

## FETAL TISSUE FOR SALE

As I write this, a bill is working its way through Congress which would require federal funding of fetal-tissue transplantation research. This is designed to overturn a Bush Administration ban on the use of federal funds for “harvesting” tissue from aborted babies for transplantation into patients with diseases which are presently incurable .... such as Parkinson’s Disease, diabetes, Alzheimer’s Disease, etc.

As you might expect, the lobbyists for this bill have been making many exaggerated and unproven claims as to the effectiveness of such transplantation procedures, and would have us believe that this is the only hope of cure for a wide range of problems, from spinal cord injuries to birth defects, preposterous claims which have no basis in fact. The range of medical problems reported to be amenable to implantation of fetal tissue is very wide, but the complete lack of scientific evidence for such claims can be easily overlooked in the excitement over the prospect of a “cure” for such devastating conditions.

Federal funding of baby harvesting would forge an alliance between the government and the abortion industry. Abortion, then, when tied to these humanitarian research directives, would gain a much more positive and altruistic image, and give baby-killing an air of legitimacy it has long desired. Women with unplanned pregnancies, who might have had mixed emotions about going through with abortion, would now be pressured by arguments from spouses, families, and doctors that “some good” might come from their abortion, and this would tilt many in the direction of that choice. And it is not beyond the imagination, should this become commonplace, that some women would become pregnant expressly to abort their babies and sell their parts for federal dollars!

I cannot emphasize enough how effective the campaign has been to sell this ghoulish proposition not just to Congress but to the medical profession, various medical and charitable organizations, and to the general public. You should know that research using human tissue is backed by practically all the national organizations that you support financially, including the American Cancer Society, the American Heart Association, the March of Dimes, the National Hemophilia Foundation, the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, the American Diabetes Association, and many others. I share your disappointment and frustration upon discovering that these venerable

charities have seen fit to lend the considerable weight of their reputation to a project which I think has been aptly described as “cannibalizing our children.”

What should we do? Let us look to our Church for guidance. “Respect for Human Life in its Origin,” a 1987 Vatican instruction, took precisely the same stand that the administration in Washington has taken: it did not request a ban on all experimentation with fetal tissue, but said there must be “no complicity in deliberate abortion.” In other words, tissue from spontaneous miscarriages may be used, as may tissue from surgically removed tubal pregnancies, but under no circumstances should electively aborted babies be accepted as donors

Many of our bishops have echoed this sentiment, and some have testified against this bill before Congress. We should inform ourselves thoroughly on this subject, pray, follow our shepherd’s lead, and be prepared to defend our stand privately and in public, and challenge those who would lead us further down the path of death on demand.

## IVF AND DESIGNER GENES

I think it is time that we look at In Vitro Fertilization again. This is the procedure whereby the human ovum is fertilized by the human sperm outside the body, on a culture medium, in the laboratory, for implantation in the mother's womb. Now that's pretty heady business, beginning human life in a test tube. Louise Brown was the first success world-wide, and she will be sixteen this year. There have been others since, but the success rate is still very low. Still, if one infertile couple can be helped to have a baby, doesn't that justify all the failures?

Before you answer that question, there is something else you have to understand. The procedure does not involve just one egg; many are fertilized in the Petrie dish, and the one that seems to be the healthiest is picked for implantation, and the others are discarded (or frozen, for possible use later). Now, if human life begins when fertilization has occurred, and that is precisely the case, these little blobs you are flushing down the drain are human lives! But they're so tiny! Can something this small be someone? Yes it can, and is. Size has nothing to do with it, folks, but this is precisely how the pro-abortionists have won over so many people....by leading them to think that the earlier in pregnancy an abortion is done the less consequential it is. Many people who oppose abortion late in pregnancy do not object if it is done in the first eight or ten weeks of life.

The problem with many scientists is that they become so wrapped up in the excitement of their work they tend to overlook its ethical and moral dimensions. Their credo seems to be that if something can be done, then it should be done. The ramifications of IVF are startling. We have already witnessed custody battles in the courts over frozen embryos, grandmothers serving as surrogate mothers, and young women having their eggs extracted and fertilized and frozen with the intention of having them implanted for gestation perhaps when they are 45 or 50 years old and can get away from their jobs. There are plans to try extracting eggs from aborted female fetuses; fertilized and implanted in a surrogate, these babies could claim no biological mother....their "mother" had been aborted! There is even talk of the possibility of human parthenogenesis; that refers to reproduction of the species without the male germ cell. Hitherto known only in some insects, it is thought by some to be workable in humans. (If it can be done,

let's do it.)

