

Personal Update

No. 211

August-September 2026

A Deepening Rupture in the Church	1
Was the Church Slow to Condemn Slavery?	5
Abortion Drug Mifepristone in Drinking Water	10
Dem Governor Persecutes Religious Sisters in New York	11
Mandatory Reporting and the Seal of Confession	15
Is N.I. Banning Religion to Protect Abortion?	17
The Self-Mythology of Professor Jason Arday	19
Insecure Christians in the Islamic Republic of Iran	21
Chaplain of Christian School Sacked for Speaking Truth	22
Book Review: <i>The Genesis of Gender: A Christian Theory</i>	26

Dear Friend of Family & Life,

Please accept and read the Personal Update, number 211. It is an odd summer with the weeks of heat, leaving my lawn, normally green and growing, now looking like a burnt out meadow in Spain. I still have a hope that the coming rain will bring it back to life and the unused lawn mower will justify its existence.

We start off with an account and reflection on the consecration of four bishops in Écône, Switzerland, on the first day of July. I trust that I am not standing on anyone's toes.

Too often the Catholic Church has been blamed for abuses in previous centuries, and the widespread acceptance of slavery after Columbus discovered the Americas is one of them. In fact, the Popes actively condemned the treating of the natives as chattels and beasts of burden in the money-making plantations of the New World. What was lacking was the support of the local churches and their bishops in the colonising states of Europe. A race-based slavery had become part of the economic life of the state, and the locals was unwilling to challenge it.

There is much more to read in News from America and thereafter. Our book review at the close of the Update is important, since the book contains a much-needed and comprehensive exposé of the evil and insanity of *gender mania*, written by a once "insider" of its advocates.

A Deepening Rupture in the Church

On July 2, the Vatican declared that the consecration of four bishops at Écône in the Society of St Pius X (SSPX) was “schismatic” since it was done without any mandate of Pope Leo XIV, and therefore, both the consecrators and the new bishops are automatically excommunicated (*latae sententiae*). The two consecrators were Bishop Bernard Fellay and Bishop Alfonso de Galarreta, both illegally consecrated in 1988, and the four newly consecrated bishops were Bishops Pascal Schreiber, Michael Goldade, Michel Poinciset de Sivry and Marc Hanappier. These excommunications can only be removed by the Pope.

Just before the consecrations on June 29, Pope Leo wrote a special letter to the Superior General of the SSPX, Fr Davide Pagliarani. While he acknowledged the many admirable features of the religious life of this fraternity, the Pope pleaded with him “to turn back” the intended consecrations, and “consider the spiritual good of the faithful, because the schismatic act you are about to undertake would deprive them of the licit and, in some cases, even valid reception of the Sacraments, which they love and seek for their sanctification.” The Pope noted that “to tear the seamless garment of Christ is a sin of extreme gravity.”

Fr Pagliarani replied: “Paradoxically, in the present circumstances, we believe it to be our very duty to do everything possible to mend Christ’s seamless garment, torn by forces and pressures incompatible with a truly Catholic spirit.” Maybe the paradox arises from the defiance and disobedience of the SSPX, even as they profess communion with and submission to Rome?

Clear and Without Ambiguity

On July 2, the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith published a Decree about the illegal consecrations. It pointed out that, since the time of Pope Paul VI, the SSPX has not been in full communion with the Holy See, and this open disobedience in defiance of Pope Leo has deepened the schism, which began exactly 38 years ago when Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre consecrated four bishops in 1988, and rendered his priests’ ministering of the sacraments of penance and marriage invalid. He died in 1991.

A little-known episode in 1988 reveals the SSPX’s deep suspicion of the Vatican. That year Archbishop Lefebvre was 83, and there were fears that the Society would not survive after he died. Lefebvre met Cardinal Ratzinger, and together they agreed on a compromise. The Pope would approve a bishop from the ranks of the SSPX, and Lefebvre would profess obedience to the Pope and accept Vatican Two’s continuity with the Magisterium.

Unfortunately, Lefebvre retracted his consent the next day, and announced that he would ordain four new bishops. Two days later, Pope John Paul issued the *motu proprio*, *Ecclesia Dei*, in which he declared “this act was one of *disobedience* to the Roman Pontiff in a very grave matter and of supreme importance for the unity of the Church, namely the ordination of bishops whereby the apostolic succession is sacramentally perpetuated. Hence such disobedience—which implies in practice the rejection of the Roman primacy—constitutes a *schismatic* act.” Lefebvre and the four bishops were excommunicated *latae sententiae* according to Canon Law, §§ 751 and 1364.

In 2009, Pope Benedict XVI lifted the excommunications to recognise the good faith of the SSPX. In November 2016, Pope Francis granted liceity and validity to SSPX priests’ sacramental absolution of penitents and their solemnising of marriages. It would appear from the above Decree that this measure of toleration no longer exists, since it stated that in both these sacraments their participation would be illicit and invalid. While SSPX priests are clearly

“schismatic”, they administer the other sacraments validly, and their celebration of the Eucharist is a valid Mass.

For a lay person, merely attending an SSPX Mass does not make one a schismatic unless he insists that it is the only valid Mass, and refuses to attend Mass elsewhere, which suggests a “schismatic intention”, which rejects the authority of the Pope and the Magisterium of the Church. While lay people who “formally adhere to the Priestly Fraternity of Saint Pius X are to be considered schismatics and excommunicated”, it is important to define “adherence”. Internally, it is freely and knowingly embracing the substance of the schismatic position and placing it above obedience to the Pope, and externally and visibly manifesting that choice. The July Decree specifically says that laypeople attending for liturgical or spiritual reasons but who do not reject the Magisterium or papal authority are not automatically schismatic, and individual cases would need to be assessed one by one.

‘The Elephant in the Room’

In his letter, Pope Leo praised the many features of the SSPX which illustrate the Church’s major problems in certain countries today. He noted that Archbishop Lefebvre’s efforts to preserve the “Mass of the Ages” succeeded when almost everyone else wanted to consign it to the Vatican’s museum. The SSPX’s lengthy *Declaration of Catholic Faith* is clear and orthodox, apart from a few minor slips, and is in contrast to the often incomplete and even conflicting teaching of some bishops today. Some have permitted open heresy, blatant immorality, and liturgies without reverence—thankfully, Ireland was largely spared these aberrations. While the SSPX does have many legitimate complaints about how bishops have failed, this does not exonerate its action on July 1, or invalidate the excommunication.

Despite the failings of the Church since the Second Vatican Council, the leaders of the SSPX have failed to grasp the doctrinal “elephant in the room”, namely, communion with the bishop of Rome, which has been the foundation of the visible unity of the Church for centuries. While they claimed to be defending the traditional teaching of the Church, they have ignored the hierarchical nature of the Church, part of which is the Pope’s supreme authority over the appointment of bishops. To be a member of the Catholic Church, one must be in communion with the successor of Peter.

Some High Anglicans in the Church of England may copy the rite of the Mass, use the language of Latin, accept the Church’s teaching in nearly every point, but, if they are not part of that unity and communion, they do not belong to the Church. In the same way, the SSPX has broken the visible unity of the Church by refusing to obey the demand of Pope Leo XIV, and thereby added to the crises in the Church. By acting in direct contradiction to the explicit command of the Pope, the SSPX breaks the visible unity of the Church, which is the foundation for all Catholic teaching.

Before the consecration of a bishop starts, the consecrating prelate asks for the “Apostolic Mandate”, which is a letter of the Pope, appointing a priest to become a bishop. As the SSPX Information Service reported, the question was asked at Écône, but there was no direct response since no “Apostolic Mandate” existed for the four priests awaiting consecration. Instead of reading a papal mandate, a notary read a declaration justifying the ceremony and invoking “a state of necessity” in the Church, which in as many words, accuses the Church’s bishops of failing in their duty to preserve the Deposit of Faith in the Church.

Being “in communion” with the Pope of Rome does not mean that you like him or agree with his views. You may even resist his agenda, but at all stages, it means that we acknowledge him as the visible head of the visible and universal Church. This doctrine was not an invention of the Council of Trent as alleged, but goes back to the early centuries.

Ubi Petrus, Ibi Ecclesia

In the year of 377, St Jerome wrote to Pope Damasus: *I speak with the successor of the fisherman and the disciple of the cross. I, who follow none but Christ as first, am joined in communion with Your Holiness, that is, with the See of Peter. On this rock I know that the Church was built. Whoever eats the lamb outside this house is profane. Whoever is not in the Ark of Noah will perish when the deluge comes... Whoever does not gather with you scatters; for whoever does not belong to Christ is of Antichrist.* (Epistula XV ad Damasum, § 2)

There exist many similar statements of other Church Fathers. Even though they had disputes with the Bishop of Rome on issues of doctrine or discipline, they all agreed on the necessity of being in communion with him. No amount of denial and justification can escape the conclusion that Pope Leo, making use of his universal jurisdiction and authority, has excommunicated the six bishops named above for committing a formal act of schism.

The 2026 response of Pope Leo is severe and strict, compared with Pope John Paul II in 1988, who, while calling Lefebvre's consecrations a "schismatic act", was more pastorally accommodating. In 1988, a number of SSPX priests and seminarians rejected Lefebvre's episcopal consecrations, and formed the Priestly Fraternity of St Peter in communion with Rome, and with the encouragement of Pope John Paul II, who told them that their dedication to the Traditional Latin Mass was a "rightful aspiration". Today, this pontifical society, known as the FSSP, has 400 priests and 200 seminarians, and in Ireland is located in Waterford.

Today, one serious pastoral problem arises for penitents who confess their sins to an SSPX priest or get married under his ministration, but have doubts about the validity of their absolution and marriage. Pope Leo has opened the door to reconciling priests and lay people who may wish to leave the SSPX. Unfortunately, Pope Francis' *Traditionis Custodes* remains in force, and has become an obstacle to those unhappy in the SSPX, since this document claims that the Traditional Mass is harmful to the unity of the Church. Pope Leo has an urgent need to find a solution to this paradox.

