

ABORTION AND TEENAGE PREGNANCY

In 1973 the U.S. Supreme Court issued an unprecedented ruling. Abortion, it said, is virtually a private matter for the woman to decide. "This right of privacy . . . is broad enough to encompass a woman's decision whether or not to terminate her pregnancy" (Roe v. Wade, slip opinion, pp. 37-38). Beginning in the fourth month of pregnancy, the Court held, the state could impose some health restrictions on the performance of abortion, if it chose to do so, and in the sixth or perhaps seventh month it could—if it so chose—extend some protection to the "potential human life" in the mother's womb (full rights of human personhood are not to be recognized by the law until at least birth). But, whether in the third, sixth, or ninth month of pregnancy, the private right of the woman to obtain an abortion is always paramount.

The Court's tragic decision is based on two fundamental errors:

First, the life of the unborn child is assigned a moral value of zero.

Second, abortion is essentially considered in a vacuum, apart from all other human relationships.

The woman, in consultation with her physician, has the final power to decide whether and why the abortion should be performed. No one else has any say in the matter.

Yet—despite what the Court said—it is a fact that the generation of new human life is an event of immense social importance. Court decisions do not create this reality, nor can they destroy it. Many aspects of this process of generation are personal, but none can properly be called altogether private—that is, pertaining to the individual alone. When the Court called abortion a private matter for the woman to decide, it adopted a legal fiction—a fiction which helps society silently condone the performance of what it knows to be a morally shameful act.

At least since 1969, when national records on the subject were first kept, about one-third of all legal abortions each year have been performed on teenagers—upwards of 300,000 in 1974. Teenagers make up a significant single group of abortion recipients. They are also the most humanly vulnerable group. In what follows we shall discuss in some detail the situation of the pregnant, unwed teenager. We shall conclude with several reflections on why changes are needed in public policy.

TEENAGE ABORTION

The incidence of legal abortion has been increasing dramatically since it was first introduced in an appreciable way in several states in 1967. It is estimated that in 1975 the number of abortions in the United States exceeded one million. Apparently, the annual figure has not yet peaked (a phenomenon which usually occurs several years after a permissive abortion policy has been introduced). Teenagers, along with other age groups, have increasingly turned to abortion, and this trend will probably continue for several years.

The available data do not make it clear how many of the teenagers who obtain abortions are married and how many are not. However, it seems safe to assume that the vast majority are unmarried. The estimated national figure for unmarried women obtaining abortions in all age groups was 70.9 percent in 1974. Most likely, the figure for the teen years was even higher.

In light of this, one can hardly ignore the question of the relationship between the pregnant, unmarried daughter and her parents. This question becomes even more important when we realize that an estimated 13,000 girls under the age of 15 obtained abortions in 1974. (According to the Center for Disease Control this age group had more abortions than live births.)

CHILDBEARING AMONG TEENAGERS

Despite the contrary impression, overall rates of teenage childbearing have actually fallen in recent years—from a high in 1957 of 97.3 births per 1,000 women (ages 15 to 19) to a low in 1975 of 56.3. This substantial decline, however, has not been as extreme as that experienced by older women. For the 20-to-24-year-old age group, for example, the rate dropped from 258.1 in 1960 to 114.7 in 1975. As a result, births to teenagers now figure more prominently among all births—nearly one-fifth of all births in 1975.

While teenage birth rates have gone down in recent years, the number of women aged 10 to 19 years has grown from around 15 million in 1960 to over 20 million in 1975. As a result, the annual *total number of births* to teenagers has not declined (as might have been expected from the falling teenage birth rate) but has stayed about the same (609,000 in 1960 and 594,900 in 1975).

In 1975 nearly 40 percent of all teenage childbearing was out of wedlock (233,500 births out of 594,900). In addition, it is estimated that a significant percentage of teenage marital births are conceived pre-martially.

OUT-OF-WEDLOCK BIRTHS IN GENERAL

Social scientists measure out-of-wedlock births in various ways-by total numbers, by illegitimacy ratios (the number of out-of-wedlock births compared to the number of live births), and by illegitimacy rates (the number of out-of-wedlock births per 1,000 unmarried women of childbearing age).

For purposes of measuring general historical trends, special attention will be given here to illegitimacy rates.

From 1920 to 1940 the illegitimacy rate remained relatively stable:

Year	Total No.	Rate
1920	86,400	8.7
1930	90,800	7.8
1940	103,000	8.0

However, from 1940 to 1970 the illegitimacy rate rose steadily. By 1970 the rate had increased more than threefold:

Year	Total No.	Rate
1940	103,000	8.0
1945	128,200	10.5
1950	148,200	14.5
1955	189,700	19.5
1960	230,400	21.7
1965	297,100	23.4
1970	398,700	26.4

Since 1970 the rate has remained high, declining slightly for the most part, but with a small upturn in 1975:

Year	Total No.	Rate
1970	398,700	26.4
1971	401,400	25.6
1972	403,200	24.9
1973	407,300	24.5

1974	418,100	24.1
1975	447,900	24.8
1976	NA	NA

OUT-OF-WEDLOCK BIRTHS TEENAGERS

From 1940 to 1965 every age group of childbearing women showed an increase in the rate of illegitimacy. Those aged 15 to 19 showed the lowest rate of increase. However, from 1965 to 1975 every age group experienced a decrease in the rate-except the 15-19 year-old group, among whom the rate continued to increase.