If you agree that we are getting into areas where God alone belongs, then look also at the field of genetics. Here is an area full of great promise for the future. No question, genetic science may well hold the answer to a wide range of disorders such as hemophilia, congenital anomalies, familial disorders, and many types of cancer. Already gene therapy has arrived on the scene in the prevention and treatment of some diseases. But here again some scientists are rushing headlong into areas where angels fear to tread. More and more is being said about twinning, and even, heaven help us, cloning. The genetic engineers with the most fertile imaginations are even looking to the time when they will be able to manipulate your genes and chromosomes so that you could pick your child's body build, or hair color, or athletic prowess. Your children could be custom-made. With "designer" genes!

This is not written without genuine compassion for barren couples, or parents who have good reason to believe their child will have congenital anomalies, or a familial disease. But we must draw the line at any procedure which flies in the face of God's beautiful and miraculous plan for the preservation of the species and the process by which human life is transmitted, just as we must never allow a life God has created to be snuffed out, regardless of its stage of development or its degree of perfection.

## ABORTION IN THE FUTURE

It would be nice if God would send the angel Gabriel to answer one question for us: exactly when does ensoulment occur? Precisely when does human life begin.? I believe, as I was taught in catechism class and in medical school, that life begins at the moment of conception....at that precise moment when the sperm from the male and the ovum from the female unite to form a **new being**, with its own genetic pattern....unique, unlike any that has ever been created before or any that will ever be created again. It would seem entirely logical that God would infuse this new creature, made in His own likeness, with an immortal soul, at this very moment.

But there are those, and many are pro-life, who feel otherwise. They contend, and their arguments are not entirely specious, that it is more likely that human life actually begins, and therefore ensoulment occurs, at the moment the fertilized ovum is **implanted** in the wall of the uterus.

What a huge difference between these two theories! Those six thousand frozen embryos that were recently destroyed in England....were they just "seeds" that were never planted, or was this mass murder of thousands of microscopic babies?

More importantly, for we are talking millions and not thousands, is "the pill" really a contraceptive, or is it an abortifacient? The original high-dose-estrogen birth-control pill was indeed a contraceptive....it acted by preventing ovulation, thus making pregnancy impossible. But the incidence and the severity of side-effects caused the pharmaceutical industry to "change the formula." This subject is too complicated to go into detail in this column....but suffice it to say that many, if not most, so-called birth-control pills are, in effect, abortifacients. They act by making the lining of the womb unreceptive to the fertilized ovum (baby). So the familiar figure of 1.5 million abortions in the U.S. is not realistic at all. The number is larger, much larger. How much larger? God only knows. Literally.

You should understand that the problem of abortion will be very different in the future. The move away from surgical abortion to pharmaceutical abortion has already started, and it will pick up momentum. Drugs are already available, and more are to come, which will induce early abortion. It has been recommended that a woman might take the abortifacient on a regular basis each month....that way she would never know whether she has had a very

early abortion or a menstrual period. {That would take care of the conscience thing!} Many doctors, who would never consider performing an abortion, or even referring a woman to an abortionist, would readily prescribe a pill which would cause an early abortion with relative safety. When polled, many have said they would have no problem with that.

Then, too, a vaccine has virtually been perfected, which prevents the fertilized ovum (baby) from implanting. One shot will last 18 months. It will be touted as "birth-control," not as an abortifacient. Theoretically, a woman could abort 18 times in as many months, and never know it. . So this will be abortion in the future. We may well see the demise of the abortion mills, and that will be a relief. But, make no mistake, the number of abortions will escalate sharply, and the millions of people who are rather lukewarm on the subject will come to accept it as a part of life in our changing times. It will become for them a ho-hum issue. Those pro-life people who are pro-contraception will shrug and look the other way, and by their apathy will condone and give momentum to the avalanche of abortions.

The biggest challenge we face is to change the mindset of so many people, who feel that the earlier in fetal development the abortion takes place the lesser the crime. Look at the furor generated by the debate over partial-birth abortion....politicians, and even clergy, who had never been very vocal about abortion suddenly rose from their silence and spoke out vigorously against such a despicable procedure. We need to convince them that the size, or the stage of development, is immaterial. Human life at any point, from conception to the vision of God, is only His to give and His to take.

And abortion is wrong, whether by instrumentation in an abortion mill or by a pill in the privacy of one's home. The doctors are not reachable on this subject; we will have to do it by reaching out directly to the people, with education, with counseling, and with prayer.