This visible communion with the bishop of Rome insures that we are joined with the universal Church, horizontally with Catholics across the world, and vertically, with its members stretching through the centuries back to Christ. Our church is not an invisible one as some Protestants think, where one belongs by agreement or leaves to find another.

"We must all work for reform in the Church... from *within* the Church, not outside her visible unity. Only then will she be able to overcome the crisis that plagues her." (*Crisis* magazine, July 2026)

An Eye-Witness Account of the Consecrations at Écône

The largely outdoor ceremony took place in the field below the International Seminary of St Pius X, the "flagship seminary" founded in 1971, and it followed the example of Archbishop Lefebvre's four consecrations in 1988. The five-hour Mass brought thousands of SSPX faithful to participate, who wore white baseball caps, labelled "Écône 2026".

As the Mass was nearing the distribution of Holy Communion, a mountain thunderstorm arrived, the heavens opened with a downpour to soak you in seconds and scattered the assembled congregation. Was this a sign of divine displeasure?

The Catholic Herald reporter, Rose Lyddon, stayed for the three days of celebrations, and was surprised that the general mood was one of "unreserved excitement" instead of doubt or sadness. Without exception, her mostly young interviewees were delighted that the long-

awaited advance to secure the future had been “finally” accomplished. Ecclesial communion with a failing Church carries the danger of Modernism, a contaminating heresy, so keeping one’s distance from Rome is a blessing, not a problem.

When asked to explain the crisis in the Church, the familiar talking points of the SSPX were repeated—religious liberty, ecumenism, interfaith dialogue and the Protestant features of the *Novus Ordo* Mass. Yet Ms Lyddon was somewhat scandalised by seeing people chatting away during the Mass, even at the consecration of the bread and wine. She asked herself if this is the way to reverence the Mass of the Ages?

Gradually, Ms Lyddon recognised that the SSPX is a tight-knit Society, with every member vetted to belong to the group, and is set apart from the rest of the Church and the world. It reminded her of the Puritans in the 17th century who left behind the corruptions of the established Church of England, and set up a theocratic state of the elect in the New World of America. Like the Puritans, many in the SSPX have no wish to belong to the existing Catholic Church. Today, a generation born after 1988 has grown up in the SSPX, and only knows worship and religious doctrine in their own chapels and schools, making them proud of having a distinct and independent identity. The consecration of four young bishops will insure their future, and renders a return to full communion with and in the Catholic Church all the more onerous and remote. (Source: *Catholic Herald*, a monthly magazine)

Addendum: It is easy to dismiss the SSPX’s actions as due to pride and a Protestant spirit. Blaming their supposed moral failings in an argument does not open their minds to the truth. We need to try understand their reasoning, even if we think their July 1 decision was a serious error. Recall Cardinal Ratzinger’s painstaking efforts to persuade Archbishop Lefebvre in 1988 provide an instructive example. However vigorously he contested Lefebvre’s reasoning, he approached him as a man sincerely concerned for Christ and the Church. Therefore, our task should be to identify and answer the errors in the SSPX’s arguments without presuming to judge their interior motives. The cause of reconciliation will be better served by reason, prayer and charity than by accusation or contempt.

Was the Church Slow to Condemn Slavery?

In 2020, Pope Francis asked the question: “Why... did it take so long for the Church to unequivocally condemn slavery and various forms of violence?” (*Fratelli Tutti*, § 86) It was only in 1888 that Pope Leo XIII announced a “formal, absolute and universal condemnation of slavery” and its full incompatibility with the “dignity of every human being, created in the image of God”. (*In Plurimis*, § 3-4) This year Pope Leo XIV asked for pardon for the Church’s slowness to arrive at a clear condemnation of slavery. We should, Pope Leo XIV wrote, “feel deep sorrow when contemplating the immense suffering and humiliation endured by so many in stark contrast to their immeasurable dignity of persons infinitely loved by the Lord. For this, in the name of the Church, I sincerely ask for pardon.” (*Magnifica Humanitas*, § 176)

Historical slavery plays a vital role in Pope Leo’s thinking about AI (artificial intelligence), which has the capacity to create “new forms of slavery”. When the efficiency of technology is advanced with no safeguards against the uncontrolled pursuit of wealth, AI can be developed to reduce whole classes of humans to a “subordination akin to slavery”. The Pope speaks about, not merely the theoretic degradation of humans, but the practical abuse of human labour to build AI machines, to extract the necessary minerals and supply the vast energy to feed them, all of which may be at the expense of human dignity and magnificence.

In 1891, Pope Leo XIII attacked the “runaway capitalism” in the 19th century “as little better than slavery”, and demanded that employers treat each worker according to “his dignity

as a person ennobled by Christian character... To this must be added that the hiring of labour and the conduct of trade are concentrated in the hands of comparatively few; so that a small number of very rich men have been able to lay upon the teeming masses of the labouring poor a yoke little better than that of slavery itself.” (*Rerum Novarum*, §§ 3 and 20)

In 1888, writing to the bishops of Brazil, he called slavery a practice “*wholly opposed to that which was originally ordained by God and by nature... Through an absolute forgetfulness of our common nature, and of human dignity, and the likeness of God stamped upon us all, it came to pass that in the contentions and wars which then broke out, those who were the stronger reduced the conquered into slavery; so that mankind, though of the same race, became divided into two sections, the conquered slaves and their victorious master.*” (*In Plurimis*, §§ 3-4)

Brazil was the last western country to abolish chattel slavery.

A Voice in the Wilderness

The discovery of the New World of the Americas led to the slavery trade of Africans to work in the plantations of sugar, tobacco and other crops of the European colonisers. A series of papal edicts condemned slavery repeatedly, even while the local bishops turned a deaf ear to these edicts.

Much earlier in 1435, Pope Eugene IV had condemned the enslavement of Guanche natives in the Canary Islands, recently taken over by French explorers and later by the Spanish Kingdom of Castile. In his statement, *Sicut Dudum*, he demanded that those in charge should stop this practice, and correct the injustice within 15 days of the document’s publication under pain of immediate excommunication.

A century later in 1537, Pope Paul III issued *Sublimis Deus*, regarded as the most important document on the human condition of the Indians, and addressed all the Christian faithful in the world, thereby making it a message for everyone. It began by stating that Christ commissioned the Apostles and the Church to preach the Good News to everyone without exception: “Go, make disciples of all nations.”

Satan has undermined this command by persuading the European colonisers that the Indians are not really human, and may be treated like animals and slaves on the plantations of the New World. For Pope Paul, this servitude was “unheard of before now”, and it violated the brotherhood of mankind.

This led to the Pontiff’s declaration that the native Indians are “true men”, capable of choosing to be baptised, and becoming faithful Christians. He condemned the enforced slavery, resulting in the loss of the home and farm of the Indians as well as their family life.

Pope Paul’s teaching was repeated by Popes Gregory XIV in 1591 and Urban VIII in 1639, Innocent XI in 1686 and Benedict XIV in 1741. In 1815, after the defeat of Napoleon, Pope Pius VII called on the Congress of Vienna to outlaw both the slave trade and slavery itself. Pope Gregory XVI in 1839 repeated the teaching of his predecessors by *In Supremo*, condemning the grave evils of the slave trade and slavery, because so-called Christian nations refused to follow the Church’s teaching since the discovery of the New World in the 15th century.

A Case of Wilful Ignorance?

For obvious reasons, churchmen and lay people decided that Pope Gregory had only condemned the slave trade but not the lawful possession and use of slaves, which was widespread in the United States until the Civil War ended all slavery in 1865. The US Catholic bishops accepted this misreading of *In Supremo*, and never tried to disturb the local church by

campaigning for the abolition of slavery. They were also unwilling to disturb the current law which permitted the common practice of buying, selling and renting slaves. Surely this is an example of wilful ignorance?

Not unrelated to this topic was the scandal of the Jesuit Province of Maryland's sale of 272 slaves to two Louisiana landowners in 1838. The arrival of the first Jesuits in the Catholic province of Maryland took place in 1634, and as the only priests there they ministered the sacraments to the people in a huge area. From the start, they supported themselves by the produce of their plantations, growing mainly corn and tobacco. The farm workers were recorded as being black slaves in 1711.

In 1824, the Jesuit landholdings were more than 12,000 acres in Maryland, and 1,700 in nearby Pennsylvania, but were so poorly managed that the head of the Jesuits sent Fr Peter Kenny from Ireland to conduct a canonical visit. He found the farms were in debt, and the slaves were living in deplorable conditions and without any religious practice.

By 1833, the Jesuits in the Maryland province were deeply divided about the future of the plantations. One party wanted to sell the land and free the slaves while concentrating on the work of their schools like Georgetown College; others advocated keeping their "patrimonial lands" and avoid sending the slaves to the Deep South where they would risk being mistreated. At an official meeting, it was decided to sell 272 slaves, men, women and children, which took place in 1838.

The sale became a major scandal and notorious among Catholics, not just because it was the largest sale of slaves in US history, but because of their well-founded fear of what would happen when the slaves were sent to the Deep South. Shortly after leaving Maryland, they worked in plantations far from any church or priest, and were not allowed to practice their faith. Families were separated by the new owners, in defiance of a condition of the sale.

Many Jesuit priests were outraged by their provincial's action, and written complaints were sent to Rome. The provincial was removed from his post, and sent to Rome where he was censured and posted to Nice where he died. Most of the money received was not used for the education of Jesuit students, the third condition of the sale. It helped to clear the debt of Georgetown Academy, today's Georgetown University, which otherwise might have collapsed.

The issue of slavery, that is the owning, renting and selling of human beings, became a contentious matter among Americans in the 2000s. It became clear that the Jesuits and other religious orders of men and women regarded slaves as a normal part of social life of the time, despite the clear teaching of the Magisterium.

Addendum: In the UK, after research had showed that the Church of England had invested in a slave trading business called the South Sea Company in the 17th century, the Church Commissioners set up a nine-year programme to invest £100 million in black communities affected by the legacy of slavery. The project for "Healing, Repair and Justice" became known as Project Spire.

