above all else, guided by the higher claims of divine revelation. Our aim in all of this will be to hold fast to an authentic understanding of marriage which has been written in the human heart, consolidated in history and confirmed by the Word of God.


Dark Clouds Forming

In his book Faith and the Future, Pope Benedict, writing as Cardinal Ratzinger, surveyed the landscape and saw dark clouds forming on the horizon.

“From the crisis of today the Church of tomorrow will emerge—a Church that has lost much. She will become small and will have to start afresh more or less from the beginning. She will no longer be able to inhabit many of the edifices she built in prosperity. As the number of her adherents diminishes, so will she lose many of her social privileges.”
The Next Culture War
by James M. Kushiner, executive director, The Fellowship of St. James

David Brooks in “The Next Culture War” quoted my friend Rod Dreher, who says, “We have to accept that we really are living in a culturally post-Christian nation.” I agree if by “accept” we mean recognize and acknowledge something pretty obvious.

Brooks, however, takes it to mean “give up.” Stop fighting. For, he notes, “most Christian commentary has opted for another strategy: fight on.” After the Obergefell decision for “gay marriage,” “Robert P. George, probably the most brilliant social conservative theorist in the country, argued that just as Lincoln persistently rejected the Dred Scott decision, so ‘we must reject and resist an egregious act of judicial usurpation.’”

“These conservatives are enmeshed in a decades-long culture war … over issues arising from the sexual revolution.”

As “a friend and admirer” of social conservatives, Brooks “would just ask them to consider a change in course. Consider putting aside … the culture war oriented around the sexual revolution.” For it’s “been a communications disaster, reducing a rich, complex and beautiful faith into a public obsession with sex.”

Really? Who put sex on public display? Homeschoolers or pornographers? Where would you see sexual obsession? At a Promise Keepers rally or gay pride parades? At small Christian liberal arts colleges or at V-Day campus parties at elite or state-run universities?

Brooks asks us to “consider a different culture war, one just as central to your faith and far more powerful in its persuasive witness.”

We live in a society plagued by formlessness and radical flux, in which bonds, social structures and commitments are strained and frayed. Millions of kids live in stressed and fluid living arrangements. Many communities have suffered a loss of social capital. Many young people grow up in a sexual and social environment rendered barbaric because there are no common norms ….

The defining face of social conservatism could be this: Those are the people who go into underprivileged areas and form organizations to help nurture stable families. Those are the people who build community institutions in places where they are sparse.

And those, I might add, are the people running institutions whose tax-exempt statuses may soon be in jeopardy. Who have been fined, sued, hounded from their jobs (remember Brendan Eichs at Mozilla)—not for carrying on a guerilla culture war but for simply believing what nearly all their persecutors believed 10 years ago.

The culture war has barely started, if we mean by war the conquering of an enemy. Believers are the enemy to be subjugated. Surrender! Use your church funds to pay for abortions and contraception!

Go ahead, Mr. Brooks, “Repair a society rendered atomized, unforgiving and inhospitable.” Communities languish, families are unstable and broken, kids live in fluid living arrangements: isn’t this the fault of the sexual revolution? The family, the building block of society, arises from the marital commitments of man and woman, to each other and to their children. You cannot bracket out sexual morality from this healthy social dynamic.

So, how do you rebuild families and communities without addressing sexual morals? With more condoms and Planned Parenthood “clinics”? Helping young boys become responsible fathers by suggesting they at least consider sodomy?

Too bad, conservatives! Shut up, move along now and do rebuild, but don’t talk to

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What Does the Church Teach?

*Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 2003*

Considerations regarding proposals to give legal recognition to unions between homosexual persons

4. There are absolutely no grounds for considering homosexual unions to be in any way similar or even remotely analogous to God’s plan for marriage and family. Marriage is holy, while homosexual acts go against the natural moral law. Homosexual acts “close the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity. Under no circumstances can they be approved” (Catechism of the Catholic Church 2357).

