

# Life Matters

The Newsletter of the St. Rose of Lima Pro-Life/Pro-Family Committee

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## Human Love in the Divine Plan Pope John Paul II's Theology of the Body

By: Adrienne and Albert Keogler

"The body, in fact, and only it, is capable of making visible what is invisible: the spiritual and the divine."

*John Paul II, General Audience of October 6, 1982*

When a newborn child is laid in your arms, you can't help but marvel at the wonder and beauty of the warm, new bundle of life, so clearly reflecting God. In a newborn's eyes one sees a love so pure and innocent it speaks of heaven. The Catechism of the Catholic Church says, "The beauty of creation reflects the infinite beauty of the Creator..."(341). In the book of Genesis, after each act of creation "God saw how good it was." But after the creation of man and woman "...behold, it was very good." (Gen.1.31) Man is the only creature that God created for its own sake and he alone is called to share in God's own life.

"God created man in his image; in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them." (Gen.1.27)

Obviously then, the design of our bodies has great significance in the Christian mystery. Through our bodies we are called to love as God loves. The body which God created for us, both male and female, holds a key to our happiness.

Pope John Paul II devoted five years at the beginning of his pontificate to in-depth Scriptural reflections on the meaning of human love and sexuality in light of the mystery of Christ and His Church. What we now call the Theology of the Body is a compilation of 129 of his Wednesday audiences delivered between September 1979 and November 1984 (English edition published by Pauline Books & Media). What our Pope gives to us is truly revolutionary. Christopher West, a man who is devoting his life to spreading the "good news" of John Paul's Theology of the Body, states: "Brace yourself! If we take in what the Holy Father is saying in his Theology of the Body we will never view ourselves, view others, view the Church, the Sacraments, grace, God, heaven, marriage, the celibate vocation...we will never view the world the same way again." In his book Witness to Hope –the Biography of Pope John Paul II, George Weigel states, "John Paul's Theology of the Body has ramifications for all of theology. It challenges us to think of sexuality as a way to grasp the essence of the human – and through that, to discern something of the divine...These...catechetical addresses, taken together, constitute a kind of theological time bomb set to go off, with dramatic consequences, sometime in the third

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millennium of the Church." Pope John Paul brings new vision to understanding the dignity of the human person and explains how our fulfillment is to be found in imitating Christ's complete gift of self.

"The human body, with its sex, and its masculinity and femininity seen in the very mystery of creation, is not only a source of fruitfulness and procreation, as in the whole natural order. It includes right from the beginning the nuptial attribute, that is, the capacity of expressing love, that love in which the person becomes a gift and – by means of this gift – fulfills the meaning of his being and existence." *John Paul II Jan. 16, 1980*

The body is central to understanding the key doctrines of our Faith. In the beginning man was created in God's image. In the Incarnation "The word became flesh and dwelt among us." (John 1.14) Jesus sanctified us by becoming human. By offering himself up on the cross, He redeemed us. Jesus gives us his own body and blood in the Eucharist. We believe in the resurrection of our body at the end of time when our bodies will be reunited with our souls for all eternity. In December 2002, Archbishop John Myers wrote a Pastoral Letter, A Theological Reflection on the Human Body based on John Paul's Theology of the Body. In it he speaks of the Blessed Mother..."who already shares bodily in the Resurrection of Her Son. In her we see the ultimate meaning and purpose of bodily existence – total and complete union with Jesus."

Pope John Paul applies the concept of total self-giving to the vocations of marriage and the celibate life. In marriage, our sexuality becomes a total self-giving to our spouse. We are called to make a complete gift of ourselves to each other. Our life and love as a married couple, including the marital embrace, is meant to be an image of the life-giving love of the Blessed Trinity. It is no coincidence that it is in the one-flesh union of husband and wife that God calls the couple to share in the wonder of His creation to bring forth a new human being - an eternal soul. As theologian Scott Hahn says, the love between a husband and wife "becomes so real that nine months later you have to give it a name!" The life-giving

love of the marital embrace does not limit itself to procreation but permeates all aspects of a marriage.