Just how much of this programme is virtue signalling based on dubious historical research? The descendants of slave owners are paying the descendants of slaves? For something that happened over three centuries ago, too much time and too many people have come and gone to make sense of it. For many Anglicans in the UK, a much greater need are the hundreds of parishes, struggling to find the money to repair their ancient churches.

NEWS FROM AMERICA

[By Brendan Gleason] As we have always stated here, this column concerns itself with President Donald Trump’s pro-life actions, policies and statements only. All else, whether in domestic or foreign policy, is outside our scope and our conversation.

Right to Life

Back in the 1960s, Auxiliary Bishop John Ward (1920-2011) of Los Angeles said defenders of unborn babies should use the term “right to life” to describe their fledgling movement. That is what happened—and that appellation, along with the equally valid and compelling term “pro-life”, can be credited with saving unborn babies’ lives ever since by framing the issue accurately, so untold millions of people realise that babies do have rights.

In 1967, the Right to Life League debuted in Southern California, and today it supports “over 80” crisis pregnancy centres, medical clinics and maternity homes around California. Words matter—and the words “right to life” keep on saving babies and their mums.

US Bishops Praise *Dobbs*

The US bishops’ pro-life chairman, Bishop Daniel Thomas of Toledo, praised the US Supreme Court’s *Dobbs* decision of June 24, 2022: “On this Anniversary of the *Dobbs* decision, we praise God for the historic overturning of *Roe v Wade*, and we beg the intercession of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in building a culture of life.”

US Bishops’ Pro-Life Prayer

In June, the US bishops consecrated the United States to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. And in July, for the 250th anniversary of the Declaration, they issued a pro-life prayer intention for the USA that included these words:

The Declaration of Independence boldly affirms that first among our inalienable rights is the right to life, given to us by the Creator. Yet despite being so solemnly proclaimed, the right to life is today threatened and often denied, particularly at the moments when life is most fragile. The laws of our nation should—first and foremost—protect life. For “there can be no true democracy without a recognition of every person’s dignity and without respect for his or her rights” (Evangelium vitae, § 101).

US Bishops’ Prayer Campaign

At the end of July, the US bishops made this announcement: “From now through the end of October, Respect Life Month, the USCCB Committee on Pro-Life Activities is inviting Catholics to join a focused effort of prayer and action to stop the spread of abortion pills.” Oklahoma City Archbishop Paul S Coakley, the bishops’ president, said, “Every abortion involves the death of a child and harm to the mother. Now with easier access to abortion pills, the abortion rate is tragically climbing, along with increased health risks [to mums].”

The archbishop slammed the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for letting abortion drugs be sold by mail nationwide, prescribed via telehealth and sold online and at pharmacies. He pointed out that all this enables “exploitation by violent partners or human traffickers”.

Archbishop Coakley urges everyone to pray to St Joseph:

... May your example inspire us also to welcome, cherish, and safeguard God’s most precious gift of life. Help us to faithfully commit ourselves to the service and defence of human life — especially where it is vulnerable or threatened. Obtain for us the grace to do the will of God in all things. Amen.

US Bishops’ ‘Notes for Clergy’

Along with their prayer campaign against the death-dealing abortion drugs, the US Conference of Catholic Bishops have published a two-page document, “Notes for Clergy on

the Abortion Pill”, which contains suggestions for homilies on the subject. They have also released a two-page “Abortion Pill Q&A” for public distribution online and in print.

All Dems in Congress Back Death Drug

All 259 Democrats in Congress—47 senators and 212 congressmen and women—have collectively filed a brief to ask the Fifth Circuit Court to restore the Biden administration’s FDA rules that let mifepristone be prescribed in “telehealth” sessions, and also be shipped through the US mail in violation of the *Comstock Act*, which prohibits mailing abortifacients.

Catholic Betrays Late-Term Babies

On August 10, Massachusetts Governor Maura Healey (Democrat), surrounded by jubilant feminists, signed into state law a literally bloodthirsty bill that legalises aborting any and all late-term babies, including ones about to be born. Even some of her fellow Democrats, who are ordinarily pro-abortion, drew the line and voted against the horrific bill.

Maura Healey considers herself a Catholic and calls herself a lesbian. As you can imagine, pro-life Catholics in the Bay State and around all America are asking Archbishop Richard Henning of Boston to excommunicate her. The archbishop has called the new law “a grave offense against the sanctity and dignity of every person” but so far has not responded to demands for penalties against the governor.

Pro-Life New FDA Nominee

Dr Heidi Overton, a White House aide nominated by President Trump on August 19 to head the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), said in 2023 that Congress should regulate the abortion drug mifepristone “to protect women and children”. She has also written negatively about abortion on demand. She served in Mr Trump’s first administration and is now deputy director of the White House Domestic Policy Council.

As head of the FDA, Dr Overton would deal with mifepristone, but she first faces confirmation by the Senate. The FDA is conducting a safety review of mifepristone, and plans to issue a report after this November’s midterm elections. The issue, of course, is hot-button.

Baby Death Toll

Planned Parenthood’s annual report for its fiscal year 2024-2025 states that it aborted 434,450 babies in that time. Estimates place America’s annual national toll at 1.1 million babies.

Pro-Life Mass and Procession

Every First Saturday, Bishop Kevin Sweeney of Paterson, New Jersey, offers a pro-life Mass at St Margaret of Scotland Church in Morristown and leads a rosary procession to the local Planned Parenthood. The bishop and pro-lifers pray for an end to abortion, and then return to the church for Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

Demand Autopsies for Aborted Babies

On July 20, Republican lawmakers by the dozens, led by Rep. Chris Smith (New Jersey) and Senator Mike Lee (Utah), wrote to the Department of Justice to insist that it finish a probe into the deaths of the DC Five, the late-term babies whose bodies were recovered by pro-lifers with 110 more infants in March 2022 outside the Washington Surgi-Centre run by the late-term abortionist Cesare Santangelo. The legislators also demanded that the DOJ do autopsies on the babies to see if their deaths were partial-birth abortions and even infanticides, and hence were illegal under federal law. District of Columbia officials have been uncooperative.

The lawmakers also asked that the babies be released for respectful burials. Terrisa Bukovinac and Lauren Handy, the pro-life activists who recovered the babies from a medical-

waste truck driver, had unofficially named the five children to rescue them from anonymity, and give them the love they never had in life: Angel, Christopher X, Harriet, Holly and Phoenix.

There is some hope that the DOJ will take action. We will keep you posted.

Remembrance

The 14th annual National Day of Remembrance for Aborted Children will take place on Saturday, September 12. In hundreds of cities, pro-lifers will gather to hold services and pray at the graves of aborted babies and at churches' memorials for the infants. The intent is to express love for the little abortion victims, to provide healing for post-abortive moms and anyone else ever involved in abortion, and to strengthen pro-lifers' resolve to never give up the cause.

A theme for the events is, "Blessed are they who mourn". (St Matthew 5, 4)

Abortion Drugs in Drinking Water

A new, twice peer-reviewed environmental study reveals that a two-year test of nine municipal water supplies has found "significant levels" of the abortion drug mifepristone in eight of the nine city water sources. Each year, hundreds of thousands of women use the drug to kill their babies at home. The little victims are flushed into the toilet and so enter the water supply. So does contamination from the mifepristone.

There is little public awareness or outcry about this; largely, only pro-lifers care about the babies and about the public health dangers their barbaric removal poses. Environmentalists are noticeably unconcerned, and so are public health advocates. However, some state attorneys general are showing interest, as the following story explains.

Call for Drugs Probe

On June 5, the attorneys general of 14 states collectively urged the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to start tracking levels and health risks of the abortion drug mifepristone in America's municipal water supply, as pro-life writer Calvin Freiburger has reported. Led by Missouri Attorney General Catherine Hanaway, the officials reminded the EPA that mifepristone elements "remain active post-excretion", current wastewater treatment does not remove them, and so "there is strong reason to conclude that the compounds persist in both the environment and the water supply." Pro-aborts want no such testing.

Pope Leo's Pro-Life Monthly Intention

Pope Leo XIV's monthly prayer intention for July of this year was "Let us pray for the respect and protection of human life in all its stages, recognising it as a gift from God."

The Holy Father's prayer includes these thoughts:

Today we ask for the grace to recognize and protect the unique and unrepeatable value of every human being. May we learn to welcome life unconditionally, to tenderly care for fragility, to accompany each stage with respect, and to bravely defend those who have no voice... Make your Church a living witness of the Gospel of life... Amen.

You can find the monthly "Pray with the Pope" at the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network: <https://www.popesprayer.va/>

Pope Leo's Message to America

In his congratulations to the United States on the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, Pope Leo stressed religious liberty— "the right of every person to worship according to conscience and to practice their faith openly, without coercion or fear"—and the right to life—"the God-given dignity of every human life, each person being endowed with an inherent worth that calls for reverence, protection and care."

‘Declaration of Dependence’

Venerable Archbishop Fulton J Sheen (1895-1979), known universally as Bishop Sheen during his lifetime, was also known, in the words of the Protestant evangelist Billy Graham, as the greatest communicator of the 20th century. A profound theologian, apologist, author, radio and TV evangelist and convert-maker, he wrote 73 books and countless articles.

Bishop Sheen will be beatified in St Louis on September 24.

He published one of his books, *A Declaration of Dependence*, on Independence Day, the Fourth of July, 1941. In it he stressed that our rights are God-given and do not come from the state. He wrote, “When we deny God as the foundation of our rights, we shall no longer have rights. The Declaration of Independence, I repeat, is a Declaration of Dependence.”

As you might recall, last issue we quoted several prominent pro-abortion Democrat politicians who in recent years have arrogantly denied that God is the source of our rights. They have insisted that our rights come from government—which, of course, means coming from government officials, as preposterous as that is. Bishop Sheen knew better—and so do we.