The birth rate—both legitimate and illegitimate-has been declining for women 20 years and older. But, as noted in the chart below, the overall birth rate for teenagers has not been declining as fast as that for those 20 years and older. Here, the illegitimate birth rate for teenagers continues to increase. As a result, out-of-wedlock births have become more concentrated in the teen years—52 percent of the total in 1975 (40 percent in 1955, 44 percent in 1965).

**Illegitimacy Rates by Age Groups
1940, 1965, 1970, 1975**

	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44
1940	8.7	10.6	8.1	5.8	3.4	1.2
1965	17.5	39.3	48.4	37.2	17.4	4.5
1970	22.4	38.4	37.0	27.1	13.6	3.5
1975	24.2	31.6	28.0	18.1	9.1	2.6
% of Change 1965-1975	+38%	-20%	-42%	-51%	-48%	-42%

WHY?

Authorities disagree about what factors affect out-of-wedlock births and what should be done in response to the problem.

Improvements in health care can result in increased fertility—and thus more births, including out-of-wedlock births. The age at menarche (when menstruation first occurs) has been decreasing in the Western world for many years at the rate of four months per decade (the average age is now 12—though wide variations occur). Presumably this has been occurring as a result of improved health conditions. The young adolescent may not be fully fertile, however, for another two and one-half or three years following the onset of menarche. In light of these two facts, one authority estimates that between 1940 and 1960 fertility was increasing among women 15, 16, and perhaps 17 (Cutright). Improved health care presumably has also led to a reduction in spontaneous abortion and to reductions in involuntary sterility (primarily for women beyond their teen years).

However, these health factors certainly do not fully explain the rise in illegitimacy rates since 1940. And in no way do they explain the declines since 1965 among women aged 20 or older.

One study concluded that, beyond improved health conditions, the main factor in the rise in the illegitimacy rates between 1940 and 1960 was an increase in sexual activity (Cutright).

This is the conclusion of one study, and it is not the last word. More important, changes in sexual behavior are themselves related to other social changes and conditions, especially changes in family structure and social policy toward the family.

One authority considers the rise in premarital pregnancies and the rise in the rate of teenage marriages following World War II to be closely tied to economic and social changes of that time (Weeks).

Let us look at teenage childbearing behavior in particular in the 1960s and 1970s.

The incidence of teenage out-of-wedlock childbearing will be directly affected by the incidence of teenage marriage. Some argue that at the beginning and end of the period 1960 to 1974 the percentage of teenage births conceived out-of-wedlock remained about the same, but, because of a downturn in teenage marriages, the proportion of these births that were actually born out-of-wedlock increased substantially (Campbell).

This analysis does not claim that the level of teenage non-marital sexual activity or the incidence of teenage out-of-wedlock conceptions had not increased. As stated above, since the late 1960s teenagers have increasingly turned to abortion as a solution to the out-of-wedlock pregnancy. Other studies indicate that non-marital teenage sexual activity has been increasing in recent years (Zelnik and Kantner). With respect to the

increase in teenage sexual activity, Weeks states that "the breakdown in social control during the 60s and early 70s is quite striking" (Weeks, p. 58).

THE SOLUTION-ABORTION?

Some studies correlate the availability of legal abortion with recent declines in the rate of illegitimacy (Sklar and Berkov). Increased use of contraception may also account for some of the decrease.

Not surprisingly, some advocate contraception and abortion as the means to combat teenage illegitimacy.

However, the use of contraception by the unmarried teenager is notoriously ineffective. Unmarried, emotionally immature teenagers are not the same as married, emotionally mature adults. As it is, the failure rate in contraceptive use among married adults is fairly high (Cutright, pp. 417-418). In contrast to the married, the sexual behavior of the unmarried teenager is irregular, infrequent, and generally unplanned. Further, the behavior is often highly romanticized and the values of "spontaneity" and "naturalness" may be highly prized. Recent studies also show that sexually active teenagers possess a poor knowledge of the biology of reproduction (Zelnik and Kantner).

For reasons such as these, those who advocate contraception as a solution for the problem of out-of-wedlock teenage pregnancies consider abortion as an essential "backstop" method. An abortion will surely prevent a birth.

From 1965 to 1975 abortion and contraception were increasingly available in American society-but during this period the teenage illegitimacy rate continued to increase (though at a slower pace). One should anticipate that in the future abortion will be of even greater importance as an essential "backstop" for the "pragmatic" problem solvers.

Predictably, those promoting teenage contraception and abortion are looking for ways to make contraception and abortion more "accessible" to the unmarried teenager. Emphasis has shifted from community clinics to the schools.

In recent years, legal and social barriers inhibiting teenage access to contraception and abortion have become less and less. However, the natural barriers to effective use may very well remain.

Even if efforts to make contraception and abortion more "accessible" should succeed in "solving" the problem of out-of-wedlock teenage births, would we be a better society for it? What problems would have been left unattended? What new problems would have been created?