“The Theology of Marriage and Celibacy ends with John Paul’s most dramatic celebration of marital love. Sexual love, he concludes, is an act of worship. ‘Conjugal life becomes...liturgical’ when the ‘language of the body’ becomes the means to encounter, through an experience of the sacred, what God has willed for the world and for humanity ‘from the beginning.’ The sexual gift of self, freely offered and freely received within the covenant of marriage becomes a way to sanctify the world.”

*George Weigel, Witness to Hope*

In the celibate vocation, one becomes a total gift to Christ and His Church. Fruitfulness for a celibate person takes on spiritual paternity and maternity.

“Earthly continence for the kingdom of heaven...is a sign that the body, whose end is not the grave, is directed to glorification. Already by this fact, continence for the kingdom of heaven is a witness among men that anticipates the future resurrection.”

*John Paul II, General Audience of March 24, 1982*

As Christopher West explains, “Authentic Christian celibacy, then, is not a rejection of sexuality or a devaluation of marriage. It’s the expression on earth of its ultimate purpose and meaning!” A consecrated celibate man makes a complete gift of himself to his bride, the Church. A consecrated celibate woman makes a complete gift of herself to Christ.

The Pope concludes his Theology of the Body with reflections on Pope Paul VI’s *Humanae Vitae*. In 1968, with the advent of the birth control pill, there was great turmoil within the Church on the issue of birth control. Pope Paul VI issued *Humanae Vitae* reaffirming the Church’s constant teaching on the inseparable link between the unitive and procreative significance of the marriage act. This brings us to the pivotal concept of marital chastity. A couple is called to discern God’s plan for their family. They become “ministers of the design.” For a couple who is looking to postpone pregnancy they simply abstain from relations during the fertile time of a woman’s cycle (Natural Family Planning). The importance of “natural” is not so much that it is not artificial, but that it is in keeping with the God-given natural order of a woman’s fertility cycle. “Natural” is what is in keeping with the dignity of the human person. Sexual love is meant to image the life-giving love of the Trinity – a communion of persons.

“Living marital chastity means thinking of marriage as a vocation to be grown into, as a couple grows in the love ‘poured into (their) hearts as a gift of the Holy Spirit.’ A couple’s maturation into a communion of persons involves sexual expression and sexual abstinence, ecstasy and asceticism. To remove that tension from married life is to empty it of one crucial aspect of its inherent drama, and its humanity. Truth and love can never be separated in the mysterious, ecstatic, ascetic ‘language of the body.’”

*George Weigel, Witness to Hope*

The self-mastery required in Natural Family Planning is not always easy, but it is possible with God’s grace. Marital chastity leads a couple to a level of sexual maturity that enriches a marriage in the most beautiful ways. It is no coincidence that the divorce rate among couples using Natural Family Planning is between 0 and 4 percent.

Monsignor Vincent Walsh from the Archdiocese of Philadelphia has recently written a simplified version of *The Theology of the Body* published by Key of David Publications. His goal is to make the Pope’s teachings more accessible to the general public. He calls the theology a “...beautiful poem to the greatness of our bodies. The reader will appreciate the true beauty of his or her own body and the bodies of others. This will generate an appreciation of chastity before marriage and of the sexual act within marriage.”

Many people disagree with the Church’s teaching on different issues regarding sexuality. Unfortunately most don’t really understand what the teaching actually is.

“A man and woman ought to experience sexual intercourse as a mutual giving and receiving in the open self-surrender to each other; it is a kind of communication – the language of the body – a sign of sincere giving of self and sincere acceptance of the other’s gift, and of their mutual opening up to God’s gift of life. This kind of giving and receiving without reserve requires the foundation of stable, permanent love.