Sacred Scripture condemns homosexual acts as a serious depravity (cf. Rom 1:24-27; 1Cor 6:10; 1Tim 1:10). This judgment of Scripture does not of course permit us to conclude that all those who suffer from this anomaly are personally responsible for it, but it does attest to the fact that homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered ....

Nonetheless, according to the teaching of the Church, men and women with homosexual tendencies “must be accepted with respect, compassion and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided” (CCC 2358). They are called, like other Christians, to live the virtue of chastity. The homosexual inclination is however “objectively disordered” (CCC 2358) and homosexual practices are “sins gravely contrary to chastity” (CCC 2396).

5. In those situations where homosexual unions have been legally recognized or have been given the legal status and rights belonging to marriage, clear and emphatic opposition is a duty. One must refrain from any kind of formal cooperation in the enactment or application of such gravely unjust laws and, as far as possible, from material cooperation on the level of their application. In this area, everyone can exercise the right to conscientious objection.

11. The Church teaches that respect for homosexual persons cannot lead in any way to approval of homosexual behavior or to legal recognition of homosexual unions. The common good requires that laws recognize, promote and protect marriage as the basis of the family, the primary unit of society. Legal recognition of homosexual unions or placing them on the same level as marriage would mean not only the approval of deviant behavior, with the consequence of making it a model in present-day society, but would also obscure basic values which belong to the common inheritance of humanity. The Church cannot fail to defend these values, for the good of men and women and for the good of society itself.

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us about building materials! Make us bricks without straw!

A real culture war, arising from the sexual revolution, may be just getting started. Yes, we must fight on all fronts: in our churches, home, and in our hearts—so that chastity, fidelity, repentance and a quest for holiness in Christ render our families stronger and our witness more powerful. This will help us stand our ground while pushing back against the devouring forces arrayed against innocent human life and the life of the family. Never give up, never surrender! Only hirelings do that.

... for Christ, Creed & Culture.

*Reprinted with permission.*
American Catholics Are Flunking the Test of Evangelization

by Phil Lawler, CatholicCulture.org

Yesterday’s top Catholic World News headline news story points to the most urgent problem facing the Catholic Church in the United States: the decline in the American Catholic population.

As our headline story reports, there is some disagreement among experts about the extent of that decline. Pew Research finds that the Catholic population of the United States has fallen by three million in the past seven years. Other surveys suggest that the decline has been less severe or that the Catholic population may even have held steady over those same years. But no one is suggesting that the number of Catholics has increased.

That means we, as a Church, are doing something wrong. We are failing abjectly in our mission—failing to carry out the task assigned to us by Jesus Christ.

The Lord did not order us to publish new hymnals or to build hospitals or to balance diocesan budgets or bring about world peace or to eliminate economic inequality or to stop global warming. Those (or may not) be laudable efforts, but they are not the central mandate of the Church. Jesus did enjoin us to “make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

To be honest, the Church in the United States has never been very good at attracting converts. In the past, the American Catholic population grew steadily because of three factors: the children born to Catholic parents, the arrival of immigrants from Catholic countries and the non-Catholics who entered the Church as they married Catholic spouses. But today most American Catholic couples have only one or two children. Today Hispanic immigrants by the thousands come into the country as Catholics, but many soon switch to small Evangelical denominations. And today when a Catholic marries a non-Catholic, it is the Catholic partner who is statistically more likely to change religious affiliation.

So the numbers keep falling; while the American population grows, the Catholic drops. The Pew survey found that for every one American who comes into the Catholic Church, there are more than six who leave. If current trends continue, the number of American ex-Catholics will surpass the number of active American Catholics sometime within the next few decades.

Keep in mind, too, that the Pew figures are based solely on how respondents answer survey questions. If a respondent identifies himself as Catholic, he goes into the books as a Catholic, whether or not he ever goes to church. Since Mass attendance figures have been dropping, too, the grim reality is undoubtedly worse than the Pew statistics would suggest.

What do we plan to do about it? Many Catholics, I’m afraid, will see these survey figures as a reason to launch ambitious new programs for evangelization, complete with workbooks and staffing criteria and PowerPoint presentations. That’s not what we need. We already have a program for evangelization that has been successful for 2000 years: the liturgy. What we really need, in order to take advantage of that “program,” is a new attitude.