THE SOLUTION - A MORE REFLECTIVE LOOK

One sociologist scores the advocacy of contraception for teenagers as typical of the American character—a misplaced trust in technology to solve human problems:

The current belief that illegitimacy will be reduced if teenage girls are given an effective contraceptive is an extension of the same reasoning that created the problem in the first place. It reflects an unwillingness to face problems of social control and social discipline, while trusting some technological device to extricate society from its difficulties. The irony is that the illegitimacy rise occurred precisely while contraception was becoming more, rather than less, widespread and respectable (Davis, p. 253).

The same could be said about abortion as a problem solving tool for teenage out-of-wedlock births.

It is often assumed that little or nothing can be done to affect the sexual behavior of teenagers. At the same time, studies are produced which show that teenage sexual behavior has been affected—over the last several years it has increased. Today, U.S. teenage childbearing rates are among the highest in the world—higher even than those in many less developed nations. Are we to assume that teenagers in third world countries are more effective contraceptors and have greater access to abortion? Or that only health conditions explain the differences?

The sexual behavior of teenagers not only can change over time but can vary among individuals and groups. For example, teenage girls who are more highly motivated to achieve future goals are more likely to delay the initiation of sexual activity—and thus the possibility of an out-of-wedlock pregnancy (Furstenberg, 39-42).

American culture currently romanticizes sexual activity. It was not always so. However, teenagers—growing up, experiencing life for the first time, looking to authority figures outside the family—are most susceptible to the new cultural "norms."

The problem is only compounded by the fact that other societal patterns, even laws, separate parent and child. In some instances society seems to expect each individual teenager to discover the meaning of human life all alone. In such a system of moral development many serious and permanent mistakes will be made. The gifted few may succeed. Would we leave teenagers to their own devices with respect to intellectual development? Society - both from within the home and from outside the home—has always exercised guidance

and discipline in the moral and social development of its teenage members. This guidance and discipline is no less important today than in the past.

Breakdown in social controls over sexual activity are not always entirely obvious. Studies show that non-marital teenage sexual activity is often initiated at the insistence of the male. One way of controlling the non-marital sexual activity of the male in the past was through paternity laws—but these now are often meaningless in practice. (In this sense, is abortion on request the logical out come of a lessening of the male's responsibility for his sexual actions?) At the same time the social structures that used to ensure an orderly process in the selection of a marriage partner are no longer or not always there. As a result, the woman's search for a marriage partner-in the marriage oriented society that we still are-is more apt to begin earlier, and end either in an out-of-wedlock pregnancy or a teenage marriage.

Social factors at first glance apparently unrelated may affect the incidence of teenage out-of-wedlock births. Studies show that the majority of nonwhite as well as white teenage girls hold non-marital sexual activity to be morally wrong. However, whites more than nonwhites are more likely to legitimate an out-of-wedlock pregnancy by marriage. Some postulate that marriage might only aggravate the economically disadvantaged positions of the nonwhite. It might be several years before the teenage father would have a job that at the same time, the teenage mother would be separating herself from the immediate support of her existing family unit (Furstenberg, pp. 68, 71-75).

OUT-OF-WEDLOCK BIRTHS THE EXTENT OF THE PROBLEM

Those who advocate contraception and abortion as the solution to teenage out-of-wedlock births may not necessarily perceive the basic problem in the same way.

Some emphasize the reduction of all teenage childbearing—marital and non-marital—and, in this sense, the concern should perhaps more properly be classified as population control.

Others stress the special social and medical problems associated with teenage out-of-wedlock childbearing.

A recent study concluded “The widespread conviction that early childbearing precipitated a number of social and economic problems is founded on surprisingly little evidence.” (Furstenberg, p. 12). It is not that such problems do not exist (the study confirmed the general impression that they do), but that their precise nature is not well understood and, as a result, inadequate solutions are proposed.

This same study found that over a five-year-period some teenage unwed mothers succeeded where others, in the same general circumstances, did not. “One of the most impressive findings was the diversity of

responses to a common event The outcome at the five-year follow-up was enormously varied. In fact, by the time of the last interview, the sample hardly could have been more diverse in every important area we explored" (Furstenberg, pp. 218-219).

The most important question is whether any medical or social problems are so great as to justify the taking of unborn human life. The Church's teaching on respect for human life shows the principle that underlies this kind of problem solving to be incompatible with human dignity. Innocent human life can never be taken just because to do is pragmatic—that is, it is possible, is easier than its alternative, it "works so it should be done. The humane way may very well be the more challenging way.

We must ask not only what are human costs of bearing a child out of wedlock, but what is the human cost of aborting this yet unborn child. Is the loss of human life nothing? Does the woman who consents to the destruction of the new life within her remain indifferent to the act—or is a sense of freedom that a "problem" has been gotten rid of a morally praiseworthy quality? What is the effect on society itself when it adopts highly utilitarian social policies which violate fundamental human rights?

In the case of adolescent girls, they are already some realization that they become resentful of parents who force "the abortion solution" on them. More over, abortion counselors tell young people to expect some alteration in the boy/girl relationship after the abortion. The young woman especially has changed attitude toward the boy, an apparently many of these relationships disintegrate rapidly.