Thus, considered as communication, intercourse outside marriage and contraceptive intercourse both are lies told with bodies; the two parties do not truly give and receive openly and unconditionally but only use each other for pleasure. They do not say with their bodies, and from their hearts, what they speak with their lips.”

*Archbishop John Myers, A Pastoral Letter*

The challenge before us is to take the time to discover the Church’s wisdom on these issues. There is a tremendous amount of misunderstanding among Catholics and even some clergy. We have been given a beautiful gift in John Paul II’s *Theology of the Body*. What he lays before us is extremely exciting. It touches us at the very core of our being. It has the power to change lives, transform marriages, and guide us in our chosen vocation. We need to raise our children with a sense of dignity and a reverence for the gift of their sexuality. In so doing we are fulfilling our responsibility to educate them in the ways of the Faith. In our effort to discover the truth of our sexuality, we will then be able to pass that same gift on to future generations. We are all called to participate in what the Pope calls the “new evangelization.”

And last, but not least, as part of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of our diocese, Bishop Lori will be hosting a two-day conference March 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> of 2004 to introduce *The Theology of the Body*. We will be gathering internationally renowned speakers to help us

gain a deeper understanding of Pope John Paul II's vision of "Human Love in the Divine Plan."

To find out more about The Theology of the Body you can visit the website [www.theologyofthebody.net](http://www.theologyofthebody.net). The Gift Foundation ([giftfoundation.org](http://giftfoundation.org)) sells A Crash Course in Theology of the Body (a set of 12 audio-cassettes) by Christopher West as well as many other tapes and products, including the Theology of the Body text. The One More Soul Foundation ([omsoul.com](http://omsoul.com)) is also a wonderful resource, including a directory of NFP – only (Natural Family Planning) physicians, teachers and centers throughout the country.

## The Deadly Dozen

By: Ron Leddy

The American Life League in a Crusade for the Defense of Our Catholic Church has listed the following 12 "Catholic" U.S. senators who claim to be Catholic, yet support legalized abortion and deny the authority of the Holy Father, Pope John Paul II.

Keep their names in mind when election time comes since one or more may show up on the ballot.

Senator Ted Kennedy,	Massachusetts
Senator Tom Daschle,	South Dakota
Senator Patty Murray,	Washington
Senator Patrick Leahy,	Vermont
Senator John Kerry,	Massachusetts
Senator Mary Landrieu,	Louisiana
Senator Christopher Dodd,	Connecticut
Senator Joseph Biden,	Delaware
Senator Susan Collins,	Maine
Senator Tom Harkin,	Iowa
Senator Barbara Mikulski,	Maryland
Senator Jack Reed,	Rhode Island

"As I said 18 years ago in my maiden speech in the U.S. Senate: the right to choose [abortion] is a fundamental right... neither the Government nor any person has the right to infringe on that freedom. If I get to share a stage with this President and debate him... one of the first things I'll tell him is: "There's a defining issue between us. I trust women to make their own decisions. You don't. And that's the difference. So it's time we said to this President :----- We're not going to let you turn back the clock ----- No overturning Roe v. Wade -- No packing of the courts with judges hostile to choice -- No denial of choice to poor women -- No outlawing of a procedure necessary to save a woman's life or physical health -- No more cutbacks on population control efforts around the world "

January 21, 2003  
Remarks of Senator John Kerry  
NARAL 30th Anniversary Dinner

### Pro-Life/Pro-Family Mission Statement

To peacefully promote, with compassion and love, a higher standard of ethics and morality in accordance with God's commandments. To defend life in all its stages from conception to natural death, through prayer, education, witness, political action, charitable assistance to those in need, and by opposing that in our society which degrades the sanctity of life.

## Divine Mercy Sunday

By: Dick and Dorothy Lambert - [RLambert72@aol.com](mailto:RLambert72@aol.com).