## SHALL WE DEFROST YOUR BABY NOW?

It is going to be difficult to ignore the recent Supreme Court decision on the Webster case, and not devote this column to what was a distinct victory for the pro-life movement. All indications are that *Roe v Wade* could be overturned soon, possibly when the Court convenes again this fall, and it is tempting to use this space to savor the taste of our most significant win in sixteen years. But I am going to resist that temptation, to address a topic that I have written about before but which needs to be re-examined . . . and that is In-Vitro Fertilization.

It was exactly eleven years ago that I wrote to the editor of *The Morning Star*, decrying the worldwide titillation over the birth of Louise Brown. Remember her? The first “test-tube baby,” the product of the fertilization of a human ovum by a human sperm in a culture medium. I felt then, and feel even more strongly now, that this represented a mechanization of the generative act, which would invariably lead to an increasing tendency in our secular society to perceive human life as a gift of man rather than as a gift from God.

To appreciate the complexity of the ethical and moral issues involved in IVF, you need no deep understanding of science or theology. All you need to know is that ova from the woman and sperm from the male are taken from their bodies and joined on a culture medium in the laboratory. Multiple germ-cells from the donors are used, so that multiple fertilizations take place. Now, if you believe as I do, and as our Church teaches, each one of these unions represents the formation of a new life, and I believe that ensoulment occurs at that moment. The “good” ones are then frozen, to be considered for implantation later; the ones that don’t appear healthy (whatever that means) are flushed down the drain. I understand that across the country there are now more than three thousand frozen embryos. We might assume that in the process of stockpiling this many tiny unborn babies, many thousands more were casually discarded. Now, the United States does not have a monopoly on these scientific shenanigans; it is going on all over the world. God only knows how many tiny human lives are lying dormant in freezers all over the world, prisoners in subzero concentration camps.

The enormity of the problem cannot be exaggerated. Several recent court cases have awakened us to its seriousness, and its complexity. The legal tug-of-war going on between Mary and

Junior Davis, the barren couple who are seeking a divorce . . . and each asking for custody of their seven frozen embryos. She wants them so that she might choose to have one implanted in her uterus, which could possibly result in the delivery of a normal full-term baby; he wants them, claiming that “no court has the right to make me a father.” Both of them are wrong. This is truly a lose-lose situation. This fall a court will decide whether or not Steven and Risa York can force a clinic in Norfolk to transfer their frozen embryo to a facility closer to their home in California, which the clinic claims would be hazardous. And on and on. There will be many others.

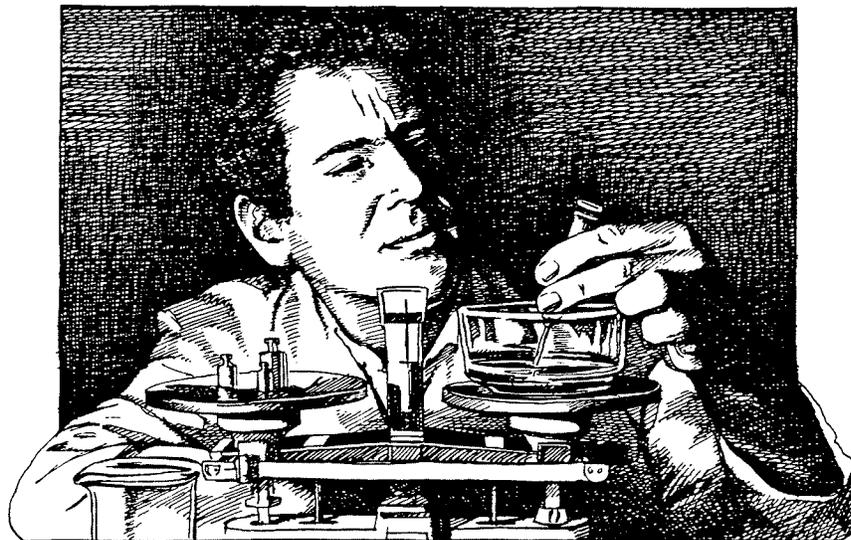
The success rate is rather small, around ten percent. It may be much less than that, if we are to believe a *60 Minutes* episode, which claimed that many infertility clinics have skewed their figures badly to make their results look good, and some have never produced a single live full-term baby. The expense is enormous, also, and virtually never covered by hospitalization insurance. I don’t know why I am even bringing up these points. The important issue we need focus on is the morality and the ethics of IVF: has science gone too far? I say yes. The attitude of the scientific community seems to be, “If it can be done, we must do it.” Wrong. I say it is past the time to blow the whistle on these people, who have already tread in areas where God alone should walk.