As a medical procedure abortion presents threats to the life and health of any woman. But the adolescent girl is at risk in several respects. The teenagers are more apt to delay seeking an abortion. But late-term abortions are medically the most dangerous kind. Yet full-scale educational effort to convince teenagers that sex is a simple, uncomplicated fact of life and that, if they become pregnant, abortion is available on request, is generating pressure which leads teenagers to abort, glossing over the important fact of inherent danger

It is commonly assumed that a young unmarried girl can abort an existing pregnancy and have children later when she wants them. But things may not be that simple. For example, studies in various parts of the world—are showing that young women whose first pregnancies are aborted are much more likely than average to have subsequent pregnancies which result in premature births. Pre-maturity, in turn, has long been known to be associated with an increased incidence in cerebral palsy, mental retardation, and lesser forms of damage to the central nervous system, such as learning disabilities (Hellegers). As abortion becomes the solution to premarital pregnancies, married couples and society may later have to pay the human and financial costs of a growing number of mentally and physically damaged children.

There is every reason to expect that young women who are rushed into abortion by social and cultural pressure will distrust and resent a society that misled them about the nature and long range effect of the action they were encouraged to undertake.

Teenage pregnancy is not simply a result of ignorance or failed contraception. In many cases, the teenager's sexual irresponsibility is a symptom of personal insecurity-of a need for love, affection, and self-affirmation. Pregnancy is not necessarily unintended or unforeseen. And, while pregnancy may complicate existing personality difficulties, in such cases, so also the destruction of the unborn child may simply reinforce the teenager's low estimate of herself or diminish her perceived ability to cope with and overcome problems. Destroying the fetus in such cases may well be a weapon for destroying the mother, too.

SOCIAL AND PUBLIC POLICY

Today, sexuality is often regarded as a plaything. In such an atmosphere it is not surprising that sexual relationships between men and women tend to become exploitative while the broader social ramifications of human sexuality are lost sight of or are even positively rejected. The newly conceived human life is often described as an intruder. When human sexuality is not accorded its proper dignity, it is consistent though sad-that the unborn child, the fruit of the human sexual relationship, is regarded as nonhuman.

Examination of the facts about teenage childbearing, especially teenage out-of-wedlock births makes it clear that "adult" standards of moral conduct are being extended to the not-yet-mature adolescent. But in this area, as in others, contemporary society suffers from moral impoverishment. Thus, the not-yet-mature adolescent will not find life guidance in the not-yet-mature standards of society at large.

The notions of social control and social discipline refer to more than parents' responsibility for their children. General social policy toward the family will condition the expression of family relationships.

Americans have traditionally considered freedom as both a social and personal value. Increasingly, however, freedom is being seen simply in terms of the individual. American public policy seems to have adopted this more narrow viewpoint.

But absolute or virtually absolute personal freedom is quickly emptied of meaning. The other goods of the human person, as well as the manifest goods that flow from human relationships, will time and again be compromised in the name of a nebulous, all-pervasive individual freedom.

The individual is never perfectly autonomous. Whether or not it is acknowledged, there always exists a tension between personal freedom and the good of society. Nowhere is this more evident than in the family,

where the individual establishes self-identity and exercises his or her freedom while respecting the rights of other family members and the good of the family unit.

The threats to the family posed by an excessive concentration on individual freedom were graphically expressed by the U.S. Supreme Court in its 1973 abortion decisions.

These decisions represent the culmination of Court decisions over a period of several years which were unfavorable to the family (Noonan). Furthermore, on July 1, 1976, the Court issued another round of abortion decisions—with specific reference to the family. It ruled that the woman's right to abort the child within her can be exercised without her husband's consent, or, if she is a minor without her parent's consent (*Planned Parenthood of Central Missouri v. Danforth*).

Several public policy recommendations require attention.

- The fundamental errors of the 1973, abortion decisions must be corrected. The most viable way to do this is through an amendment to the U.S. Constitution guaranteeing the basic right to life of the living but unborn child.
- The United States needs to develop a family policy that is positive toward and supportive of family life. Such policy must extend beyond a narrow concern for the techniques of family planning and must be based on broader vision which respects and encourages the basic goods of human life.
- Government policy and program should be directed at removing those conditions which tempt or in some sense force a woman to turn to abortion to solve problems. Societal attitudes toward out-of-wedlock pregnancies have changed. The recriminations that society traditionally leveled at both unwed mother and child have been more and more put aside—and rightly so. No girl pregnant out-of-wedlock should be abandoned to her own resources—and perhaps to an abortion. And no child should have to suffer any legal or social restrictions because he or she has been designated illegitimate.

PROGRAM SUGGESTIONS

1. EDUCATION

Parenthood Education

Urge your parish to become more actively involved in upgrading training and preparation programs for parenthood. Seminars for combination youth-adult groups can be established to present the biological facts of motherhood, as well as the emotions, hopes, and frustrations which accompany the new role of parenthood. A number of mothers might speak on how they felt about giving birth. Discuss the father's role and how it has changed concerning delivery and child raising.

Investigate the establishment of "Parent Centers" in your community. These centers recognize that parents, regardless of socio-economic background, need help to develop competence and confidence in themselves and in their role as parents. Expectant parents are encouraged to drop in the center to relax and meet other parents, to participate in discussions about child development, and to share concerns and ideas with each other and the staff.

