



PRIESTS FOR LIFE

an outreach of Gospel of Life Ministries

Assisting God's people to respond to the evils of abortion and euthanasia

Jan - Feb 2014 Vol. 24

www.priestsforlife.org

Number 1



Fr. Frank Pavone celebrated his 25th Anniversary of Ordination to the Priesthood on November 25. Thank you to all who sent prayers and good wishes! Asked about his ambitions for the future, Fr. Frank didn't hesitate to give a simple, strong answer: "The End of Abortion." Left: Fr. Frank celebrates Mass. Right: At the 25th anniversary celebration on Staten Island on Nov. 12 are, from left, Sister Bernadette of the Disciples of The Lord Jesus Christ in Prayertown, Texas; Father Pavone; Cardinal Renato Martino, president emeritus of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace; Mother Lucy, superior general of the Disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, and Archbishop Francis Chullikatt, the representative of Pope Francis to the United Nations.

Does the Church Have Something to Hide?

Russell Shaw, former spokesman for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, in 2008 wrote a fabulous book called *Nothing to Hide: Secrecy, Communication, and Communion in the Catholic Church*. It hits the nail on the head in regard to one of the biggest problems the Church in the United States faces today: a failure to communicate openly and honestly among all her members, especially between clergy and laity, based on our equal dignity in Christ. His observations are a breath of fresh air because they flow directly from the teachings of the Church and her authentic self-understanding as a *communion*.

What is the spirituality of "communion?" The Second Vatican Council, in its key document on the nature of the Church, states the following:

"There is, therefore, one chosen People of God: "one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Eph. 4:5); there is a common dignity of members deriving from their rebirth in Christ... Although by Christ's will some are established as teachers, dispensers of the mysteries and pastors for the others, there remains, nevertheless, a true equality between all with regard to the dignity and to the activity which is common to all the faithful in the building up of the Body of Christ." -- p.62 of Shaw, quoting from Lumen Gentium 32.

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Our Legislative Priority: Stop Abortions in the Last Four Months of Pregnancy

Every abortion is morally wrong. But some abortions shock the public more than others, and move them to action to protect children in the womb. That's why the current legislative priority of Priests for Life is to end the crazy policy, still prevailing in the United States, of unrestricted abortion throughout pregnancy, and instead achieve what seems to be the next achievable step in the short term: *protecting children in the sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth months of pregnancy.*

The U.S. House of Representatives has passed the *Pain Capable Unborn Child Protection Act*, which aims to protect children from abortion after 20 weeks fetal age ("22 weeks LMP"). Senator Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), along with a third of his colleagues as co-sponsors, has introduced the same bill in the U.S. Senate.

The Pain Capable Unborn Child Protection Act has already been enacted in 10 states, and enjoys the support of close to two-thirds of the American public. This legislation identifies the child's ability to feel pain as the relevant state interest in protecting that child from dismemberment by abortion.

I took part in a meeting of Senator Graham with other

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Something to Hide?

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Key words here are *trust, openness, dignity, and responsibility*. The Church is rooted in the understanding that each of her members, though they have different ranks, *have an equal dignity*, both on a human and supernatural level, and should acknowledge each other as equals. This means that even those who exercise authority should communicate in a spirit of openness with those over whom they have authority, and should listen to them. In other words, the shared dignity leads to shared communication, and also to shared *responsibility* in carrying out the mission of the Church, including the effort to bring about a change in public policy to secure the protection of the right to life.

Recognizing this equal dignity, and acting accordingly, means that in carrying out the mission of the Church, her leaders will avoid the kind of clericalism that says “I know best” and that disregards the competence of the laity who in fact know better on many matters. And because they know better, they should be both allowed and encouraged to communicate to the Church leaders.