This is not to overlook the frustration, and the hopes and dreams, of barren couples. Happily, many can be helped with methods and procedures perfectly acceptable to our Church, and we certainly rejoice with them when a pregnancy can be achieved and a term baby delivered. But any procedure which flies in the face of God’s beautiful and miraculous plan, and the process by which human life is transmitted, must be condemned, and especially if in the process of bringing about one new life a number of pre-born embryos are destroyed. No couple has a “right” to have a child, or children. Each new life is a free gift of God, a basic fact often and easily overlooked by a secular society which allows, and even encourages, the killing of millions of unborn babies for socio-economic reasons, or even for reasons of inconvenience.

Charles Rice has said that it doesn’t require much imagination to visualize a husband and wife scrutinizing perhaps a dozen or so of their offspring

developing in test tubes and “picking out” one . . . much as one would pick out the best-looking apples from the bin at a grocery store.... then throwing the others into the sink.

The scientists and the genetic-engineers frighten me. They speak of cloning as though it is just a matter of time, as one said, before we will be able to “clone a dozen Wilt Chamberlains,” pausing to fantasize on what a terrific basketball team that would produce! They speak of tinkering with human life as casually as a horticulturist would speak of grafting to produce a more beautiful orchid. I am delighted, too, when a childless couple has a “miracle baby,” but I mourn for the human lives destroyed in the process. I especially grieve for the growing army of tiny unborn babies who hibernate quietly in frozen containers....statistics on someone’s computer....a few, perhaps, to be implanted and allowed to grow and mature and to be born and to live, the rest to defrost and to be flushed into oblivion.



## THE COURTS AND THE SANCTITY OF LIFE

The United States Supreme Court has recently agreed to review the rulings on assisted suicide and euthanasia by the lower courts, and we may expect their decision by June of next year. Considering the Court's decisions over the past 25 years as regards the sanctity of human life, we would certainly have little cause for optimism here. The only ray of hope I see is that Jack Kevorkian's attorney is very upset over the selection of cases picked for review. Anything that upsets Mr. Fieger should make us feel good.

Secularism in our society, especially in our courts, is crushing religious freedom. The Constitution was written in such a way as to ensure that we would never have a government-enforced religion. We are all free to worship as we please. It nowhere contains the phrase "wall of separation of church and state"....that was a metaphor of Thomas Jefferson, and was never recognized by the Supreme Court until 1947. But it has become the mantra of the irreligious, and, sadly, some Christians as well, and we are all familiar with the results.

Think of the effects of lower court rulings in the past two decades that have either gone unchallenged or have been affirmed on appeal. Astronauts can't read aloud from Scripture as they orbit the earth, high school students can't pray at a commencement exercise or before a football game, a creche can't be erected in front of a public building; a postal employee can greet you with 'season's greetings' but not with "Merry Christmas;" a government worker is fired for wearing a pro-life emblem to work. Is the statue of Christ of the Ozarks still standing? I am afraid to ask.

At the top of the judicial heap sits our Supreme Court, nine attorneys in long robes, appointed to their life-time positions, with powers they have assumed far beyond what our Founding Fathers envisioned, powers which can severely erode our national moral fabric, or at least what is left of it. I never was good at Civics, and my memory is fading with the years, but I remember being taught that the Judicial arm of our government was set up to interpret the law, not to make laws.

But these judges and justices are making laws. They are discovering ideas in our Constitution which escaped detection by highly capable jurists for more than 200 years. A woman's "right of privacy" gives her a legal right to kill her unborn child, at any stage

in the pregnancy. And now a western Appellate Court has discovered, right there in the Constitution, a person's "right to suicide," somehow overlooked for over two centuries.

Right behind assisted suicide will come euthanasia; legally they are a little different, but they are morally equivalent. And right behind voluntary euthanasia will be involuntary euthanasia, as the Dutch have found out.

Don't expect the medical profession to save us on this one. They will go along with it, for the most part, just as they have with abortion. Schedule a pro-life rally and see how few doctors will come. It will be the same way with mercy-killing. What begins as an act of "mercy" will gradually become one of convenience, then of economics. No one will shout it from the rooftops, but this could quietly become a way to help solve the problem of financing medical and nursing care for the elderly and the infirm. Does that sound morbid to contemplate? Could that possibly happen here? That is precisely what has happened in the Netherlands.

The activists in the euthanasia movement loudly claim they are motivated solely by compassion and pity, that their aim is simply to do away with suffering. They would eliminate suffering by killing the sufferer. As morally unacceptable as that is, their agenda goes much further than that. Their ultimate goal is to do away with all who do not contribute to society, whose lives (by *their* standards) are "meaningless." This utilitarian ethic runs counter to the Judeo-Christian belief that all human life is precious; it is God's greatest gift to us, and we are bound to protect it....in the womb, in the wheel chair, in the hospital bed, and in the nursing home.