On April 27, 2003 a two hour bus trip was taken by 40 parishioners from St. Rose of Lima Parish north through New England serpentine country roads to Stockbridge, Massachusetts, and the National Shrine of St. Faustina. The occasion was Divine Mercy Sunday. This writer in slow sips read her unique 700 page Diary that records the Divine Revelations of Jesus to St. Faustina Kowalska. Prayerful reading inspired this writer to make this specific pilgrimage with his wife Dorothy.

This event, honored throughout the universal Catholic Church, drew 20,000 people. Mass was offered in the open fields with the background beauty of the Berkshire Mountains. At the end of Mass an exuberant forty person choir chanted, with compelling power, the refrains of the Chaplet of Divine Mercy.

In a way, making a pilgrimage is like exposing one's being to a rite of passage. We assembled at 9:00 a.m. for bus transport. En route to the shrine we were given information by veteran pilgrims. We shared prayers, sang hymns, received instruction, enjoyed friendly conversation and freeing laughter! Such enjoyments became part of a holistic experience.

To indicate the spiritual fervor of people from all over the countryside, and even neighboring states, 300 buses streamed into the parking lots. (Eleven buses from Toronto, Canada were cancelled due to the SARS scare.)

There was time before Mass for people to sit in groves of trees and picnic under the outdoor cathedral of blue skies and warm sun. Before Mass 20,000 people spread out on rolling lawns around the main altar. What caught our attention over the loudspeakers was a publicly proclaimed personal testimony, shared by a man who had endured personal crises and family trauma. I felt swept into another world, a world of suffering while facing the impending death of a young son. He described how he and his wife, in desperation, made a pilgrimage to the Polish shrine of Divine Mercy, and how the Lord came to their assistance.

I suggest to the reader that there is another way to listen to such personal testimony. Did you ever think that all stories are about YOU? When a person does listen with that kind of attentiveness, everything changes. You're moved toward deeper intimacy with the Lord.

On the way home we stopped in a restaurant to satisfy our food hunger after quenching our spiritual hunger. It was another moment of spontaneous lighthearted sharing and rejoicing. About 12 hours after starting our day, we stepped off the bus, we were tired (at least some of us), but there was deep satisfaction in feeling that together we had experienced on our journey, a rare day of companionship with the Lord.

## Safe Haven Laws

Topic suggested by Helga Roegele

Information extracted from [religioustolerance.org](http://religioustolerance.org) by Fred Dwyer

**By March 11, 2003**, 42 states had enacted "safe haven" laws which permit a person -- usually a parent -- to abandon a newborn baby, at a specified location. This may be a hospital, firehouse, or police station. State laws differ:

**History:** In 1999, Texas was the first state to enact a safe haven law. Forty-one other states have followed suit, leaving only eight states which have no such law: Alaska, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Nebraska, New Hampshire, Vermont, Virginia, and Wyoming. The Wyoming legislature is currently considering legislation.

**National hotline:** Anyone in the U.S. who wants to get in touch with a safe haven can call 1-877-796-HOPE (1-877-796-4673). This is a toll free call that can be accessed anywhere in the U.S. No record of the call will appear on your telephone bill. A similar hot line is available at 1-877-440-2229, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

**Effectiveness:** The National Conference of State Legislatures issued a report in 2003-FEB which indicated that the laws did not fully solve the problem of newborn abandonment. For example, in California during the first 18 months after the state law came into effect, 20 babies were abandoned safely. 38 were simply discarded. Of the latter, 17 died.

**Editorial opinion:** While these laws can be criticized for not being a total solution, and even for legitimizing infant abandonment, it is clear that they do save lives. Certainly many of the flaws can be remedied if we care enough to be involved in the political process. For further information see:

[http://www.religioustolerance.org/saf\\_have.htm](http://www.religioustolerance.org/saf_have.htm)

<http://www.robynsnest.com/safehaven.htm>

<http://www.amtchildrenofhope.com/>

Please note that while these sites are good references for Safe Haven information, they may or may not be fully in concert with Catholic teachings regarding other pro-life/pro-family issues.