Tyranny: ‘Cultural Competency’

New York’s pro-abortion Governor Kathy Hochul (Democrat) considers herself a good Catholic, yet she has promoted aborting babies every chance she gets. Pro-lifers are now criticising her for another New York Democrat anti-life move: persecuting the Hawthorne Dominican Sisters—her fellow Catholics, obviously—because they will not comply with a totalitarian state law. That measure would make them, among other outrages, house natural men with the dying, aged, indigent women whom they care for without charge at their skilled nursing facility, Rosary Hill Home, in Hawthorne, not far from New York City.

Yet another provision of that state law would compel the sisters to attend twice-yearly pro-homosexual “cultural competency” brain-washing sessions—this in America, Land of the Free! Pro-lifers exclaim, “How totalitarian is the concept ‘cultural competency’? Who gets to define culture? The sisters are already ‘culturally competent’, Catholic, pro-life and American!”

Penalties for failure to comply with the law could force the sisters to stop their ministry of care for dying people—and that is an utterly anti-life position and result.

The sisters have filed a federal suit against the law, and President Trump’s Department of Justice has joined it as a co-plaintiff. We will keep you posted.

Judge: New York Can’t Coerce Sisters--Yet

The New York state government is also persecuting the Hawthorne Dominican sisters on another front, and is going after other Catholic religious orders who care for dying patients as well. At issue is a new state law that would force all of them to comply with assisted suicide in violation of their Catholic faith and their vocation of protecting their patients.

The sisters—the Carmelite Sisters for the Aged and Infirm, the Dominican Sisters of Hawthorne, the Missionary Sisters of St Benedict, the Little Sisters of the Poor—and the Diocese of Rockville Centre are suing the New York state government over the unjust law. And at the end of July a federal judge got New York to agree to temporarily stop enforcement of the new law while the lawsuit proceeds through the federal courts.

The case is *Carmelite Sisters for the Aged and Infirm v. James*. The law would order the sisters to counsel their patients about assisted suicide, and to refer them for obtaining drugs that would cause their deaths. The penalties for non-compliance by the sisters would be ruinous fines—and potentially even prison sentences.

The Sisters Stay True

Mother Mary Rose Heery, O. Carm., Prioress General of the Carmelite Sisters for the Aged and Infirm, has said this about the law, as reported by pro-life writer Ryan Colby:

Families entrust their loved ones to us because they know our homes will be places of tenderness, dignity, and faithful care. We are grateful that we can continue honouring that trust and remain beside every resident until the very end.

Other sisters have spoken up, too, as reported by pro-life writer Tyler Arnold.

Sister Justyna Owsiejko, O.S.B., of the Missionary Sisters of St Benedict:

[W]e are simple nuns whose mission is to serve God—and we do that by offering the aged a home in which to live their final days in peace, tranquility, and comfort, cared for by sisters who see the face of Christ in each person they serve. New York is trying to force us to abandon that vocation and help our residents commit suicide. That is something we will never do. Our foundress overcame war and exile to serve those in need—we will overcome this law to do the same.

Mother Alice Marie Monica of the Little Sisters of the Poor:

[W]e have served God by welcoming the elderly poor and dying into our homes for nearly 200 years. Our calling is to protect and care for needy seniors, not steer them toward suicide. We will remain true to that mission, whatever the cost.

Pro-lifers across America are praying for the sisters and the diocese, and your prayers will surely help them, too. May they prevail.

Taxpayer \$\$ for Abortion Giant

On July 5, the federal government resumed Medicaid funding for Planned Parenthood after a hiatus of one year. That came about because Republicans in Congress would not extend last year's defunding of the abortion giant. Medicaid money is not supposed to be used for aborting babies—but after all, such money, once granted, is fungible and ends up supporting Planned Parenthood in all of its functions.

Prospects for renewing suspension of the funding are not bright, but pro-lifers, leaders and rank and file alike, vow to keep after Republican lawmakers.

Embryonic Humans Are Human

Under the Trump administration, the Office of Population Affairs (OPA) in the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has issued new guidelines to affirm that adoptable human embryos are human children—each one “a child already in existence” who has rights and must be cherished and protected. So reports pro-life journalist Bridget Sielicki.

The OPA guidelines replace Biden administration ones and say this:

Embryo adoption is distinct from infertility treatment. Rather than addressing the reproductive needs of prospective parents, it serves the needs of a child already in existence, offering that child the opportunity for life within a stable and loving family.

Protections under these guidelines specify that humans in their embryonic stage of development may not be killed or thrown away or used in research that would kill them.

Pro-lifers, of course, align with Catholic teaching that implantation of embryos is immoral, as is IVF. But acknowledgment of embryos' humanity and rights is most welcome.

Pope Leo XIV Defends Embryonic Babies

On June 22, Pope Leo XIV said, “No doctor should ever allow themselves, on the basis of laboratory algorithms, to decide on the life of a particular embryo or an elderly person”. He continued, “Medicine can never become the servant of programmed death.”

He was speaking to members of the Jérôme Lejeune Foundation, who visited the Vatican on that date for the centenary of the birth of the eminent, pioneering and resolutely pro-life French geneticist Dr Jérôme Lejeune (1926-1994), who discovered the cause of Down syndrome.

Religious Rights in Hiring

Pro-life Bishop Thomas Paprocki's Diocese of Springfield, Illinois, and the Pregnancy Care Centre of Rockford are contesting an Illinois state law that forbids "discrimination on the basis of reproductive health decisions in employment." In practice, that means Catholic and pro-life groups must hire, or keep, employees who do not abide by the same faith beliefs.

Bishop Paprocki remarks that under the law, "we cannot hire or retain employees based on our deeply held religious beliefs on pro-life teachings without being subject to disciplinary action." Pro-life attorney Caroline Lindsay has this to say:

Illinois can't force pro-life religious organisations to bend the knee to the state's secular view of abortion. The Constitution protects the right of religious ministries to choose messengers who will advance—rather than contradict—their pro-life mission and religious beliefs.

When contemplating laws like this, pro-lifers point out that they always seem to work only one way, toward intruding on pro-lifers' and Catholics' rights. No one ever asks what if the laws were used to force pro-aborts to hire pro-lifers; imagine the indignation then!

Unjust Laws Are No Laws

Pro-lifers everywhere are proud, of course, of Bishop Thomas Paprocki and the Pregnancy Care Centre of Rockford for fighting back against the state of Illinois' pro-abortion, anti-Catholic attacks on their religious liberty and First Amendment rights.

Such pro-life support harkens back to what the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr, wrote in his "Letter from Birmingham Jail" on April 16, 1963. He and other civil rights activists had been arrested and charged on April 12, Good Friday, with violating a patently unconstitutional local law against "parading, demonstrating, boycotting, trespassing and picketing". He wrote:

One may well ask: "How can you advocate breaking some laws and obeying others?" The answer lies in the fact that there are two types of laws: just and unjust... One has not only a legal but a moral responsibility to obey just laws. Conversely, one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws. I would agree with St Augustine that "an unjust law is no law at all"... We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed.

The Illinois state law is true oppression: it tramples Catholics' and pro-lifers' conscience rights. Pro-lifers are praying that Bishop Paprocki and the pro-life centre will prevail.

Most Democrats: Save No Babies!

Pro-life journalist Hannah Knudsen reports that a June poll found that 51 percent of Democrats said there should be no restrictions on any abortions, 34 percent said some restrictions and 13 percent said only legal in "special" circumstances. One percent did say no babies should be aborted.

Abortionist Won't Back Own APR Claims

Abortionist Mitchell Creinin has insisted that Abortion Pill Reversal (APR) is ineffective and even dangerous—but in a recently discovered court deposition he admitted he would not swear to that under oath. Some 4,500 women are known to have saved their babies via APR.

R. I. P. Jeanne Head, RN

Jeanne Head, a national pro-life leader and international one-woman pro-life force, died at age 94 on July 1. She was an obstetric nurse for 44 years, 32 of them in Manhattan, saving babies and serving mums. She founded several local and regional pro-life groups and took leadership roles in representing national pro-life at meetings and gruelling negotiating sessions at the UN, the World Health Organisation and other international forums.

For a private citizen, Jeanne exercised great leverage internationally by becoming a recognised expert in the ins and outs of abortion debates and policy. Diplomats from other countries would come to her for help and she would always have the answers they needed.

The feminist pro-abortion movement, years ago and continuing today, was always trying to secure a “right” in international law to abort babies—and failing that, to twist existing legal language to make it sound as if such a “right” already existed. Jeanne and her pro-life allies were highly effective at countering them—saving incalculable numbers of babies worldwide.

For pro-lifers, the lesson from Jeanne’s remarkable life of service is that with enough courage, enough savvy and enough devotion to unborn babies and their mums, and to the right to life cause, many a pro-life individual can make a major difference—a life-saving difference.

May Jeanne Head, pro-life nurse and pro-life leader extraordinaire, rest in peace. Amen.

R. I. P. Haywood Robinson MD

Haywood Robinson MD, ex-abortionist turned pro-life champion, died July 25 at age 74. He could relate to Jesus’ promise of mercy in St Luke, as could his late wife Noreen:

What man among you having a hundred sheep and losing one of them would not leave the ninety-nine in the desert and go after the lost one until he finds it?... I tell you, in just the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need of repentance. (St. Luke, chapter 15).

As young physicians in Los Angeles, Haywood and Noreen met and married—and tragically, both began aborting babies. But after 14 years, they attended a Protestant concert and a friend witnessed to them about pro-life, repentance, atonement and following Christ. They both converted and they joined the pro-life movement full-bore.

In 2007, Haywood Robinson joined a new pro-life group, 40 Days for Life. He was at the group’s first-ever presence outside an abortion centre, in College Station, Texas. He became a tireless defender of abortion-targeted babies, strengthening the 40 Days movement and making pro-life addresses to hundreds of audiences. He would tell them this: “I was a sinner. I was going to hell... And what the Lord did, as he turned me around, he used me to go into the pro-life movement, because I had that experience in being on that dark side.”