Stay informed. Read everything in print about assisted suicide and euthanasia, and look beyond the journalistic bias, as you have done with abortion. Keep this in mind as you vote for the people who make our laws and who appoint our judges. And when you pray, pray especially for the helpless in our society....the infirm and the deformed and the aged, all those who don't "measure up" to the physical and mental and intellectual standards our secularist society has decided are basic requirements for "the right to live."

## STRESS MANAGEMENT FOR ABORTIONISTS

Combat veterans report that the first time you kill an enemy soldier it has a profound effect on you. But each successive killing gets easier and easier; and when you have a dozen or so notches on your gun, killing just becomes your job, and you go about it with less and less emotion. Have you ever wondered how abortionists and abortion clinic personnel are affected by what they are doing? I have. I am sure that many of them assuage their consciences by convincing themselves that this is a noble service they are rendering....saving a distraught woman from the ultimate curse: unwanted parenthood. But I have always suspected that many of them must be greatly disturbed by their work. What happens to these people? Do they adjust quickly, or do they have nightmares and breakdowns? Do they rationalize what they are doing or do their consciences continue to bother them? How hardened can a person become to the killing of human life, particularly when he or she has been trained for so long to save human life?

You have probably never heard this, because the pro-abortion media would never publicize it, but the National Abortion Federation periodically conducts seminars and workshops for nurses, doctors, counselors, and others who work in abortion clinics, to help them deal with their feelings and emotions and the qualms they might feel about the work that they do.

Yes, many of them do dream about aborted babies. Many are deeply bothered by the petty reasons the patients give for their decision to kill their babies, and there is almost universal disapproval of women who “wait so late” to kill their babies: they get angry with women who come in late in the second trimester, not because they want their babies killed but because they did not come in earlier during their pregnancy. (Tragically, this is the feeling of the general population: the earlier in pregnancy you abort your baby the less grievous the offense.)

Many nurses report that they are not bothered by the abortion procedures as much as they are by the profound remorse many women experience in the recovery room, when they are hit by the full impact of what they have just done. Many confess that they just don’t know how to respond to the frequent request patients make to view the remains; most would prefer to whisk away the “fetal products” than to yield to this request.

Doctors report that clinic personnel are trained

not to look so shocked when they look at an aborted 20-week fetus, especially for the first time, as this may upset the patient more. Many office personnel, such as receptionists and bookkeepers, are embarrassed by their indirect association with the killing of babies, and tend to tell outsiders what they do but not where they do it. So even the abortion industry is into stress management seminars, and I would suppose they are probably effective.

It is true that a number of abortionists and abortion clinic personnel turn away from what they have been doing, and some even become strongly pro-life. But the beat goes on, and the number of abortions each year remains the same, and I have never heard of a clinic closing for lack of job applicants. I bring all this up simply to emphasize again what a heinous procedure abortion is, that it even affects the people that do it “for a living,” not to mention the profound effects on the women victims and on the moral fabric of our country.

But remember, we will never turn this evil around by focusing on the horrors of the procedure. The clinics will close some day, but not because of our efforts. They will shut down when the abortion pill arrives on the American scene, and I think this is inevitable. Then, even more than now, we will have to continue emphasizing our most important argument: human life begins at conception and ends at death, and it is sacred because it is God’s most precious gift to us, and we never have the right to take it no matter what the social stress on the woman who carries it.

We must pray, unceasingly. We are encouraged by the increasing emphasis this is getting in our parish churches. If we rely on the courts, we will never prevail. If we trust in God, there is no way we can lose.

## CONTRACEPTION AND ABORTION

I am sure that people of all ages have complained that their particular society was the most decadent in recorded history. I read a quote once by a philosopher who was complaining bitterly about the youth of his day....they had no respect for authority, they were impolite and selfish and behaved badly and so forth; it could have been one of us, bemoaning our country's future in the hands of such a thankless lot, but it wasn't....the words were the words of Socrates, more than 400 hundred years B.C.

We Americans today certainly can make a case for the prospect of our country going straight to hell in a basket. In just one generation respect for authority has almost vanished entirely among our youth and our old morality is being replaced by the "new morality"....which is actually our old immorality. Crime rates are soaring, illegal drugs are everywhere, and marauding street gangs are proliferating and shooting good people and each other.

Children in our schools are being searched for weapons. We are locking our cars and putting alarm systems in our homes. Women need to be escorted from their offices to their automobiles. Night jogging can be hazardous to your health. Divorce rates are at an all-time high and still climbing. Good role models for our young people are hard to find: their sports heroes are more concerned with the almighty dollar than the adulation of their fans, and one sports star has been practically immortalized for contracting AIDS.