Nationwide, some 105 babies of nearly four million born in 1998 were found abandoned in public places; 33 infants were found dead. *RobynsNest.com*

## STD's, A Very Practical Reason to Abstain

Submitted by: Helga Roegele

One of the consequences of the "Sexual Revolution" is a great increase of sexually transmitted diseases. According to the Center of Disease Control, in the 60s only syphilis and gonorrhea were common. Today, there are at least 25 STDs. At least 8 new pathogens have been identified since 1980, including HIV.

According to the American Health Association, it is estimated that there are more than 68 million current STD infections among Americans. Each year 15.3 million new STD infections occur, including over 3 million infections in teens. The 2 most common STDs, herpes and human papilloma virus (HPV), account for 65 of the 68 million current infections.

On the Internet, you can read about the Department of Health and Human Services research and conclusions at: <http://www.medinstitute.org/medical/faq.htm>

"Adolescents and young adults (15-24) are the age group at the greatest risk for acquiring an STD. Approximately 2/3 of all people who acquire STDs are under 25.

While medical science has made great advances, the STD epidemic continues to grow. Chlamydia and gonorrhea can be 'cured' with antibiotics, but can leave scars, which often require future treatment and may cause infertility. Viral STDs pose a major problem, because no medical cure has been found for any virus not even the common cold.

**What is the solution?** Postponing sexual activity until marriage with an uninfected mate is the only way for teens and, single adults to be 100 percent confident of avoiding STD infection. Delaying sex until marriage is the only advice supported by medical research that offers adequate protection from STDs.

**Can parents make a difference?** Definitely. According to the National Longitudinal Study on Adolescent Health, parental disapproval of their teen being sexually active and of their teen using contraceptives are significant factors that influence the delay of the onset of sexual activity in teenagers."

## Suffer yet Rejoice!

By: Queta Donovan

Prolifers, we encounter pain, every day. Pain for a Catholic Christian is not the mere experience of pain, nor just the tolerance of pain. If we sanctify suffering it becomes a sacrifice. We need to transform our Cross as painful as it may be. In the mysterious power of prayer we can find a beautiful treasure. Look deeper into your darkness. You will see the Cross of Christ with all His prayerful suffering through His own Passion and death, when pain and love meet in His immeasurable redemptive suffering.

So often we think that we have the greatest, strongest and only pain in the entire world. Maybe your suffering is the sorrow in your soul for all the abortions in the world, euthanasia, pornography, war or another great difficulty that exists in the world, or simply the Cross of the little things of each day that are the ones that we face the most. Remember when we think that we are weak, we are strong in the Lord. We need to see the reconstructive power of suffering that Jesus, with His Love for you and me, gives us in His Redemption.

We have a Good Master to follow. We have a King of sorrows, a King of love, a King of suffering; we have our King of the Cross. He is there. He has been in the shadow of suffering, not only bodily, but spiritually which is deep and painful as well. We have a Good Master to follow. Look to the Cross if you are lost in any pain; our pain when united with Christ's suffering becomes redemptive suffering. We are blessed because we have a Cross, embrace it praising God. Come to the fountain of Graces, hear the music of His sacrifice resting in His love, in His light, not in the dark. Pain and love kiss as the light meets the dark. We need to progress in our interior life, offer everything up. Don't reject suffering, don't evade your own sanctity.

If ever we are tempted to doubt the value of suffering, the only thing that we need to do is to look up at the Crucifix. We must resemble our Master, our Lord, our Love. We have the most special teacher. It is a privilege for us. If we only do the will of the Lord with acceptance, with love, with humility, it will be so easy to obey. There will be an outpouring of Graces upon us and the entire world. We proliferate need to teach everyone around us to be happy doing the will of God, which acquires greater value when we suffer!