Shaw describes what he means by clericalism:

“By clericalism” I mean an elitist mindset, together with structures and patterns of behavior corresponding to it, that takes it for granted that clerics – in the Catholic context, mainly bishops and priests – are intrinsically superior to the other members of the Church and deserve automatic deference. Passivity and dependency are the laity’s lot. By no means is clericalism confined to clerics themselves. The clericalist mindset is widely shared by Catholic lay people.” -- p.15

The Church respects the right and duty of the faithful to speak up to those in authority, and to lend their expertise to the Church’s mission. Few passages express it better than this one, from the Second Vatican Council:

“To [the pastors of the Church] the laity should disclose their needs and desires with that liberty and confidence which befits children of God and brothers of Christ. By reason of the knowledge, competence or preeminence which they have the laity are empowered – indeed sometimes obliged – to manifest their opinion on those things which pertain to the good of the Church. If the occasion should arise this should be done through the institutions established by the Church for that purpose.” -- Shaw p. 99 quoting *Lumen Gentium* 37.

All of this is critically important to the fulfillment of the pro-life mission of the Church. Especially when a battle is as intense as that over abortion, the temptation of those who guard the institutions of the Church will be great to protect her assets by compromising her prophetic witness. This leads to decisions (usually “No”) without explanations, leaving many of the laity feeling that they have no input into the discussions that led to those decisions, and no outlet to do precisely what the Church’s teachings inspire them to do to build a Culture of Life. This problem is especially

pronounced when it comes to the political responsibilities of the Church.

The pro-life movement is filled with people who have vast knowledge and experience in saving lives, advancing political and legislative progress, healing the wounded, and prophetically challenging the culture. We cannot afford to cripple ourselves with a failure to listen, to communicate, or to admit that we all need each other and can learn from each other. Now is the time for all of us to “speak truth in the Church” and to demand our proper role in exercising our shared responsibility for the Church’s mission, including in the political arena.

Our Legislative Priority

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pro-life leaders the day before he introduced the bill. We all agreed with the senator when he said that this is the next chapter in the effort to end abortion. It is. And just like the decade-long effort to ban partial-birth abortion, this will take time. The goal right now is to force the vote in the Senate. Raise the issue. Get people on the record about it. Start the debate. It is one that we will win -- and so will the babies.

The Alan Guttmacher Institute, which is the best source for abortion statistics in the United States, reports, “Sixty-four percent of [abortion] providers offer at least some second-trimester abortion services (13 weeks or later), and 23 percent offer abortion after 20 weeks. ...11 percent of all abortion providers offer abortions at 24 weeks.” The institute also indicates that of the approximately 1.2 million abortions in the United States each year, some 18,150 are performed at 21 weeks or more. Of the 40 states that reported in 2005 to the Centers for Disease Control, 32 states reported abortions of babies 21 weeks or older.

This means that every day in America, 50 babies the size of a large banana are dismembered and decapitated – and these include healthy babies of healthy mothers...and it’s happening legally.

