



TEN FALLACIES OF THE ABORTION DEBATE

This Monday, January 22nd, will be the 34th Anniversary of one of the saddest days in our American story. This was the day our nation's Supreme Court made it possible for doctors to kill an unborn child.

The following piece was written in 1986 by Anthony Gilles, a columnist in St. Anthony Messenger. Gilles writes:

Because legalized abortion is premised on such a precarious theoretical foundation, abortion advocates have had to devise increasingly far-fetched arguments to buttress their position. Here are their 10 most common arguments and the fallacies on which they are based.

1) ***"No one knows when human life begins."*** As a matter of fact everyone does know when human life begins. In the words of the California Medical Association's journal, *California Medicine*, this argument demonstrates "a curious avoidance of the scientific fact, which everyone really knows, that human life begins at conception and is continuous, whether intra- or extra-uterine until death." Actually, since the argument that "no one knows when human life begins" has not really convinced anyone, abortion advocates have now virtually abandoned it in favor of arguments that are more rhetorically and emotionally appealing.

2) ***"Without legalized abortion both unsafe, 'back-alley' abortions and parental abuse of unwanted children will increase."*** Aside from the fact that statistics since 1973 actually indicated the contrary, proponents of this second argument imply that without legalized abortion prospective parents who otherwise would have legally aborted their child will suddenly be at the mercy of an uncontrollable impulse either to seek a "back-alley" abortion or to abuse their child should it be born. Such an argument suggests that legalized abortion is simply a safety valve as it were for persons who lack free will, a dubious rationale for people who claim to be "pro-choice" advocates.

3) ***"Since men can't get pregnant they can't advise women not to have abortions."*** This anti-

intellectualist slogan supposes that there is no way facts I cannot directly experience can be communicated to me by someone else. In actuality, although I can never know what it is like to be pregnant, I can nonetheless be educated by previously pregnant women. As one who has been so educated I conclude that women opposed to abortion make more compelling arguments than women who favor abortion.

4) ***"If men (or the Pope) could get pregnant abortion would be a sacrament."*** As this rhetorical barb indicates, the pro-abortion position is concerned not so much with abortion as it is with male-female relations. By steering the debate away from unborn children to male oppression, abortion advocates stimulate both feminist hostility and male guilt, thereby neutralizing anyone who "self-righteously" tells women not to abort. In actuality, of course, neither men nor the Pope created the phenomenon by which pregnancy results from sexual intercourse.

5) ***"Unless women have the right to legal abortions they will be forced to suffer unbearable psychological and emotional stress caused by an unwanted child."*** This is a curious argument for people to make who otherwise argue that women are the equals of men. Unless such people entertain the fantasy that men do not suffer from psychological and emotional stress, they seem to be suggesting that women aren't strong enough to hold up under hardships. If, as proponents of this argument suggest, women are rendered hysterical by an unwanted pregnancy, then perhaps they are not emotionally qualified to assume positions of leadership in our society after all, an assumption belied by the millions of career women who are also excellent mothers.

6) ***"Denying a woman the right to abortion denies her control over her own body."*** This is more of a cliché intended to invoke an emotional response than it is an argument. One could list hundreds of ways in which society prevents women from controlling their own bodies, such as for example, laws requiring motorcyclists to wear helmets or, more to the point, laws prohibiting the use of one's body to destroy the body of another, which is what abortion accomplishes.

7) ***"Pro-lifers are single-issue fanatics."*** This canard presumes the sloganeer's omniscient

awareness of every social issue to which the pro-lifer is dedicated. I wonder why only pro-lifers are subjected to this charge. Were not blacks in the 60's and war protesters in the 70's "single-issue" zealots? Even assuming the truth of this labeling technique, it says nothing which proves or disproves the morality of abortion.