In the fall of 1972, the U.S. Office of Education and the Office of Child Development launched a joint program to help schools set up new parenthood training programs or improve existing ones. The major curriculum materials offered as a result of this effort are contained in a package entitled "Exploring Childhood." This is a one year elective course for teenage boys and girls. Students spend part of their time in the classroom learning about child development, the needs of children, and family relationships through specially prepared materials. They then go to child care centers to work with young children under the supervision of their own teacher and a Preschool teacher. Parents of both the students and the young children are involved in the program. For more information write to: Education for Parenthood Project, Office of Education, Rm 2083, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Washington, D. C. 20202.

Additional information on general educational programs can be found in the section on "The Parish Respect Life Committee" (pp. 56), and information on curricular and extracurricular programs for students can be found in the "Respect Life Education Programs" section (pp. 60). For further suggestions, consult previous Respect Life manuals.

II. PASTORAL CARE

Center for Life

A new "Center for Life" in Jacksonville, Florida, has been established to "promote basic, respect for human life from the moment of conception on." The Center has as its goals: offering alternatives to abortion; providing primary obstetrical and gynecological services for women who would otherwise abort their children; providing counseling and education in a pro-life environment, as well as testing and advice for infertile couples;

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helping people face the problems of aging; providing programs dealing with parenthood. The Center, which will also offer group and individual instruction in natural family planning methods, works in cooperation with existing programs in the St. Augustine Diocese, including Marriage Encounter and Pre-Cana Conference. For information write: Center for Life, St. Vincent's Medical Center, 1851 King St., Rm. 103, Jacksonville, FL 32204. Tel: 904/389-7751, ext. 8209.

Help For Those Distressed by Pregnancy

Assistance to women and their unborn children requires a combined effort of voluntary agencies and professional resources. Thus groups can promote services that will ensure adequate nutritional, prenatal, childbirth, and postnatal care for mothers and pediatric care for their children, and promote opportunities for counseling and continuation of education for unwed mothers. If your community has such resources available, volunteer to be of service. If no such programs are meeting your community's needs-emotional support and practical assistance-for women with problems related to pregnancy, your group might set up such a service. The following organizations can be of help to interested individuals or groups who want to help pregnant women who face particular problems in bringing their children into the world.

The National Conference of Catholic Charities

1346 Connecticut Ave., NW

Washington, D.C. 20036

Tel: 202 / 785-2757

The National Conference has member agencies in virtually every diocese in the country. Contacting a local agency can often lead to information about local community needs and opportunities for voluntary efforts. The national office can provide information about trends and issues across the country.

Alternatives to Abortion International

Hillcrest Hotel, Suite 511

Toledo, OH 43624

Tel: 419/248-4471

Pregnancy counseling programs enlist volunteers to provide one-to-one assistance to pregnant women in distress. Alternatives to Abortion publishes a very helpful Pro-Life Emergency *Pregnancy Service Centers Worldwide Directory* (\$1), and provides information about services that can be developed to help pregnant women learn how and where to find the special help they may need. They also publish a periodic newsletter.

Pregnancy Services of Michigan (PSM)

P.O. Box 11098

Lansing, MI 48901

Tel: 517/482-4974

Pregnancy Services of Michigan (PSM), is a private, nonprofit corporation offering positive assistance to women in Michigan troubled or distressed by a pregnancy. It assists in identifying persons and groups of trained volunteers which, in turn, work with private and professional services already in the community. PSM assists the volunteer groups with information through personal contact and a newsletter, regional and statewide workshops, circulation of films, and consultation on a variety of topics. The heart of the PSM program is a professionally staffed toll free 800 telephone line to help the pregnant woman find the assistance and support that is available in her own local area.

Florence Crittenton Homes

4759 Reservoir Rd., NW

Washington, D.C. 20007

Tel: 202/333-3600

For almost 100 years, the Florence Crittenton homes, located in various cities, have offered programs of service to meet the needs of unmarried, pregnant girls. The Crittenton Home in Washington, D.C., has its own teacher in an accredited school from junior high through the 12th grade, a hospital wing on the grounds, and full-time psychiatrists. Its staff includes nurses, housemothers, counselors, and teachers. FC also offers a relatively new "Barrett" program, which is an intensive counseling and residency program for pre-delinquent girls.

Alliance of Information and Referral Services, Inc. (AIRS)

5020 North 20th St., Suite 201

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Phoenix, AZ 85016 Tel: 602/263-7857

Founded in 1972, AIRS links information and referral service agencies across the country in one voluntary affiliation to improve services by sharing information and knowledge necessary to help people find and identify needed service. Most large communities have an AIRS agency which specializes in assisting people through the sometimes confusing maze of health and welfare agencies to find the "right service at the right time."

III. PUBLIC POLICY

The Congressional District Action Committee

This is a plan of legislative action to help citizens organize their state and congressional districts. It includes information to help educate people about the dangers of the Supreme Court abortion decisions and the need for a constitution amendment to protect unborn human life. Details are provided on how to recruit citizens for the effort to secure a amendment to the Constitution, and how to organize people into strong grassroots groups to help persuade legislators to support and work for an amendment. For information write

National Committee for a Human Life Amendment

1707 St., NW, Suite 400,

Washington, D.C. 20036.

Tel: 202/78E 8061.

Anniversary of 1973 Supreme Court Decisions

Each year on or around January 22 there are a variety of activities throughout the country marking the anniversary of the Supreme Court's decisions denying legal protection to unborn children. These activities include special prayer services, rallies, marches and demonstrations, parades, etc. For information regarding activities planned for January 22, 1971 contact your local pro-life group. The NCCB Committee for Pro-Life activities and the National Right to Life Committee will also have information on activities. Also, there is an inter faith prayer service on page 69 that might be used on the occasion, as well as suggestions for liturgy and a homily for use on January 22.