After Noreen’s death, Dr Robinson later married Daphne Nicely, a pro-lifer who provides services to mums before and after their babies arrive. She survives him.

Dr Robinson called abortions “the greatest injustice of our time”, and compared himself to a Nazi. A British Columbia pro-life psychiatrist, Dr Philip Ney, who treated ex-abortionists, helped him recover from the trauma over what he had done. (Dr Ney also treated children who developed psychiatric problems after learning that their parents had aborted a brother or sister.)

The Robinsons no doubt also relied on Jesus’ grace and boundless mercy: “Come now, let us argue it out, says the Lord: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be like snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool” (Isaiah 1, 18).

We may pray that they experience Christ’s welcome in eternity: “Rejoice with me because I have found my lost sheep” (St Luke 15). May the Robinsons rest in peace. Amen.

40 Days for Life

This year's 40 Days for Life fall campaign of life-saving pro-life prayer, fasting and witness outside abortion mills will take place in hundreds of towns in 71 countries, from September 23 to November 1.

More pro-life news from America for you next time. **God bless – Brendan**

Mandatory Reporting and the Seal of Confession

Among the saints of the Catholic Church, four recognised martyrs were killed because they refused to violate the seal of confession, even when threatened with torture and execution. They are St John of Nepomuk, tortured and died 1393 in Prague, Bohemia, Father Pedro Marieluz executed 1825 in Peru, Saint Mateo Correa Magallanes executed 1927 in Mexico, and Saint Fernando Olmedo Reguera, a friar executed 1936 in the Spanish Civil War. Today, the scandal of clerical sex abuse and the cover-up of these crimes have placed a new pressure on the Church's absolute protection of the seal of confession.

In the UK, the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse called for mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse to become the state's law, and refused any exemption for the sacrament of penance. Mandatory reporting is now part of the *Crime and Policing Act* of 2026. In Ireland, it is covered by the *Children First Law* of 2015. Both laws oblige "mandated persons" to report known or suspected abuse of a child to the authorities, and a failure to do so may be a criminal offence.

Before the Sexual Revolution dissolved the traditional morals for sex, sexual abuse of children was rare and regarded as most scandalous and not to be mentioned. However, the free-for-all in the Sixties and Seventies attempted to make such behaviour acceptable, but this in turn led to new laws designed to "safeguard" children, and eradicate such abuse.

In the name of "safeguarding" children, the clergy of the churches are correctly named mandated persons, since they have continual contact with children, and so have a duty to create "a culture of care" where children feel safe. An added reason for these laws was the revelation that church authorities failed to recognise the serious nature of child abuse or covered up the misdeeds of the clergy. Today, church leaders affirm that "zero-tolerance of abuse" is the safeguarding norm.

A question arises about the limits of mandatory reporting; does it extend to the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the seal of confession, obliging the priest to inform the authorities and thereby violate his vow of secrecy? In Ireland, mandatory reporting of sexual abuse is part of the *Children First Act* of 2015, but the law omits any reference to sacramental confession and does not state any formal exemption for priests. In some countries like Australia and in six states of the USA, the traditional exemption has been formally removed, although no priests have been prosecuted for refusing to violate their vow of secrecy.

'A Safe and Welcoming Church'

The Catholic bishops published the *Safeguarding Children Policy and Standards for the Catholic Church in Ireland*, in June 2024 with the title, *A Safe and Welcoming Church*. Even though it is lengthy, there is no mention of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

The bishops are well aware that the Seal of Confession is not just a matter of Canon Law, which may be open to change, but arises from the theological nature of the "sacred and

protected” sacrament, and as such is the action of Christ in the Church. The seal is the one exception to the rule of mandatory reporting of child abuse, should abuse be disclosed in Confession. This Sacrament requires “the guarantee of absolute confidentiality, allowing no exceptions”, as Canon 983, §1 states, “The sacramental seal is inviolable; therefore it is absolutely forbidden for a confessor to betray a penitent in any way, in words or in any manner and for any reason.”

In the history of the Church, private confession was a widespread practice by the fifth century. The Irish missionaries would promote the practice of private and regular confession in their evangelisation across Europe. At the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, the Church codified the strict rules of the seal of confession in Canon 21, including the very severe penalties for any priest who dared “to betray the sinner”. The absolute secrecy of confession also applies to an interpreter or even someone who accidentally hears the penitent’s confession of sin. Should they reveal what they heard to others, they would incur an automatic excommunication, reserved to the Pope. This understanding of this Sacrament has remained unchanged through the centuries.

Church of England divided on the Seal

It’s no surprise that the Church of England is divided about the seal of the sacrament of confession within the larger question of the safeguarding of children. Apparently, some bishops are “agnostic” about the seal, in other words, they would allow a priest to inform the authorities of the risk of abuse from what he heard in confession. They claim that the seal gives abusers a safe ground, and called for a change in the Church of England’s law.

The Rev Robert Springlett, Bishop of Tewkesbury, in charge of the safe-guarding programme of the Church, argued that “Our commitment to mandatory reporting must take precedent” over the seal of confession, since it “undermines the view of many of the sincerity of our commitment to safeguarding itself.”

Others invoked the constant belief and practice of the Sacrament of Penance, and argue that such a change would reduce the number of abusers who go to Confession, and so lose an opportunity to persuade an abuser to go to the police and admit his crime.

Notes and Sources

- A definition of sexual, emotional and physical abuse is contained in *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children*, published by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs in 2017.
- *A Note from the Apostolic Penitentiary on the Sacrament of Penance in the current pandemic situation*, 20/3/2020, www.vatican.va
- The Diocese of Clogher’s Safeguarding Policy Statement, *The sacramental seal*.

A Couple Sues a Surrogate for Saving a Baby

A Canadian couple hired a surrogate woman to carry a baby son to birth. All went well until prenatal tests showed that the baby might have a cleft lip and possibly heart trouble. The couple instructed the surrogate to abort the baby at 22 weeks, despite the surrogate requesting further tests. She refused to abort the child, so the couple filed a lawsuit against her in court.

When medical specialists agreed that the baby’s defect was minor, easily corrected by surgery, the couple allowed the birth to follow, and accepted the child. By then, relations between the couple and the surrogate were bad. The couple took the baby home but launched a new major lawsuit, seeking a \$600,000 compensation and refusing to pay the surrogate’s

documented expenses of \$10,000. She was a single mother with a daughter, and feared losing her house because the baby was not perfect. “They didn’t get the perfect child they wanted and they threw me away.”

Canadian law permits surrogacy but forbids the surrogate from charging a commercial fee, as is allowed in the US and other countries. She is permitted to claim only documented expenses. While the law favours the right of the surrogate to decide to proceed to birth or abort, she is vulnerable to pressure from parents who regard the unborn child as a “product and disposable”, and no longer want “it”, should the child be “unsuitable”. One wonders if such people should be allowed to raise children in the first place?

The manager of the company, Surrogacy in Canada Online, observed that the couple are suing the woman who brought a son to them, but how is their son going to feel when he learns of this? No doubt, this couple are two most disagreeable persons, but leaving that aside, surrogacy encourages would-be parents to treat both the surrogate and the unborn child as disposable, if they become displeased with one or the other. Reducing a child to a commercial transaction should not enable an adult to end the life of an unborn baby.

Addendum: Meanwhile, a new law, *Preventing Forced Abortions Act 2026*, was introduced by Representative Andy Ogles of Tennessee in the US House of Representatives, to ensure that, whatever formal contracts may contain in small print, no woman should be forced to have an abortion.

Is N.I. Banning Religion to Protect Abortion?

Hospital chaplains, “carrying out their usual day-to-day duties in hospitals” risk arrest, should they be in an abortion buffer zone. According to new guidance of the Police Service of Northern Ireland, even praying at a patient’s bedside could be a criminal offence, if it leads to “influencing, or causing distress to someone accessing abortion services”. This follows the case of Pastor Clive Johnston who in July 2024 was convicted of breaching an abortion safe access zone near Causeway Hospital in Derry, N.I., and also refusing to leave the abortion buffer zone.

In 2022, the Assembly in Stormont passed new laws to create “safe access zones” and to stop pro-life people from protesting near medical abortion clinics. Women arriving for an abortion are now “protected persons”, and the meaning of “protest” has been expanded to include even silent prayer. Pastor Johnston declared that it was “a very dark day for Christian freedom” to be found guilty of preaching biblical verses near a hospital. Altogether, there are eight such buffer zones in Northern Ireland, where abortions take place, and the zones cover from 328 feet to 820 feet from the entrances of the abortion clinics. Both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland have similar laws to restrict the right of free speech in abortion buffer zones.

The Decline of the Christian Brothers in Ireland and Australia

In 2025, the *Scoping Report into Historical Sexual Abuse* noted that the 132 CB schools in Ireland had the highest number of 820 allegations against 255 alleged abusers between the 1960s and the early 1990s. The CB brothers were the leaders of sexual abuse, and began facing legal actions for sexual abuse in the Sixties and Seventies. Corporal punishment was often brutal and encouraged from the top, more so in residential industrial schools like Carriglea Park in Monkstown, Dun Laoghaire, which also served as a training school for new brothers. Carriglea was described by Senator John Whelan who spent four years there, as a systemic “breeding ground for violence” and sexual abuse.

One such miscreant was Brother Liam Coughlan, whose habitual abuse has led to a catalogue of claims against the congregation, and highlighted its controversial legal strategy to reduce the financial cost of such cases.

In the Seventies, Coughlan taught in a Kilkenny Primary School, and molested at least 24 boys in the classroom, in the library, in a shed or in the front seat of a van. He was sentenced to four and a half years in prison in 2023. In the early 1980s Coughlan was promoted to be the principal of Portarlinton Primary School in Co Offaly where he continued his sexual abuse of boys. In July, the jury took one hour to find him guilty on all 31 charges against 9 former students, and he received a further sentence.