Back in February, when he celebrated Mass with the new members of the College of Cardinals, Pope Francis observed: “There are two ways of thinking and of having faith.” He explained: “We can fear to lose the saved, and we can want to save the lost.” When we stop worrying that we might offend someone by proclaiming the truths of the faith, and start realizing that

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Why Do We Light Votive Candles?

So many practices we observe are distinctively Catholic. They are familiar and common place, and yet their meaning is lost, even to life-long members of the Church. The familiar votive lights, or votive candles we place in front of the images of Our Lord or the Saints have been “restored” to our church. Contrary to popular thought, the reforms of the Second Vatican Council never asked for them to be removed.

The votive candle has its own very beautiful meaning that finds its roots in the Old Testament practice of sacrifice. Just as the incense that sent up its cloud of perfumed smoke Heavenward was a symbol of prayer, the candle consuming itself is a representation of sacrifice. That, for example, is why we make an “offering” for each candle we light. For the candle to be a true votive offering there has to be an element of sacrifice. Please make sure you leave the prescribed offering when lighting votive candles in church.

The candle burning its life out before the image of Our Lord or one of the saints is symbolic of a person’s love for God and his own desire to offer his sacrifices and if need be, his life itself for the glory of God. The lighting of these simple votive candles is a Catholic way to prepare the soul for a life of dedication and to offer the best of what he has to God. It is a symbol of the personal holocaust that souls are moved to make of themselves for the love of God.

The “continual” burning of the candle before the image of Our Lord or of the saint is also a reminder of the person’s desire to offer “continual prayer.” The necessities of life require that we take leave and go about our daily lives. But our burning candle remains as a silent witness and reminder of our continual prayer before being offered up before God. It burns as a continual plea, a continual intercession, keeping our prayer before Jesus or asking the saint to continually remember our prayer before the throne of God.

When we light the votive candles in church and make our offerings for them—we should always pause for a moment and offer a silent prayer. We should offer to the Lord our praise and thanksgiving, ask him for what we need and ask the intercession of the saints—ask them to pray continually for us before the face of God, to pray and beg the Lord that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.


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we might save someone by being forthright, we may begin drawing converts into the Church.

In another interesting CWN news story that appeared yesterday, we reported on a new written work by Pope-emeritus Benedict XVI. In his introduction to a new book by Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, the retired pontiff reminds us that the Church exists not only to serve the faithful, but to serve the spiritual needs of “the world in its entirety.” We have a responsibility to our neighbors: to bring them the Good News of salvation.

When things are going well, we should be drawing people into the Catholic Church. Even when things aren’t going particularly well—when we are doing just a mediocre job as Catholics—our communities should grow naturally, by birth and marriage and immigration. Right now we aren’t even doing a mediocre job. We’re flunking the test.

Reprinted with permission from Catholic World News
Smile on Catholic Citizens of Illinois

By Mary Anne Hackett, President

Catholic Citizens has been approved to participate in the Amazon Smile program. With your qualified purchases, you can donate to Catholic Citizens of Illinois, without any cost to you. Catholic Citizens receives .05 percent of qualified purchases.

AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support your favorite charitable organization every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at SMILE.AMAZON.COM you’ll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to your favorite charitable organization.

To shop at AmazonSmile simply go to SMILE.AMAZON.COM from the web browser on your computer or mobile device. You will see eligible products marked “Eligible for AmazonSmile donation” on their product detail pages. You use the same account on Amazon.com and AmazonSmile.

On your first visit to AmazonSmile, SMILE.AMAZON.COM you need to select a charitable organization to receive donations from eligible purchases before you begin shopping. You only need to select a charitable organization one time. AmazonSmile will remember your selection, and then every eligible purchase you make at SMILE.AMAZON.COM will result in a donation.

Won’t you help us by allowing us to receive a portion of your purchases? We thank you in advance for signing up and selecting Catholic Citizens of Illinois as the organization of your choice. God bless you for helping us to grow and bringing our Catholic Values to the public square.