NATIONAL RESOURCE AGENCIES

The State Catholic Conference and pro-life in the state or local community will be able to provide information on the latest developments in the pro-life field suggest appropriate literature and audio-visuals, and provide details on local public policy issues. National resource agencies include:

NCCB Committee for Pro-Life Activities

1312 Massachusetts Ave., NW

Washington, D.C. 20005

Tel : 202 / 659-6673

The Bishops' Committee can provide information on pro-life education, as well as data on state and federal legislation.

National Committee for a Human Life Amendment

1707 L St., NW, Suite 400

Washington, D.C. 20036

Tel: 202/785-8061

The NCHLA office can provide information on the congressional dimension of the amendment process.

National Right to Life Committee

341 National Press Bldg.

Washington, D.C. 20045

Tel: 202/638-4396

The NRLC can provide information on current right-to-life activities.

National Youth Pro-Life Coalition

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735 Eleventh St., NW

Washington, D.C. 20001

NYPLC can provide information on youth pro-life activities.

RESOURCE MATERIAL

Following is a list of printed and audio-visual resources for use with the Respect Life Program. This list is not meant to be exhaustive, but represents an effort to provide information on the more current pro-life materials. A more comprehensive listing can be found in previous *Respect Life!* manuals and in the *Bibliography on Abortion and Related Topics*, which covers the various aspects of abortion-church teaching, court decisions, legal and legislative aspects, fetology/perinatology, basic resources, and educational materials. The *Bibliography*, which is fully annotated, also includes the subjects of death and dying, population, Spanish pro-life materials, and audio-visual resources. The *Bibliography* is available from the NCCB Committee for Pro-Life Activities. Cost: \$1.

Church Teaching/Documents

Connery, John, S.J. *Abortion: The Development of the Roman Catholic Perspective*. Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1977, 336 pp., \$7.95. Fr. Connery traces the development of the Roman Catholic attitude toward abortion from the beginning of the Christian era to the middle of the 20th century.

Declaration on Abortion. Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1974. Available from: USCC Publications Office, 40 cents. This statement reaffirms the Church's teaching on the sanctity of human life and the moral evil of abortion.

Documentation on Abortion and the Right to Life, Part I and II. National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1975 and 1976. Available from: USCC Publications Office. Part I, 75 cents; Part II, \$1.25. Testimony of the American Catholic bishops before the Senate in 1975 (Part I) and the House in 1976 (Part II) on a human life amendment to the Constitution.

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Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities. National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1975. Available from: USCC Publications Office, 25 cents. Broad-based plan to strengthen existing efforts to educate people in regard to the Church's teaching on abortion, and the importance of securing constitutional protection for the unborn.

Pope Paul VI. *Message of His Holiness, Pope Paul VI, for the Celebration of the Day of Peace*, January 1, 1977. Available from: NCCB Committee for Pro-Life Activities, 25 cents. The theme of Pope Paul's message is: "If you want peace, defend life."

Yes to Life. Daughters of St. Paul, ads., 1977, 328 pp., \$4.9 paper; \$5.95, cloth. A valuable sourcebook bringing together the teaching of the Church on the sacredness human life.

Books

Critelli, Ida and Tom Schick. *Unmarried and Pregnant: Why Now?* Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1977, 1 pp., \$1.95. This book is intended as a guide to help the young, unmarried, pregnant woman deal with the problems and decisions she will face.

Denes, Magda. *In Necessity and Sorrow: Life and Death in an Abortion Hospital*. NY: Basic Books, 247 pp., \$10. Although personally in favor of abortion, the author, a psychologist describes the actual practice of abortion and raises some of the value questions related to permissive abortion.

Fallaci, Oriana. *Letter to An Unborn Child*. NY: Simon Schuster, 1976, 114 pp., \$6.95. A *deeply personal* narrative describing the author's dilemma and pain as she talk to her unborn child during a pregnancy that was desire but unable to come to term.

Proceedings: 1976 Institute on Services to Unmarried Parents. Washington, D.C.: National Conference of Catholic Cha ties, \$3. Helpful information on programs and services unmarried parents. Proceedings from 1974 and 1975 Institutes are also available from NCCC for \$2.50 each.

U.S. Congress. House. *Proposed Constitutional Amendment on Abortion: Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights of the Committee on the Judiciary*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing

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Office, 1976. Price \$5.25; Part II, \$3.95. Testimony on abortion and a human life amendment in seven days of hearings before the House between February 4 and March 26, 1976.

U.S. Congress. Senate. *Abortion: Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Constitutional Amendments of the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee on S.J. Res. 119 and S.J. Res. 15* Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1974-1976, Parts I, II, III, IV. Part I, stock no. 5270-02649, \$5.90; Part II, \$7.70; Part III, \$4.10; Part IV, \$9.20. Testimony on abortion and a human life amendment in 17 days of hearings before the Senate between March 6, 1974, and July 8, 1975.

Wakin, Edward. *Helping the Unwed Mother*. Chicago: Claretian Publications, 1975, 95 cents. Contains useful information about and services for the unmarried mother.