Another chronic abuser was Brother Martin O’Flaherty, a senior member of the CB, whose abuse went undetected for 50 years. He had what seemed to have been a stellar career of an educator, beginning with teaching in primary and secondary schools, appointed school principal more than once, and later served in teacher training and school syllabus, on Boards of Management, the CB’s ERST, and the sale of the congregation’s buildings and lands. From the year 2000 until 2014 he was a member of the CB leadership in Ireland and England.

And yet he was a brutal abuser, both physical and sexual, described by one victim as a “monster”. In 1976, he began teaching in the Kilkenny School where he abused several boys and where Liam Coughlan was working. Between them, the two brothers would have 167 convictions and 53 victims.

The investigation of O’Flaherty by the Gardaí began in 2017, and in 2020 he was arrested and charged with sexual abuse at the CB Kilkenny School in the Seventies. There followed six trials during which he always protested his innocence, thus forcing his victims to recount their past abuse in court. He was convicted of physical and sexual abuse in April this year and resides in Mountjoy Prison.

O’Flaherty was part of CB leadership that constructed Edmund Rice Schools Trust (ERST), an independent lay trust to which it transferred 96 schools, lands and assets. He was critical of the wholesale denunciation of the Brothers that ignores the good and inspiring educators among them, no doubt including him.

Formerly a Major Educator in Australia

In Australia, the Christian Brothers (CB) of the Oceania Province are in serious trouble, and are likely to fold their tents and depart in the near future. The first Christian Brothers arrived in 1843 and set up a school in Sydney, and some years later in Melbourne. Over the next hundred years they built a huge network of schools and orphanages across the country.

In the Sixties, CB brothers numbered some 5,000 in 600 schools across the world; in 2018, there was just 872 brothers and 172 schools. The 1950s were the high tide of the expansion of the CB schools and boys homes across Australia as well as a record number of new recruits to the congregation. Like the other religious congregations, the flow of recruits all but collapsed in the Sixties, and the revelation of sexual abuse in the last years of the century damaged their good name. In 2007, the provinces of Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines and Timor Leste were united into the one province of Oceania to simplify the administration, as the numbers of active CB teachers continued to fall.

Sadly and shamefully, many children in their care suffered sexual abuse in their schools and homes over four decades, and the Royal Commission into Institutional Response to Child Sexual Abuse recorded more than 1,000 complaints against the CB Congregation, more than any other Catholic entity it examined.

The CBs have already paid the victims 480 million Australian dollars, that is 288 million euros since 1980 when the scandal became public. The province, facing bankruptcy after paying this compensation, has proposed the “orderly distribution of [its] remaining property, funds, and other assets” for new victims of abuse and the care of the retired members of the congregation. It also obtained a court order to stop all pending court cases of survivors while it raises as much money possible.

During the past 19 years, they have transferred leading private schools, houses and property to a separate legal entity, the Edmund Rice Education Australia, much like the ERST in Ireland. This is an independent legal entity and is not run by members of the CB Oceania Province. It has refused to give financial support to the CB Congregation, and no doubt, this arrangement will give rise to further litigation in the courts.

Today, the number of Christian Brothers in the Oceania Province is 176 with average age of 81, and the congregation is likely to cease to exist in Australia, whatever the courts may decide.

The Self-Mythology of Professor Jason Arday

Do we live in a crazy world? It looks very much like one. Take one example from London, Westminster City Council’s officialdom decided to stop what it termed “vertical drinking”, that is, drinking a pint while standing. Fortunately, the new rule was cancelled.

Another example is the case of Jason Arday, a 41-year-old son of Ghanaian parents, appointed to be a professor of the sociology of education at Cambridge University. He had cooked up a *curriculum vitae* for this senior post, most of which has turned out to be a modern version of Gulliver’s Travels. He claimed that he only learned to speak at the age of 11, and to read and write at the age of 18. His achievements for sporting feats and endurance running were also deemed to have been due to his lively imagination. He boasted about running 600 miles in six days with a damaged fistula in one leg.

At Cambridge University when he decided to appear in the lecture room, he rambled on endlessly about “white racism” and “ethnicity”, and very soon his students realised they were learning little or nothing about the official subject of their studies, the sociology of education.

By 2025, considerable evidence showed that he had plagiarised the work of other authors when writing his PhD thesis. He claimed to have held positions in other colleges and universities, some of which were not verified. He acclaimed his book, *Being Young, Black and Male*, which in fact was never published.

There are many other claims about his charity work and persecution, all of which, including being sent a pig’s head, have no basis in reality. All in all, Arday is a present-day Walter Mitty, a fantasist and liar, who made up a life of record-breaking, and deceived not a few of Britain’s intelligentsia.

When the nine electors of this prestigious university unanimously voted to appoint Arday in 2023, the youngest black professor ever, their purpose was to virtue-signal to the world their abhorrence of racism, and to recognise the identity of Arday as a victim of traditional white superiority. They weren’t concerned that his achievements as a scholar and author might be fictional, since any opposition would be branded as crass behaviour and dismissed as old-fashioned white racism, today the most effective way to silence opposition.

This “quick-fix” was an example of the damage of Diversity, Inclusion and Equity is causing in the university world, in this case replacing academic excellence with a chancer’s make-believe. Believing his outlandish stories has made Cambridge a laughing stock in the

academic world. How did someone so ill-qualified in academic and intellectual ability, gain such a position?

The answer to this question points you to the academics, zealous to be his enablers of his outstanding advance in a number of universities, while ignoring academic standards, and so were easily deceived by a man's sweet smile and endless chatter.

Jason Arday resigned from his professorial position on August 6.

Journalists Accused of 'Lynching'

It was really no surprise to learn that Arday had died by his own hand on August 14. To the end, he denied any wrong-doing and placed the blame on the "campaign" against him. His liberal-left defenders blamed the media for the "toxic scrutiny" which led to this tragedy, and accused journalists of "a racist witch hunt. We can understand why Arday's family would condemn his critics for "sustained abuse" and a "campaign of misinformation and harassment". No doubt, his relatives were astounded at what looked like a meteoric advance in the academic world, and is now reduced to nothing. What they—and all of us—should blame are those academics who used Arday as an instrument for their "progressive fantasy of diversity, inclusion and equity". If its executives had given a proper examination of the young candidate, he would never have been appointed and spared the humiliation which followed.

Nor was Arday an innocent abroad. When his critics raised legitimate questions about his PhD and his blatant use of other peoples' work, he accused them of racism, and called in Carter-Ruck, a most aggressive law firm in London. Again, at his bidding, the police silenced a journalist who questioned certain claims, which later were revealed to be bogus.

Condemning the "toxic scrutiny" of the critics and the media for Arday's suicide is to ignore the left-liberals of Cambridge University who exploited this young academic, even after his death, to polish their own "progressive" outlook and make them look good.

If you want to read Arday's autobiography, Simon & Schuster have published his new book, *Great and Unfortunate Things*, and it will cost you £20. Arday claimed that the publisher was paying him £1.4 million. If so, then the bosses of S & S should be sacked.

Who will Fill the Void in the Islamic Republic of Iran?

In Iran, four months after he was killed by a US-Israeli strike, the funeral of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei began on July 4. At the Grand Mosalla Mosque in Tehran, his coffin was surrounded by senior clerics and military officers including the three sons of the Ayatollah. There was no sign of the other son, Mojtaba Khamenei, wounded at the same time as his father was killed, but neither seen nor heard since then. This is perplexing, since the same Mojtaba succeeded his father as the Supreme Leader of Iran.

The crowds of mourners were large, but the claimed 20 million is a bit off the map. The remains of the Ayatollah were taken to four important sites for Shia Muslims before being interred in holy city of Mashad. The dominant theme orchestrated by the regime was "revenge", directed at President Trump and illustrated by a picture of the clenched fist of the dead Leader.

It should be clear that the Islamic Republic of Iran is firmly under the control of the Khamenei family and the Revolutionary Guards, all of whom have no hesitation in using machine guns to suppress popular protests, as was done in January this year. The week-long funeral was an opportunity for the regime to ensure that its opponents within and outside the state know who is in charge.

Insecure Christians in the Islamic Republic of Iran

While the Christian faith has an ancient history in Persia, its existence in the modern state of Iran has been anything but secure. The Islamic Republic regards conversion as a threat to the state's security, and the Law on Apostasy remains in force, making converts from Islam liable to execution. Iran is deemed to be one of the most dangerous countries in the world to be a Christian.

While Article 13 of the 1979 Iranian Constitution recognises Christians alongside Zoroastrians and Jews as “religious minorities”, the main Christian churches are the Armenian Apostolic Church and the Assyrian Chaldean Church of the East, existing from before the Muslim conquest of Persia in the seventh century. While the government tolerates their existence, it forbids any attempt to evangelise Muslims, and insists that their liturgy is not translated into Farsi, the common language of the people. The recognised Christian minorities struggle to maintain their existence, and avoid offending the authorities. In other words, each exists in a self-enclosed island in the ocean of Islam.

Figures are hard to come by, and in a population of nearly 87 million, at most Christians may be half a million. In 2022, there was some 21,380 Catholics, according to the Apostolic Nunciature in Tehran.

There also exists an underground network of believers, many of whom have an Islamic background, and who meet in secret in house churches rather than official church buildings, most of which have been taken by the government. Their number continues to grow as many people are dissatisfied with the harsh Islamic regime, and are attracted by the evangelical fellowships, even though they are illegal and repeatedly harassed by the regime.

The most active and most persecuted of the underground churches is the Assemblies of God, a pentecostal and evangelical church, which has been in Iran since the 1960s. About four in five of its members are converts from Islam. Since the 1979 revolution of Ayatollah Khomeini, this church has faced systematic persecution, and at least eight of its leaders have suffered a violent death for their faith. In 1996 Mohammad Bagher Yusefi, known as Pastor Ravanbakhsh (which means ‘soul giver’ in Farsi), was hanged. Eight years before that, he had converted from Islam to Christianity and ran the Assemblies of God in Gorgan, northern Iran.