We all have to undergo pain. Rejoice, praise the Lord in your suffering. In our redemptive suffering.

## **NARAL Launches \$3 Million Ad Campaign**

Reprinted from Pro-Life Infonet

Source: Associated Press; June 7, 2003

Washington, DC -- A prominent pro-abortion organization is launching a \$3 million ad campaign that relies on foreboding commercials to warn of a day when the Supreme Court overrules its landmark 1973 ruling legalizing abortion.

Scheduled to begin this week, the advertising sponsored by the NARAL Pro-Choice America Foundation is timed to coincide with the near-certain enactment of legislation to ban partial birth abortions, as well as potential retirements that could affect the balance of power at the high court

The music is ominous, the look on a woman's face one of horror as the commercial opens to show a fictitious newspaper headline that reads "Abortion outlawed, Court overturns right to choose." The ad then runs back in time, and ends with the declaration that "there's still time to protect your right to choose."

A separate, 15-second version of the commercial ends with the statement, "We're one Supreme Court justice away from losing our most basic freedom. Protect your right to choose."

"These ads are designed to mobilize pro-choice America and tell pro-choice Republicans, Democrats and independents that there is still time to protect your right to choose," said Kate Michelman, head of the pro-abortion group.

Other officials said the first portion of the advertising effort would begin over the weekend and air nationally on cable stations. Beginning in two weeks, the group intends to begin airing the commercials on broadcast stations in Iowa, Wisconsin and Oregon. Officials said these commercials will run until October, and possibly longer. Overall, they put the cost of the effort at \$3 million.

While Michelman emphasized the goal of mobilizing abortion rights supporters, the advertising effort is unusual - occurring more than a year before the next presidential and congressional election. Still, the three states targeted were all narrowly decided in the 2000 presidential election. Additionally, groups on both sides of the abortion issue have long been girding for a confirmation battle this fall, on the assumption - as yet unvalidated - that one or more Supreme Court justices will step down.

Also, both houses of Congress have approved legislation that would hand pro-abortion groups their most significant setback in years. President Bush has said he will sign the measure once it reaches his desk, and a court challenge is a certainty.

Make plans to attend the National Right to Life convention in St. Louis and celebrate the 4th of July with pro-life friends and your family. For more information, visit: <http://www.nrlc.org/convention/index.html>

**Editorial Opinion:** While few of us may be able to attend this convention, we must all be politically active on pro-life issues. Let your Senators, and your Representative know where you stand. Tell them clearly and tell them often. Encourage your friends and family to do the same. Know your Senators' and Representative's positions on these critical issues and cast your vote accordingly.

## **Ultrasound Could Help End Abortion**

Reprinted from Pro-Life Infonet; June 8, 2003

Sterling, VA -- Kurt Entsminger, new President of Care Net, praised Newsweek's June 9 cover story, "Should a Fetus Have Rights? How Science is Changing the Debate." "Newsweek is doing what Life failed to do 38 years ago when it published a series of photographs on the different stages of embryonic development. Newsweek has taken the next step by asking the ultimate question, and the editors are to be commended "When the truth about life is accurately portrayed, women will understand abortion is not a positive option and we will win the debate every single time. Newsweek points out ultrasound

pictures pack such an emotional punch that even the most hard-line abortions-rights supporters will find themselves questioning their beliefs. Newsweek helped us present our side of the story," said Entsminger.

Entsminger, who has headed up Care Net's public policy efforts, has been involved in drafting and lobbying for passage of ultrasound legislation currently being considered in Congress. The bill, dubbed the Informed Choice Act, will enable pregnancy centers to apply for grants to receive ultrasound machines allowing women to see their unborn children before choosing abortion.

Mr. Entsminger said Care Net would be distributing complementary copies of the Newsweek story to all 535 Members of Congress, asking them to co-sponsor the ultrasound bill currently pending in both legislative chambers.