Hollywood personalities flaunt their hedonistic life styles for all to see. Inane TV sitcoms are outdone in tastelessness only by titillating afternoon talk show hosts and their endless string of depraved guests. Movies insert unnecessary scenes and language to get a coveted R rating, so necessary for success at the box office.

Overshadowing all of this is abortion on demand. No civilization in the past, including the Roman Empire and Nazi Germany, can match the present global assault on human life. It is a way of life now virtually everywhere. We have a whole generation of young people now for whom killing of the unborn has never been illegal. Here in the United States the outlook has never looked gloomier: our high court has now classified pro-lifers as "racketeers," and our pro-abortion president would have us all pay for the killing of the unborn in his socialized health plan (referring to abortion as a "pregnancy-related service"

ranks up there with the CDC official who called pregnancy "the commonest sexually-transmitted disease"!).

The common denominator of all these social disasters is a loss of respect for human life. And I agree with those who have been saying for years that it all began with the widespread acceptance of contraception. I know that the powers-that-be in the pro-life movement have preached, from the start, that we should keep these two topics separate. And I did, for many years. Contraception is the prevention of human life, abortion is the killing of human life; they are not the same.

And yet, I think they both represent, in different degrees, a breach of God's laws as regards procreation and the sanctity of human life. Dr. Paul Marx, of Human Life International, was the first to say it: the abortion mentality is an outgrowth of the contraceptive mentality. One has lead to the other, just as certainly as abortion is leading us to euthanasia.

Artificial birth control was illicit in all Christian churches in our country from its beginning until the 1930's. Then the Protestant churches, one by one, changed their teachings. The Catholic Church did not, and has not. More and more of our people, clergy and laity, are coming to feel that *Humanae Vitae* may well be one of the most powerful papal encyclicals in the history of our Church.

Certainly, the courage of Paul VI is being understood and appreciated more and more. He surely went against the Zeitgeist....the spirit of the times....when he spoke out, overruling the majority of his blue-ribbon panel of advisors. He was criticized and ridiculed by the press and his own people, by theologians and bishops and priests, and his teachings have been largely ignored by a large percentage of "cafeteria" Catholics worldwide.

But now, 25 years later, the pendulum has been starting to swing, and gradually more and more pastors and writers are coming to realize the truth and the wisdom of his words, and the possible correlation between what is happening in the world and the widespread disregard for the papal teachings. I believed it then, but I believe it now with more conviction.

## ARE WE RACKETEERS?

On April 20, 1998, a federal court in Chicago handed down a decision which could have a crippling effect on the pro-life movement. Unless reversed on appeal, this may well be the worst setback for the cause of the unborn since the Roe v. Wade decision of 1973.

First, a bit of background. In 1970 Congress passed the Racketeer-Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act, commonly referred to as the RICO Act. This stated that acts of civil disobedience, such as trespass....commonly used in civil rights and anti-war protests....formerly considered misdemeanors, could now be considered as felonies. This was passed primarily to combat mobsters and drug cartels, not political or social protestors.

Four years ago, in a landmark decision that curiously did not get enough national attention, the Supreme Court ruled that pro-lifers who engage in civil disobedience in front of abortion mills could be prosecuted under the RICO Act. This set the stage for the recent decision by the Chicago court. The National Organization of Women had filed suit against Joseph Scheidler and others, for their demonstrations at abortion clinics.

Scheidler, the founder of the Pro-Life Action League, is a devout Catholic and a very high-profile activist in the war against abortion, and has been jailed and fined many times for his peaceful protests at the killing centers. He has been Public Enemy Number One to the NOW and the other abortion groups, and they were determined to make him pay the price for his heroic efforts in defense of innocent human life.

The trial was a fiasco. The plaintiffs' attorneys did not accuse Scheidler of actually perpetrating any violence, but that he and others had "created a climate that encouraged others to commit acts of violence." On cross examination, Dr. Jack Wilkie was allowed only to answer "yes" or "no" or "I don't know" to the plaintiffs' questions. Congressman Henry Hyde was severely curtailed in his testimony as a character witness. Norma McCovey (the "Jane Roe" of the infamous 1973 decision) was not even allowed to tell the jury of her connection with the Roe v. Wade case. I have read that the judge instructed the jury to return a guilty verdict....can they do that?!....which, of course, they did.

The penalty? \$83,000. The RICO Act allows the judge to triple the amount, which he promptly did. So we are talking a quarter of a million dollars. But the worst is yet to come. A precedent has been set,

and it is entirely possible that hundreds of abortion clinics around the country will file suit against individual activists and organizations. This could be catastrophic for the pro-life movement. Already Charles Rice, professor of law at Notre Dame and one of the most respected voices in defense of the unborn, has urged caution in prayerful protests in front of abortion clinics, suggesting we "pray elsewhere" until we see how this case will wind up after appeal.