Bishop Haik Hovsepian-Mehr had no doubt about the intentions of the new regime in 1979. He decided to accelerate the house church movement, training house-church leaders, and equipping them in biblical leadership. He was one of the few Christian leaders who continued to preach the Gospel to Muslims, and refused to sign a declaration that Christians enjoyed full human rights in Iran, or that he would stop Muslims from joining his church. He deliberately disobeyed six directives, describing them as “inhuman and unjust demands”, and declared “our churches are open to all who want to come in.” In January 1994, the bishop, aged 49, was murdered by unknown assailants. Most observers have little doubt that the authorities were responsible for his death.

In 2013, the Islamic Revolutionary Courts closed down the churches of the Assemblies of God in Tehran, and confiscated its property and bank accounts. The three remaining Anglican churches, St Luke in Isfahan, Simon the Zealot in Shiraz and St Paul's in Tehran, have been closed since the Covid-19 pandemic. After mass protests against the Iranian regime and the 12-day war with Israel in June 2025, Christians were “scapegoated”. Nearly twice as many Christians were arrested on charges related to their religious beliefs or activities in 2025 than in the previous year—254 compared with 139. More than twice as many have served sentences of imprisonment, exile or forced labour, and at least 11 Christians received prison sentences of ten years or more.

Addendum 1: In 1962, Irish Dominican priests, headed by Father William Barden, came to Iran at the request of the Vatican, and opened St Abraham's House in the city of Tehran in 1966. Later Father Barden was appointed the Archbishop of Isfahan. The priory provided "interfaith encounters" and offered religious services to the English-speaking and multinational community in the capital. When Ayatollah Khomeini made the country an Islamic Republic in 1979, the Dominicans were expelled from Iran. However, in 1999 Fr Paul Lawlor, an Irish Dominican, returned to Teheran and re-opened the dormant St Abraham's. He had lived in Iran in his youth and was able to speak Farsi. After several years living in fear of the Revolutionary Guards, he left Tehran, and is now the prior of the church of San Clemente in Rome.

Addendum 2: The Assemblies of God in Ireland changed its name to "Christian Churches Ireland" in 2006, but continues to belong to the World Assemblies of God Fellowship, based in the US where the denomination was founded in 1914 in Los Angeles, California.

Muslim Charity under Criminal Investigation

A major British-based Muslim charity, the Al Khair Foundation (AKF), is being investigated as a money source for the terrorist group, Hamas. While its declared aims are to establish schools in Muslim communities, deliver aid to the poor and vulnerable as well as provide emergency relief to disaster areas, much of its £130 million of donations has been used to send cash and truckloads of goods, labelled as "aid to Gaza", to Hamas. Since Hamas is a declared terrorist group in the US and the UK, doing this would be a crime. Currently, four AKF schools in the UK are being investigated for links with Hamas.

The charity started as the new school of Imam Qasim Ahmad in Croyden, South London in 2003 with five students; in ten years it had grown into a junior and senior school with 350 students. The charity expanded by sending emergency help after the Kashmir earthquake in 2005, the Pakistan floods in 2010 and the Japanese earthquake in 2011. In 2015, it supported educational promotion in the Gaza Strip, where some of its members were killed in the fighting. In 2025, its income came to £74 million.

In early August, the US Department of Justice named Mohammad Yousef Hasna as the main organiser of money and materials for Hamas and of using a major "sham charity" to conceal his activity. The UK National Crime Agency arrested him and is prepared to extradite him for trial in New York.

Chaplain of Christian School Sacked for Speaking Truth

Trent College, Long Eaton, between the cities of Nottingham and Derby in England, is an independent day and boarding school for boys and girls, founded in 1868. Its junior school, The Elms, is nearby, and between the two schools they have a thousand pupils.

In 1989, the sexual abuse of boys by a number of teachers became known, and the Derbyshire police were called to investigate. In the end, the misdeeds of only two teachers were established and prosecuted; both were convicted and received prison sentences in 1990. The school has paid undisclosed sums to the victims of abuse, no doubt at each time in the hope there won't be any more claims.

Dr Bernard Randal, an ordained cleric, was the chaplain of the school, since it claims to follow the ethos of the Church of England. In 2019, the school invited an LGBT campaigning group, Educate & Celebrate (E&C), to address the staff and students "on making a more welcoming place for everyone", principally "gender identity" people.

Randal was displeased with this visit, and later told the students in a sermon in the school chapel that they were free to call into question the school's support of the LGBT ideology and

accept the Church's teaching on sex and marriage. He dismissed E&C as "Marxist, revolutionary and an atheist" outfit.

The outcome of his sermon was immediate and scandalous. The school principal sacked Dr Randall, and named him a "potential terrorist" to the government's anti-terrorist agency, an employment tribunal ruled against him "for gross misconduct", and his own bishop of Derby Diocese blacklisted him as "unsafe" for any other appointments.

An Accurate Description of E&C

In 2022, supported by the Christian Legal Centre, Randall filed a lawsuit for "discrimination, harassment, victimization and unfair dismissal". In March, 2026, a higher court ruled that Randall should receive a retrial because the judges in the 2022 trial were "biased", and ordered Trent College to pay Randall £20,000 as a settlement. Randall lamented that it had taken six years of labour to achieve justice, commenting, "No minister, teacher, or chaplain should be punished for upholding Christian teaching in a Christian setting."

The Christian Legal Centre commented: *"This case has significant implications for freedom of speech and religious belief in schools. If Bernard Randall is not vindicated, it sends a troubling message that teachers, chaplains, and parents who uphold Christian teaching or question radical ideological agendas will come under intense scrutiny and may face losing their jobs. This is why we remain committed to seeing justice done and will continue to support Bernard until that is achieved."*

Randall's description of E&C was accurate. According to its founder and leader, Elly Barnes, its aim is "to smash heteronormativity", namely the basic fact of two sexes, male and female. Schools can achieve this aim by "best practice", that is by changing the curriculum, the pictures on the walls, and above all by teachers being "out" to children of all ages. She advocated dropping the use of words like "boys", "girls", "son and mother", and instead using gender neutral words like "children" and "parents".

Since 2024 this "charity" is defunct, due to a series of scandals. One was Jordan Gray, a transgender comedian, who stripped naked on Channel Four's *Friday Night Live*, not surprisingly gaining national attention. Up to then, he or she was a regular speaker in schools for E&C.

Another scandal was the revelation of the activities of Stephen Ireland, the founder of Pride Surrey and an official patron of E&C, who faced 37 charges of rape and sexual assault of children, and others sexual crimes. When the authorities were first warned of Ireland's proclivities in 2021, they looked the other way and did nothing. When Ireland's "crimes in plain sight" were finally recognised, he was convicted of multiple child abuse in June 2025, and sentenced to 24 years in prison.

The police protested they were "making amends" for the bad old days of prejudice against homosexuals, and today's police, the county council and the local media treat whistleblowers as vile homophobes, and allow predators like Ireland "to hide behind a rainbow camouflage". Any claims of red flags are treated as bigotry while pride parades of fetishes, naked men and pornographic slogans are protected by the police from any protests of the usual opponents.

Russia's 'Sacrilegious War' Denounced in Ukraine

The Russian strike against the 11-century Dormition Cathedral in Kiev, burning a large section of its roof, has been denounced as a "truly sacrilegious war in which ideals are destroyed, moral principles violated, and the name of God blasphemed", according to the Greek

Catholic Primate, Sviatoslav Shevchuk. He compared it to the Nazi attempt to bomb St Paul's Cathedral in London during the Blitz of the Second World War, and said it adds religious sacrilege to the cruelty of targeting the homes of ordinary people.

Another primate of Ukraine's independent Orthodox Church accused Putin of trying "to erase the historical truths" of the country: "It was not in Moscow but in Kyiv that the foundations of a Christian state were laid — not in Moscow but in Kyiv that St Sophia has stood for over a thousand years... Moscow seeks to erase this historical truth — this is why it attacks and destroys everything which exposes it."

The damage to the Dormition Cathedral in the monastic complex was not an accident, since historic cathedrals in Kherson and Kupyansk have been also damaged by Russian strikes at the same time.

Meanwhile in Moscow, Putin's handyman, Patriarch Kirill named himself as "Patriarch for Russians, Belarusians and Ukrainians".

The Disguise of the Abortion Holocaust

Over 40 years ago, William Brennan published *The Abortion Holocaust: Today's Final Solution*, (St Louis: Landmark Press, 1983), in which he compared the nauseating vocabulary of "health service providers" in the abortion industry to that of the spokesmen for the Nazi annihilation of "discards", that is, unwanted people. See chapter, "Third Reich and Contemporary Society" (Chart 6, and pages 100-102).

"I know of not a single case where anyone came out of the chambers alive" (Auschwitz commandant Rudolf Höss on the deadly capacity of Zyklon B gas, 1947), and "It never ever results in live births" (an experienced abortionist on the merits of dissection and extraction, 1981);

"The subjects were forced to undergo death-dealing experiments 'without receiving anaesthetics'," (Dachau's freezing experiments, 1942), and "the foetuses are fully alive when we cut their heads off, but anaesthetics are definitely unnecessary" (Foetal researcher Dr Martti Kekomaki, 1980);

"No criticism was raised" (conference of German physicians about the Ravenbrueck death camp's sulfanilamide experiments, Berlin, May 1943), and "no one ever raised an eyebrow" (meeting of American paediatricians on an experiment involving beheading of aborted babies, San Francisco, 1973);

"What should we do with this garbage" (Treblinka, 1942), and "an aborted baby is just garbage" (foetal researcher Dr Martti Kekomaki, 1980).

In *Mein Kampf* (1925), Adolf Hitler referred to Jews as "a parasite in the body of other peoples"; in 1975, the year of *Roe v. Wade*, a radical feminist group branded the unborn as "a parasite within the mother's body" in an early edition of *Our Bodies, Ourselves: A Book By and For Women*, a phrase omitted in later editions.