NARAL and Planned Parenthood are on record opposing the Informed Choice Act. They don't want women to see ultrasound pictures because they know ultrasounds deter women from getting abortions. One abortionist on Long Island even said, "The bottom line is no woman is going to want an abortion after she sees a sonogram."

"If NARAL and Planned Parenthood are really pro-choice as they claim, why do they oppose a woman's right to see an ultrasound picture of her unborn baby? In a truly pro-choice America, women should be fully informed about all pregnancy options. That is exactly what our network of 700 pregnancy centers is committed to do," said Entsminger.

The Informed Choice Act, which Care Net supports, requires that every women receiving ultrasound services be given the right to see the images of their unborn children. Before his appointment as Care Net's new President, Entsminger served as Care Net's Executive Vice President and General Counsel.

**Editorial note:** Care Net is a non-profit Pro-Life organization that supports a network of over 600 pregnancy centers across the United States and Canada. These centers offer free pregnancy tests, peer-counseling, post abortion support and other practical help to women and men facing pregnancy related concerns. For further information see: <http://www.care-net.org/about.html>

## Can This Really Be Happening in the U.S.A.?

From the American Center for Law and Justice

Christians should not be criminalized for displaying your faith through simply wearing a cross. But that is exactly what has happened to a woman in western Pennsylvania....

Like thousands of teachers across the country, Brenda Nichol likes to wear a cross necklace around her neck. And naturally, she wore the 1 7/16 inch cross pendant to her job as a teacher's aide. But her employers said no way. They told her that state law prohibited employees from wearing religious symbols. She was told to take off the cross or be suspended for a year without pay.

Brenda, after much prayer, refused. "They were asking me in a sense to hide my faith and therefore in a sense to deny Christ," she said. Something no Christian in America should be required to do! She continued to wear her cross. Then, she was forced to pay the price for her commitment to religious freedom. She was suspended without pay for at least a year and even more importantly, denied her constitutional freedom to display her commitment to Christ.

Please understand: Brenda made no evangelistic efforts toward students or faculty at her school. Her so-called "crime" was wearing a simple 1&7/16 inch cross. But because it had the supposed possibility of offending someone, she was suspended without pay. This is "political correctness" gone awry!

Regardless of what happens as we [American Center for Law and Justice] fight this case at the District Court, there is no question: this case will be appealed - and it could well end up at the Supreme Court of the United States.

It seems the opponents of faith will stop at nothing to extinguish religious freedom.

## Most Americans Oppose Most Abortions

Source: Pro-Life Infonet; June 1, 2003

A new poll by the Gallup Organizations reveals most Americans continue to oppose most abortions. Conducted from May 5-7, 2003, the poll shows little change in Americans' attitudes on abortions compared to the same time last year. Americans remain closely divided over the leading abortion-debate-position labels: 48% consider themselves "pro-choice" and 45% call themselves "pro-life." However, such labels don't accurately reflect what Americans believe about the legality of most abortions.

The Gallup poll confirms a large majority of Americans want abortion to be very rare. Sixty-one percent of Americans want abortion to be illegal in all circumstances (19%) or legal in only a few circumstances (42%). Only 38% of Americans support abortion being legal in most circumstances (15%) or in all circumstances (22%).

Although the poll confirms most Americans oppose the "birth control" reasons for abortions, which continue to constitute more than 95 percent of abortion situations, strong majorities of Americans support abortion's availability in more difficult circumstances. A new question this year finds Americans are widely supportive of keeping abortion legal throughout pregnancy in cases when the woman's life is endangered (82%), and when the pregnancy was caused by rape or incest (72%), and when the child would be born with a life-threatening illness (60%).

Apart from the legality of abortion, Gallup finds that a majority (53%) of Americans personally believe that abortion is morally wrong. Just over one-third (36%) considers it morally acceptable. These views are very similar to those from a year ago, but reflect a pro-life shift compared with May 2001 when 45% of the public felt abortion was morally wrong.