Testimony of Sister Lucia

On February 16, 2008, Cardinal Carlo Caffara (Archbishop of Bologna), after a Mass celebrated at the tomb of St. Pio of Pietrelcina, granted an interview to Tele Radio Padre Pio, which was subsequently reported in the monthly magazine Voce di Padre Pio March, 2008. Here are some significant excerpts.

Q. There is a prophecy by Sister Lucia dos Santos, of Fatima, which concerns “the final battle between the Lord and the reign of Satan.” The battlefield is the family. Life and the family. We know that you were given charge by John Paul II to plan and establish the Pontifical Institute for the Studies on Marriage and the Family.

Yes, I was. At the start of this work entrusted to me by the Servant of God John Paul II, I wrote to Sister Lucia of Fatima through her Bishop as I couldn’t do so directly. Unexplainably however, since I didn’t expect an answer, seeing that I had only asked for prayers, I received a very long letter with her signature—now in the institute’s archives. In it we find written: the final battle between the Lord and the reign of Satan will be about marriage and the family. Don’t be afraid, she added, because anyone who works for the sanctity of marriage and the family will always be fought and opposed in every way, because this is the decisive issue. And then she concluded: however, Our Lady has already crushed its head.

Talking also to John Paul II, you felt too that this was the crux, as it touches the very pillar of creation, the truth of the relationship between man and woman among the generations. If the founding pillar is touched, the entire building collapses, and we see this now because we are at this point, and we know it.

Be a Saint!
by Pope Francis I

... Holiness is not only the prerogative of some: holiness is a gift that is offered to all; no one is excluded, it is what constitutes the distinctive character of every Christian.

All this makes us understand that, to be holy, it is not necessary to be bishops, priests or religious ... We are all called to become saints! Very often, however, we are tempted to think that holiness is reserved only to those who have the possibility to detach themselves from ordinary tasks, to dedicate themselves exclusively to prayer. But it is not so! ... In fact, it is precisely by living with love and offering Christian witness in our daily tasks that we are called to become Saints—and each one in the conditions and in the state in which he finds himself.

Are you consecrated? Be holy by living with joy your donation and your ministry. Are you married? Be holy by loving and taking care of your husband or your wife, as Christ did with the Church. Are you an unmarried baptized person? Be holy by doing your work with honesty and competence and offering time to the service of brothers. “But, father, I work in a factory ... I work as an accountant, always with the numbers, I cannot be a saint there ...” —Yes, you can! There, where you work you can become a saint.

God gives you the grace to become a saint. ... Are you a parent or a grandparent? Be holy by passionately teaching your children or your grandchildren to know and to follow Jesus. And this takes a lot of patience ... and this ... is holiness, exercising patience. Are you a catechist, educator or volunteer? Be a saint by becoming a visible sign of the love of God and of His presence at our side. This is it: every state of life leads to holiness, always! At home, on the streets, at work, at church, in the moment and with the state of life that you have, a door is opened on the road to sainthood. Do not be discouraged to travel this road. God gives you the grace to do so. And this is all that the Lord asks, is that we are in communion with Him and serve others.

Reprinted from Zenit.org

End the Funding of Planned Parenthood

In the aftermath of the horrifying and crass videos released by the Center for Medical Progress showing Planned Parenthood doctors and executives discussing the prices of the organs and tissue of aborted babies while sipping wine and eating lunch and talking about “wanting a Lambo,” we must defund Planned Parenthood once and for all. Planned Parenthood has been involved in the sale of body parts of aborted babies for over 15 years. The first exposés were reported by Mark Crutcher of Life Dynamics releasing lists of prices for the sale of baby parts as early as 1999. No one believed it. These new videos provide additional and undeniable proof.

It has been evident in the most recent videos that many of the babies are born alive, and the organs are cut from the bodies of living babies. Think of the horror of women who have aborted their babies and now see what further abuse has been inflicted on their children.