In both cases, Brennan shows how the Nazi executioners and today's "expert" abortionists concealed the barbarity of genocide and the atrocity of abortion by linguistic subterfuge and double talk.

And the Final Addenda...

🕒 In the Archdiocese of Tours in central France, three churches were desecrated by unknown and malicious individuals in July this year. Over the past two years, this is the seventh time that churches of the Archdiocese have been broken into and, in the words of Archbishop Vincent Jordy, "offering boxes were looted and damaged, doors forced open,

sacred vessels damaged, a tabernacle forced open, and the Blessed Sacrament desecrated.” He announced that Masses of reparation would take place in these three churches.

The mayor of Chambray-les-Tours, Michel Lamy, condemned the desecration the parish church in his town, not far from the city of Tours, saying “Nothing can justify an attack on a place of worship, our heritage, and what it represents for many residents of Chambray.”

Archbishop Jordy is on record for stating that the persons who have done these things “wish to express at times hatred toward the Church or toward what she represents.”

Tours is an ancient city, founded by the Emperor Augustus in the first century AD. It is also close to the site of the famous Battle of Tours in 732, when Charles Martel was victorious against the Muslim army that had advanced 300 miles into France, and thereby blocked for good the advance of Islam in western Europe. Today, Tours is a city of some 140,000 inhabitants, with its own University of Tours and a medieval cathedral of Saint Gatianus of Tours.

The city is also a special place for Catholic pilgrims to the shrine where Sister Marie de Saint-Pierre started the devotion to the Holy Face of Jesus after a vision in 1843. A few years later, Leo Dupont, known as the Holy Man of Tours, began nightly adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in 1849, which became a popular devotion across France. Another famous person was Saint Martin, the third bishop of Tours during the fourth century. He was venerated as a monk and miracle worker, known across medieval Europe for dividing his cloak to clothe a beggar, who later revealed himself as the Lord Jesus.

🕉️ Father Crépin Martial Monga, vicar of St John the Baptist Parish in Zémio in the Diocese of Bangassou, was shot dead by gunmen on Monday, June 29, as he returned to the parish residence, and only one day after he had baptised 175 people, mostly of them displaced by the continual civil war in the Central African Republic.

The Central African Republic took its present shape as the colony of French Equatorial Africa, established after the “scramble for Africa” in the late-19th century. In 1960, it achieved formal independence from France. Since then, the people there have suffered a series of military takeovers, dictators and roaming gangs of armed bandits during the periodic civil wars. These events have rendered the state one of the poorest and most lawless with its average annual income no more than \$400 a year, one of the lowest in the world, even though it has immense natural resources and a large population, which has increased four-fold since 1960.

Father Monga was well known as “a tireless peacemaker, committed to reconciliation of enemies and the defence of the vulnerable.” Bishop Aurelio Gazzera of Bangassou, Fr Monga’s diocese, praised the young priest: “At times, he and the parish cared for more than 3,000 refugees at the mission. This work was very important. In addition to this, he maintained many contacts with various rebel leaders and the authorities, always striving to mediate and find resolutions for the conflicts.” Fr Monga’s friends have no doubt that his peace-making efforts clashed with the local armed bandits and led to his assassination.

A Request for a Bequest

Have you considered adding a bequest in your Will in favour of Family & Life? By remembering Family & Life in your Will with a bequest, your legacy will ensure that our work of bringing help to mothers and saving babies’ lives will continue.

As you know, we remain committed to defending the right to life of the unborn child in the womb, and rebuilding a Culture of Life in a country where the law and fashionable opinion accept abortion as a human right.

To learn more about how a bequest can safeguard the work of Family & Life, or to avail of our Solicitor's free Wills Service, please call the office today.

The Importance of Standing Orders

Is a standing order a possible gift for you?

The amount of your monthly gift to save babies is entirely up to you, and it's for you to decide if it is to be monthly or every two months, and you may cancel it at any time. Even a small monthly amount is more valuable than you might think. That's because Standing Orders help us to plan with certainty, and maintain our most vital baby saving activities, year in year out.

A number of your fellow Family & Life supporters already have monthly Standing Orders for €20, €25, €50 and €100. Others, whose material blessings allow, have pledged regular gifts of €150 and €250. Unlike our opponents we don't have a benefactor to bankroll our work, still less generous government grants. We do, however, have you! And for that we are eternally thankful because without your prayers and financial sacrifices, Family & Life would have closed its doors long ago.

That is all for now. God bless you and your family,

PS **“Whom the gods would destroy, they first make mad”**, an old saying goes. The widespread belief that instead of the two sexes there exist dozens of “genders”, and that people can change at will their “gender”, is out of touch with reality, so it meets the definition of madness. Yet countless apparently sane people espouse that belief.

Happily, some people are exposing and opposing “gender” insanity. One is Dr Abigail Favale, whose book *The Genesis of Gender: A Christian Theory* (Ignatius Press) follows her path from conservative Evangelical Christian to Christian feminist to atheistic feminist to orthodox Catholic, and then explains why “gender” theory is profoundly wrong and contrary to what Christians believe.

Dazzling Truths about ‘Genders’ in Genesis

The author literally begins with the Book of Genesis, explaining the vast differences between pagan creation myths and biblical truth. The difference between the two sexes isn't an “extraneous or faulty feature of the cosmos”, she explains, but “an essential part of its goodness.”

Important, too, is the “delicate balance” of both “sameness and difference” that God created between the sexes, and that most “gender” theories are oblivious to. Dr Favale explains further how Genesis reveals that “our bodies serve a sacramental function by revealing and communicating a spiritual reality.” They enable “true communion” with someone of the other sex—the profound communion that Adam longed for.

In Pope St John Paul II’s words, “...only the body is capable of making visible what is invisible: the spiritual and the divine. It has been created to transfer into the visible reality of the world the mystery hidden from eternity in God, and thus to be a sign of it.”

What’s more, as Dr Favale explains, the man-woman union “is expansive and open, because this union alone has the potential to create new life.” Therefore, “Our bodies simultaneously proclaim our individual personhood and our capacity for relation”, which Pope St John Paul II called “the spousal meaning of the body”. “The full spousal meaning of the body”, she says, “...is the power to express love, to give oneself fully in love to another.”

Reality vs Radical ‘Gender’ Theory

Dr Favale proves that God made the two sexes an objective *reality*, not mere linguistic or social constructs, as “gender” ideologues contend. Therefore, our first parents were “a living, breathing image of God”, even before they sinned.

She also relates why, from the earliest times, Catholic interpreters have seen parallels between Eve and Mary, both of whom “determined the destiny of humanity”. Further, she explores how the consequences of our first parents’ sin changed the “dynamic of love” into a “dynamic of possession... a utilitarian exchange” that affects women more negatively than men. But Christ “urges us, with divine help, to reclaim the goodness of the created order” and “to cultivate anew a dynamic of reciprocity between the sexes.”

The author says the “progenitor” of “gender” ideology is feminism, and traces the history of that movement. She shines light on the philosophical currents that fostered “gender” theory and the feminist writers whose ideas have influenced millions, including one whose words were “the mustard seed of gender theory”. The same writer said her concern wasn’t with what will make women happy but what will make them free.

Godless Feminism’s ‘Rotten Fruits’

Dr Favale’s book contains many intriguing historical titbits, for example the revelation that many early feminists not only opposed abortion but saw contraception as something that’d benefit men, not women, by allowing males to enjoy childless sex. Later feminists were driven by envy of men, in whose supposed privileges they longed to indulge. The author also relates who concocted subversive social-engineering terms such as *transsexual*, *transgender*, *sex-reassignment*, *cisgender*, *heteronormativity*, and *birth control*.

Speaking of “birth control”, Dr Favale also provides a useful biography of Planned Parenthood foundress Margaret Sanger, whose relentless anti-baby agitation turned centuries-old mores upside-down and made contraception respectable, despite its horrific effects on women’s health. She describes those in eye-opening detail, deeming them the results of a feminist mindset that sees women’s fertility not as a gift but as a pathology.

In detail, too, she describes current methods of natural fertility regulation, which work *with* rather than *against* women’s bodies and, as studies prove, are at least as effective as artificial birth prevention. A Catholic approach to women’s health would see a woman’s body, not as “a threat to her freedom and happiness but rather as something *good*, worthy of deeper understanding and respect.”

The Pill, she shows further, has deformed not only women but society at large. People now see sex as “*recreational*, rather than *procreational*”. Men see women as objects and turn into animals. Severing sex from babies “trumpets liberation while enslaving us”. And, as a former user of hormonal birth control herself, Dr Favale explains why it has vastly *increased*, not decreased, the number of babies aborted.

How Christ would help the ‘Gender’ confused

Unmoored from both God and the natural law, rudderless feminist and “gender” theorists endlessly propound new myths about sex, “intersex” people, “sexual transitioning”, an ever-widening “spectrum” of “genders”, and even what constitutes a woman in the first place.

“Every bad idea starts in the faculty lounge”, American commentator Victor Davis Hanson contends. You’ll meet the professor most responsible for the “gender” madness that’s costing thousands of “transitioning” children their health and their male or female parts. You’ll also learn from actual cases, the appalling mental and physical harms (including death) that such surgical and chemical mutilations entail, and what young people with “gender” dysphoria need instead.

Dr Favale is a deep thinker. In 248 beautifully-written pages, she builds her case formidably, marshalling profound insights, scientific facts and studies, Scripture, popes, saints, classical philosophers, personal anecdotes and more. She shows why today’s confused, isolated people can find wholeness, love and communion, not in the “mix-and-match” sex theories of the radical feminists but only by “accepting oneself, acknowledging that we are not self-created” (Pope Benedict XVI), and embracing “the Catholic Christian paradigm” of “women’s intrinsic value and identity”.

Not everyone, however, will accept the author’s understanding of the place of same-sex attraction in the spiritual lives of some Christians. Also, her discussions of male and female body parts, including her own, make her book unsuitable for young readers, among whom there might still be a few innocents.