Articles and Booklets

Dillon, Valerie V. *Nine Facts to Know About Abortion*. Washington, D.C.: NCCB Committee for Pro-Life Activities, 1974, 25 cents. A 16-page question and answer booklet on the medical, legal, biological, and theological aspects of abortion. Also contains references and a select bibliography.

Selzer, Richard. "Abortion," *Moral Lessons: Notes on the Art of Surgery*. NY: Simon & Schuster, 1974, 219 pp., \$8.95. Dr. Selzer, a surgeon, describes his reactions to experiences relating to abortion.

Leaflets and Posters

"Respect Life!" flier, 1977. NCCB Committee for Pro-Life Activities, \$25 per 1,000. An attractive, full color flier describing the multifaceted Respect Life Program, with a special essay on the emerging science of perinatology. Contains full color pictures of the unborn child.

"Respect Life!" poster, 1977. NCCB Committee for Pro-Life Activities, 50 cents each. A 17" x 22" full color poster, photographically showing the beauty and dignity of human life. Very attractive-with 22 color photographs artistically arranged on dark blue background.

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"Abortion: what the court said," 1977. NCCB Committee for Pro-Life Activities, \$17.50 per 1,000. A clear and concise explanation of what the 1973 Supreme Court opinions on abortion said. Contains b/w fetal pictures from the Carnegie collection.

"Jennifer," 1976. NCCB Committee for Pro-Life Activities, \$25 per 1,000. A 6" x 9", two-page story of the growth and development of the unborn child from conception to birth. Text, in story form, is accompanied by color photos of the unborn child. Persuasive; suitable for mass distribution.

"Respect Life!" brochure, 1976. NCCB Committee for Pro-Life Activities, 15 cents each; \$10 per 100. A striking, four page photographic essay showing that life is indeed a continuum. Contains color photographs of fetal development; clear and concise text describing the growth and development of the unborn child.

"Love and Let Live," 1976. Michigan Catholic Conference, 5 cents each. An attractive, four-page, color brochure containing pictures of the unborn child at various stages of development (the Nilsson photos); with text.

Slides/Films/Filmstrips

In the Beginning: A slide presentation on the value of human life, 1976. Includes 80-frames/cassette/transcript and supplementary material. NCCB Committee for Pro-Life Activities, \$25. Emphasis on the humanity of the unborn child is stressed by narration and by use of the famous Lennart Nilsson photographs. Includes references to Church tradition holding all human life sacred, and explains that a constitutional amendment is necessary to restore legal protection to the unborn child.

A Life Too Brief, 10 min., 16 mm, color, 1976. Produced by the NCCB Committee for Pro-Life Activities in conjunction with the Office for Pro-Life Activities, Archdiocese of New York. Available from both organizations, \$75. Focuses on the growth and development of the unborn child, the destructiveness of abortion, and the need for restoring legal protection to the unborn child by passing a constitutional amendment.

Abortion: A Woman's Decision, 22 min., 16 mm, color. ACTA Films: rental, \$25 for three days; purchase, \$200. A dramatic presentation of how a pregnant high school girl comes to the decision not to have an abortion.

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The Beginning of Life, 26 min., 16 mm, color. Produced by Cine-Science, Tokyo. Available from Pyramid Films: rental, \$45; purchase, \$450. Dramatically shows the actual process of conception and earliest stages of life—from cell formation to the first heartbeat of the human embryo. For high school/adult audience, as well as a teaching aid for medical students.

Celebration in Fresh Powder, 28 min., 16 mm, color. Paulist Productions: rental, \$18.95 a day; purchase, \$360. Confronts the confusion and pressures a high school girl goes through when she becomes pregnant and must decide whether to abort, marry the child's father, or have the baby outside of marriage.

Choose Life, 56-frame, color filmstrip. Ikonographics: \$21.95. Highlights arguments for and against abortion. Demonstrates why abortion is a serious detriment to the development of the social community.

The First Days of Life, 24 min., 16 mm, color. For Life, Inc: rental, \$20 per showing; purchase, \$275. Eloquently shows the humanity of -the unborn child from the very beginning of life through delivery. Pictures of children of various ages vividly point out that life is indeed a continuum.

I'm Seventeen, Pregnant, and Don't Know What To Do, 28 min., 16 mm, color, 1970. Children's Home Society of California: purchase only, \$180 plus postage. Also available on video-cassette from Public Television Library: rental, \$36 for three days; purchase, \$175. This is the story of a young, unmarried woman who has a child out of wedlock and keeps the child. The film, by personal interview, shows the reactions of her parents, her boyfriend and girlfriends, as well as her own thoughts and emotions. After giving birth to a boy and keeping him at home for 18 months, she makes the difficult decision to give the child up for adoption. The film also shows the joy of the adoptive parents who have been waiting for a child to love. Good for use with high school students and for volunteers working with alternative to abortion programs.

Love and Let Live, 77 slide frames and cassette, 1976. Michigan Catholic Conference: \$22.50. Well done slide presentation showing the humanity of the unborn child, the destructiveness of abortion, and the necessity for passing a constitutional amendment to protect unborn human life.

Right to Life, 27 slide frames and cassette. Teleketics: \$21.50. A multiple-handicapped child, old people; a father and his child, young lovers, a family—all have potential for living.