For once, I am optimistic about how the higher courts will handle the appeal. Cardinal Francis George of Chicago lost no time in denouncing the decision and pledged his support in an appeal, and it is hoped that the NCCB will do the same. But, more important, other organizations are worried, groups we certainly would never think of as our "allies"....the ACLU, Greenpeace, and even the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals are concerned. This outrageous court decision could make all forms of peaceful protest felonious. This would have absolutely killed the civil rights movement, had this law been in effect and similarly enforced back in the 60's.

We have been called a lot of things the past 25 years, but this surpasses them all. Now we are racketeers! Webster defines a racketeer as "one who obtains money by an illegal enterprise usually involving intimidation." Do we fit this description? This court has redefined the word to include those of us who choose to say the Rosary in front of an abortion clinic. This is preposterous! There is no way this can stand up in the appeals court. But, of course, this is what we said in 1973.

The worst scenario would be a rash of similar suits nationwide, and the costs of litigation could well destroy all pro-life organizations. I don't think this will happen, though. I think everyone will sit back and wait and see how the appeal will go. Unless the courts would single out abortion protestors, and ignore civil rights demonstrations and protests, there should be no way this could be allowed to stand.

The terrible irony in all this is that the abortion industry is immensely profitable. Abortion is *big* money. *They* are the real racketeers. Rescuers and demonstrators have to beg for help to pay for their legal defense. Now they are the victims of the court's distortion of a law against racketeering which would make heroism antisocial and concern for human life criminal. We cannot let this happen.

## A NOTABLE SHIFT

I have been accused of being too pessimistic in my columns about abortion, especially those of the past three or four years. I don't deny the charge, but I have to say it would be an easy stance to justify. 25 years after *Roe v. Wade* we still have abortions in the millions, and those of us unalterably opposed to abortion-on-demand for any reason whatsoever are still in the minority in this country. We have won a battle here and there....24-hour waiting periods, parental consent, denial of federal funding....but we are not winning the war. The courts, the media, and the administration in Washington are still solidly against us, and our dream of a constitutional amendment, still present, seems more distant than ever. Our president, while condescendingly hoping to make abortion "safe, legal, and rare," has vetoed the ban on partial-birth abortions for the second time and an override is not expected.

And yet....and yet....something seems to be happening. The tide seems to be turning. No less a voice than the *New York Times*....no friend of the pro-life movement....has noticed it, and in a recent front page article has called it "a notable shift" in public opinion. The number of abortions performed annually in this country is slowly decreasing, the number of abortion mills is declining, and the number of doctors performing abortions is dropping precipitously. The most encouraging sign of all, though, is the large number of young people getting involved in the struggle to defend unborn life. Bishop O'Donnell took note of this in his talk at the Rachel Monument after the Pro-Life Mass in January.

The national press noted the same phenomenon at the annual March for Life in Washington. The huge number of young people under 25, who came from all corners of the country, was striking, as was their enthusiasm and the maturity of their thinking when called on to express their feelings. Now, these young people have never known abortion to be illegal. They have not accepted the premise that if it's legal it must be O.K., as so many of their lukewarm elders have. They have not bought into the hedonistic life-style so glorified by the trash music they hear and the inane sitcoms they see. They give us reason for optimism, for the pro-life movement and for the future of our nation.

What has caused this gradual but increasingly noticeable shift in public opinion? Certainly, the tireless effort of hundreds of thousands of dedicated

women and men, who have practically devoted their lives to the education of our young people to the sanctity of human life, has played a major role. Advances in the field of neonatology, especially ultrasonography, have sharpened our awareness of the humanity of the unborn child, completely disarming those who would call a baby a "blob of tissue," and who would insist that we really don't know when life begins. Most of the institutional churches have fallen in line with the Catholic Church and her teachings, although it took them a long time to do so. Even more helpful has been the involvement and the fervor of the Evangelicals and Fundamentalists, and their Christian Coalition has been extremely vocal and active in the cause of the unborn.

But I think the one, single development that has been most responsible for the "notable shift" is the exposure of the horrible procedure known as the partial-birth abortion. Although we are yet to see this grisly murder of a live infant on national T.V., and we never will, drawings were displayed and detailed descriptions were publicized everywhere, even on the floor of Congress, and many people were "converted." Even some staunch pro-abortionists made feeble attempts to disassociate themselves from the brouhaha, as more and more people came to realize that this operation was tantamount to infanticide.