8) **"Sometimes poverty, a teenage pregnancy or other social problem virtually forces a woman to have an abortion."** Such a rationale presumes that a terrible violent procedure like abortion is a proper means to solve problems. As our 13-year experience with legalized abortion has demonstrated, violence gets us nowhere. Can abortion advocates point to even one social problem that has diminished since abortion became legal?

9) **"We should not force our moral beliefs on others."** Not only should we do this, we in fact are doing this. Most of us, for example, impose our moral beliefs every day on thieves, murderers and rapists. In our system morality is the basis of law. I cannot think of one law in effect in this country which is not the result of someone's moral preference. For abortion advocates to prohibit me from imposing my beliefs on them, they must impose their own beliefs on me.

10) **"There is no precedent to indicate that legalized abortion is related in any way to a general dissolution of civilized morality as claimed by abortion opponents."** This argument is best rebutted in a decision issued by the West German equivalent of our Supreme Court, which on February 25, 1975, rejected legalized abortion, in the court's words, "principally as a reaction to the 'destruction of life unworthy of life,' and to the 'final solution' and 'liquidations' which were carried out by the National Socialist Regime as measures of state."

Since 1973 about 30 million innocent unborn lives have been taken. Let us pray for politicians and courts, especially the members of our Supreme Court that they fight for the right to life for the unborn. Let us pray for God's continued strength for all who have a deep passion for this issue and spend much time and energy being a voice for the voiceless unborn. Let us pray for the conversions of all who are pro-choice and for the conversion of all who are pro-life when it comes to the unborn but are anti-life on other issues such as capital punishment and denying medical insurance for those who cannot afford to purchase it. Let us also pray for women and men who continue to suffer spiritually and emotionally because of their direct or indirect involvement in an abortion.

The Year of Luke

In our liturgical calendar, this is cycle C or the Year of Luke. With the exception of the *Easter Season* during which we listen to John's Gospel, during Cycle C our Sunday Gospel will be nearly always from the Gospel of Luke.

Today's Gospel begins with the opening verses from Luke's Gospel. Imitating the Greek writers of his time, Luke begins by addressing his message to a particular person. Theophilus ("friend of God") may have been a friend of Luke and a wealthy patron. Luke tells us that in his Gospel, he is going to share with us events from the ministry of Jesus as handed on to him by eyewitnesses. Luke's hope and desire is that his message will lead others to accept Jesus and surrender their lives to him.

Then we move to what is often called Jesus' "Inaugural Address" or "Mission Statement". He uses verses from Isaiah to announce his Mission Statement. As the people listen, they should clearly realize that he is not going to be a political or military Messiah. Rather, he is going to be a servant who will proclaim, by word and deed, God's love and concern for the poor, the disenfranchised, and the spiritually and physically handicapped. Jesus concludes by saying that he is the fulfillment of Israel's Messianic expectations.

The Action 2000 Daily Devotional

Action 2000 is a popular *Daily Devotional* (see sample below.) If you are using the devotional and if you are not too familiar with the flow of our liturgical year, please note that we are now in Ordinary Time. If you want to be current with our liturgical year, you need to be on page 187 this Sunday—week 3 of Ordinary Time. For those of you not familiar with Action 2000, the following is a sample from Tuesday of this past week.

[God] will not forget the work you did or the love you showed for him in the help you gave and are still giving to your fellow Christians. Hebrews 6:10

A doctor used to prescribe "memory breaks" for hospital patients. Before leaving a room, he would say, "I have one more prescription for you. I want you to take a memory break" one at ten o'clock and another at four. Here's what you do.

Close your eyes and recall a happy time from your past.

Spend as much time as you can recalling and reliving it."

The doctor knew what he was doing. Memory breaks are healing experiences. Today's Bible reading assures us that someday God will take a similar memory break with us. God will recall the good we did on earth. That will be a great healing experience.

What memory, especially, will God recall for me at that time?

God gives us memory so that we can have roses in December.

James Matthew Barrie

Have a blessed week,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Le Baron". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.