Can we continue to be complicit in the murder of innocent babies, or will we finally take a stand and demand that this practice be stopped? Don’t be deceived by reports of the health services that are provided by Planned Parenthood. There are thousands of community health centers that provide the services without the killing. Please contact your senators and representatives and demand that the funding be stopped. The shedding of innocent blood cries to God for vengeance!
Forum Speakers

September 22—Annual Dinner—(See Insert for Details.)—No Luncheon in September

October 9—Dale Alquist, president of the American Chesterton Society and publisher of Gilbert Magazine. He is the creator and host of the EWTN television series, “The Apostle of Common Sense.” Dale is the author of four books and has edited eight books of writings by G.K. Chesterton. Recognized as one of the leading Chesterton scholars in the world, he has given over 500 lectures at major colleges and universities and other venues, including Yale, Columbia, Cornell, Notre Dame, Dartmouth, San Pablo (Madrid), the Vatican Forum in Rome and the House of Lords in London. He is a senior fellow of the Chesterton Library at Oxford. Dale received a B.A. degree from Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota, and a M.A. degree from Hamline University in St. Paul, Minnesota. He and his wife Laura have six children.

November 13—To Be Announced

December 11—Mary Claire Kendall, author of Oasis: Conversion Stories of Hollywood Legends. Ms. Kendall is a Washington-based writer, with a special focus on Hollywood. Her book, Oasis came out in April 2015. She is currently working on several other books, including a follow-up to Oasis. She has written feature film screenplays, pilot sitcoms, a TV action drama pilot, and she is producing and hosting an interview show about Hollywood, for which four episodes have been filmed. In 2013, she completed a collection of short stories and continues to add to it. A graduate of Wellesley College, Mary Claire served as a political appointee in the administrations of Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush, at the Departments of Education (1987–88) and Health and Human Services (1989–93), respectively, as a speechwriter, policy analyst and representative spearheading various initiatives.


Worthiness to Receive Holy Communion—General Principles

by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, latter Pope Benedict XVI, L’espresso, June 2004

Not all moral issues have the same moral weight as abortion and euthanasia. For example, if a Catholic were to be at odds with the Holy Father on the application of capital punishment or on the decision to wage war, he would not for that reason be considered unworthy to present himself to receive Holy Communion.

While the Church exhorts civil authorities to seek peace, not war, and to exercise discretion and mercy in imposing punishment on criminals, it may still be permissible to take up arms to repel an aggressor or to have recourse to capital punishment. There may be a legitimate diversity of opinion even among Catholics about waging war and applying the death penalty, but not however with regard to abortion and euthanasia.
**Summer 2015 Update**

Since our last newsletter we have received the dispiriting decision from the Supreme Court legalizing Gay “Marriage.” Many of the Catholic bishops have responded to the decision with a strong defense of true marriage. Bishop Frank Dewane of the Diocese of Venice, Florida stated, “Regardless of the decision, no human law can override the laws of God, and no human court can redefine something as integral to human society as marriage. The Catholic Church will continue to defend and promote the institution of marriage as the Church has always understood it.”

Springfield Bishop Thomas Paprocki calls the U.S. Supreme Court ruling legalizing gay marriage a “misfortune.” He said: “The government has no moral authority to change what God has created.” He commented: “Just because the government legalizes gay marriage does not make it morally valid.”

Archbishop Charles J. Chaput commented: “The Supreme Court’s 5–4 decision on marriage is not a surprise. The surprise will come as ordinary people begin to experience, firsthand and painfully, the impact of today’s action on everything they thought they knew about marriage, family life, our laws and our social institutions. The mistakes of the court change nothing about the nature of men and women, and the truth of God’s Word. The task now for believers is to form our own families even more deeply in the love of God, and to rebuild a healthy marriage culture, one marriage at a time, from the debris of today’s decision.”

Do not lose heart! Now is the time to witness to the Truth. God will give the victory!

**Does Hell Exist?**

A few years back … Pope Benedict said the following—“Jesus came to tell us everyone is wanted in paradise and that hell, about which little gets said today, exists and is eternal for those who shut their hearts to His love.”

But the latest research from the religious polling group Barna Associates shows that only 32 percent of adults see hell as, “an actual place of torment and suffering where people’s souls go after death.”