Whatever the reason, or reasons, the tide does seem to be turning, and we should be motivated to redouble our efforts to restore sanity to our laws. The failure of the McCain-Feingold bill will allow us to continue to spotlight the attitudes of political candidates on the sanctity of human life, and we must consistently vote pro-life at every level of public office. As we cast our votes, nothing else should have priority over the politician's stand on abortion. Inspired by the groundswell of pro-life sentiment among our young people, we must never overlook an opportunity to speak up for the unborn, in public or in private conversation. And we must continue to pray and sacrifice as though the entire future of our nation depends upon it. It does.

## BABIES FOR SALE

A generation ago, that phrase would bring to mind black-market babies....infants without parents who were available for adoption by childless couples, for a fee. Illegal, sordid, back-alley stuff, but it went on. Today, "Babies for Sale" has a different connotation. Today, you can buy, openly and legally, an unborn baby.

The *New York Times* recently reported that embryos are being offered for sale at Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center. Doctors there, perhaps spurred on by all the media hype about In-Vitro Fertilization, surrogate motherhood, and the like, are fertilizing human eggs with human sperm on agar plates, freezing these tiny human beings, and offering them for sale....at \$2,750 each!

Unborn babies, then, are considered by many in the scientific community no longer to be a product of God's creation, but rather a commodity, manufactured in the laboratory for sale on the open market. We have often compared the Roe v. Wade decision of 1973 to the Dred Scott decision of the last century, when the Court ruled that slaves were chattel, they were not really human, they could be bought and sold like cattle. Here, too, the analogy applies.... there is no moral distinction between selling a human when he is an embryo and selling one who is a fully developed adult

Another recent article in the same newspaper, as reported by a syndicated columnist, reports on the escalating market for human sperm and eggs. Kathleen Parker tells us that there is now a worldwide demand for "designer genes." For reasons that are not obvious to me, the demand for Caucasian sperm and eggs from the U.S. is greatest in Japan and Guatemala. You can actually "shop" for these germ cells on the Internet, punching in your preference for this or that physical characteristic and ethnic or intellectual background. A woman, let us say, could search specifically for donor semen from a blond, blue-eyed man, tall and fair, with a taste for the classics. The doctors will do the rest, for a huge fee, and thanks to modern science she may possibly have a child with these traits.

Now, the odds of this happening are roughly equal to her chances of winning the lottery, but of course we are never given these statistics. One success, out of hundreds or thousands of attempts, will be trumpeted over the network evening news to the titillation of millions of gullible people, who have

not looked hard at all this craziness and seen it for what it really is.

We have been warning for 25 years that abortion is not the real problem we face, but rather a symptom of the real problem. The real enemy is secular humanism, which denies God's laws and enthrones human laws. Once abortion became acceptable, as it has, all defenseless and unproductive human life will be at risk....assisted suicide and euthanasia will surely follow, and we are getting very close to that reality now. What we did not foresee, at least I didn't, was that, as human life was devalued, the creation of life would move away from the beautiful procreative marriage act that God designed to the culture tube in a big city laboratory that science has invented.

Years ago the Frankenstein series of movies were all the rage among the younger set. No red-blooded American boy would think of missing one. Dr. Frankenstein was the mad scientist who was obsessed with the idea of "creating" a human being. His hunchback servant would rob graves, and Dr. Frankenstein (Basil Rathbone) would put body parts together in the shape of a rather large man. The doctor was years ahead of his time, and knew that he could get the heart pumping with electricity....which he did, by rigging a lightning rod through a skylight in the roof of his laboratory and waiting for a good electrical storm. The storm came on cue, the lightning bolt struck, and after a few moments of Hollywood's best special effects.....voila! The monster was born (Boris Karloff), and for the next 30 minutes stumbled about the countryside, frightening the villagers to death, and the young audience as well..

But that was fiction. Today's Frankensteins are quite real, and they are dead serious about what they are doing. They consider themselves the cognitive elite, and move about in God's territory with pride and arrogance, fashioning human life in a test tube, and flushing the less-than-perfect specimens down the drain. Microscopic in size, but it is human life. And you can pick and choose the one that appears to be the "best" one, and buy it....probably with a credit card. The only challenge that now lies ahead of them is cloning....and you can be absolutely certain that one day they will succeed in doing that, if it is possible. For their motto is, "If it can be done, do it."

Abortion, euthanasia, test-tube babies, cloning. This is what has been called "the slippery slope." And we seem to be sliding down it very rapidly. This

is what happens when we cross the line that separates civilized people from barbarians. That line is the belief that all human life is sacred and must be protected.

Pray, as if your life depended on it. It may.