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Very Much Alive, color filmstrip and cassette. Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, \$2.50 (order No. VVOF: 420). Emphasizes reverence for all human life from conception on that is part of the Mormon tradition. Touches on solutions to problem pregnancies.

Cassette

Respect for Life, cassette by Most Rev. Joseph L. Bernardin, Archbishop of Cincinnati, 1976. Available from The Daughters of St. Paul: \$1.50. Archbishop Bernardin speaks about the sanctity and dignity of all human life and our duty to respect and protect each life. He speaks of the evil of abortion and the necessity of securing a constitutional amendment that would protect the unborn child's right to life.

Television Spots

Respect Life, 30-sec., 16 mm, color, 1976. NCCB Committee for Pro-Life Activities: \$10. Text: "A child is born and it's the most special event in the world; it's something you never fully understand. A child is an explorer, and the world is a planet-full of possibilities. Human life is precious, and we think every child should have a chance to discover and enjoy life. A message from the National Conference of Catholic Bishops."

The Empty Swing, 60-sec., 16 mm, color. Daughters of St. Paul, \$10. Text: "I would have liked to do that. To sit in a swing feeling safe cause Mommy was nearby and I knew everything was all right all over. That would have been fun, too. I would have had a doll to love just as Mommy loves me. It would have been fun to be alive if Mommy had wanted me."

The following three TV spots are available from: Communications for Life, at: one/\$150; two/\$225; three/\$275. Also available as radio spots, at: one/\$50; two/\$80; three/\$125.

Parental Rights, 30-sec., video-tape. Text: "Three facts that you, as parents, should know: Fact No. 1: Your written consent is necessary for your children to go on a school sponsored field trip. Fact No. 2: Your consent is also necessary for your daughter to have her ears pierced at the local shopping center. Fact No. 3: But your consent is not necessary for your minor daughter to have an abortion. You don't have the right to say yes or no! You need not even be informed! Parents, wake up!"

Unwanted, 30-sec., video-tape. Text: "It's scary to think that you could be tagged 'unwanted' or 'different,' isn't it? But we did that with Indians. We called them 'savages.' And stole their land. We did that with Blacks. We called them 'niggers.' And used them as slaves. Hitler did that with Jews. They were classified 'unwanted,' and eliminated. We've made some tragic mistakes. We've defined people out of the human race. You'd think we'd learn . . . yet every three minutes abortion kills an' unborn baby . . . because the Supreme Court said they were not 'persons.'

Fetology, 30-sec., video-tape. Text: "Did you know your heart was already beating just 18 days after you were conceived? And by seven weeks you had fingers, knees, ankles, and toes? And every organ system you have today was present and functioning six months before you were born! Your life, and every human life, is unique. Yet, legal abortion which kills before birth, will claim one million individual lives this year! It's legal, but is it right? Abortion-America's number one killer."

Spanish Material

En El Principio. A slide presentation on the value of human life, 1976. Includes 80 frames/cassette/transcript and supplementary material. The cassette and synch-script are in Spanish; supplementary materials are in English. See description above under "Slides/Films/Filmstrips." Cost: \$25.

Plan Pastoral Para Las Actividades Pro-Vida. National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1975. Available from USCC Publications Office, 25 cents. See description above under "Church Teaching /Documents."

El Aborto. Mexico: Ediciones Paulinas, S.A. Available from: Curia del Arzobispado de Mexico, 50 cents. The text of the 1974 *Declaration on Abortion* by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Also contains a reflection on the *Declaration* by Mons. Luis Reynoso Cervantes, Chancellor of Mexico.

O'Brien, R. P. Dionisio, ed. "Los Pequeños." Available from: Curia del Arzobispado de Mexico, 25 cents. A compilation of statistics, references and quotes from various articles related to abortion and euthanasia.

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Ibarrola, Dr. Faustino Cervantes. "~Quien Mato A Juanito?" Available from: Curia del Arzobispado de Mexico, 10 cents. A brief description, in cartoon form, of the growth and development of the unborn child and the tragic results of abortion.

"Respetad la Vida!" flier, 1977. NCCB Committee for ProLife Activities, \$25 per 1,000. See description above under "Leaflets and Posters."

"Respetad la Vida!" poster, 1977. NCCB Committee for ProLife -Activities, 50 cents. See description above under "Leaflets and Posters."

"Respetad la Vida!" brochure, 1976. NCCB Committee for Pro-Life Activities, 15 cents each; \$10 per 100. See description above under "Leaflets and Posters."

"Maria Elena," 1976. NCCB Committee for Pro-Life Activities, \$25 per 1,000. See description above for "Jennifer," under Leaflets and Posters."

"EI Aborto-to que dijo la corte suprema," 1977. NCCB Committee for Pro-Life Activities, \$17.50 per 1,000. See description above under "Leaflets and Posters."

"Vida O Muerte." Cincinnati: Hayes Publishing Co., 12 cents each; 100 or more, 10 cents each. Color brochure with photos of children born only 18 and 21 weeks after conception who survived, as well as photos of children destroyed by abortion. Question and answer text.

" Sabia Listed?" Cincinnati: Hayes Publishing Co., three cents each; 1,000 or more, 2.1 cents each. Small leaflet providing information on various stages of fetal development, and portraying the tragic results of abortion.

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