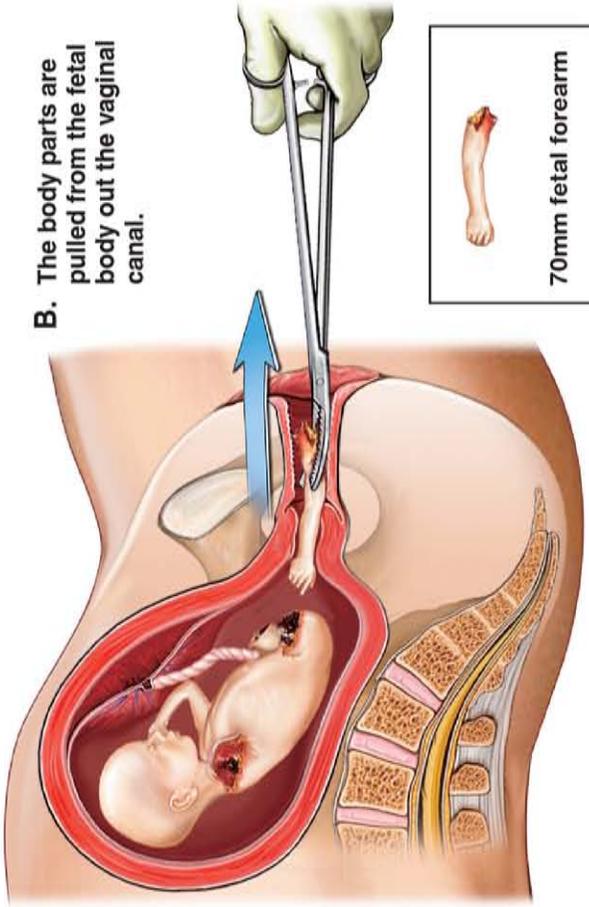
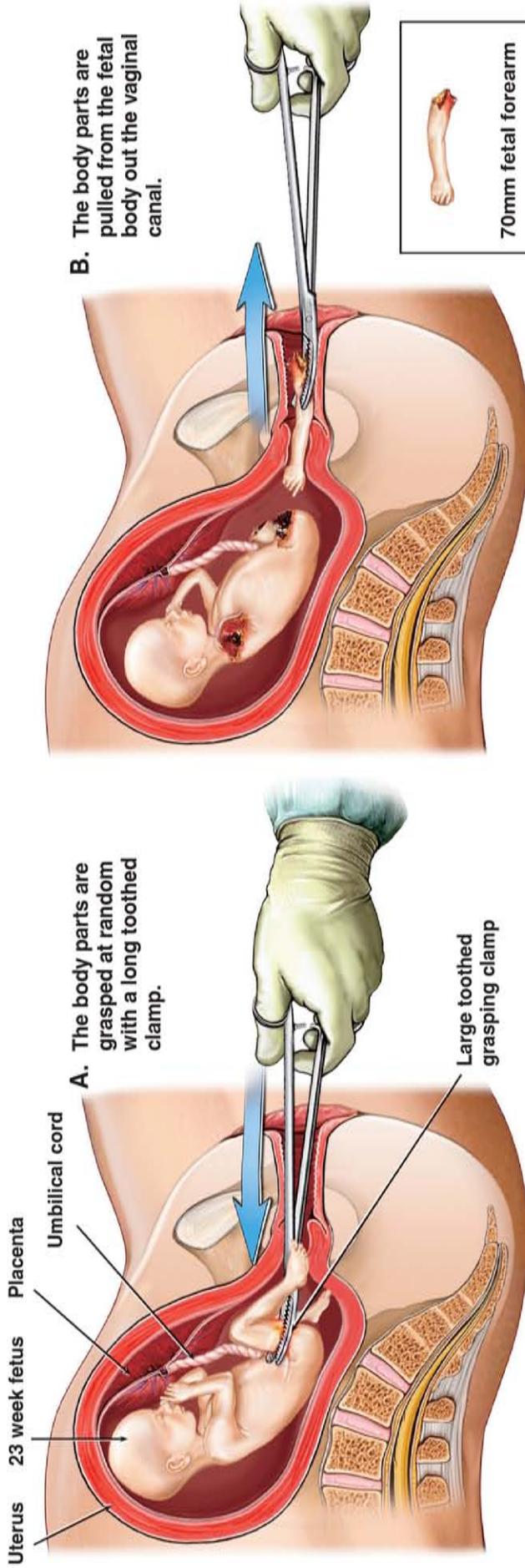
These are babies that the mother can already feel moving. According to MedlinePlus, a service of the U.S. National Library of Medicine and the National Institutes of Health, these babies are storing fat on their bodies, their heartbeat can be heard with a stethoscope, they can hear, they have eyebrows, eyelashes, fingernails and toenails. Incidentally, MedlinePlus calls them “babies.” (See www.nlm.nih.gov/MEDLINEPLUS/ency/article/002398.htm).

When one looks at the abortion procedure and reads its descriptions, the only conclusion that is rational to draw is that *abortion is a crime against humanity*. As we reveal its horror, we need to start using that language more frequently.

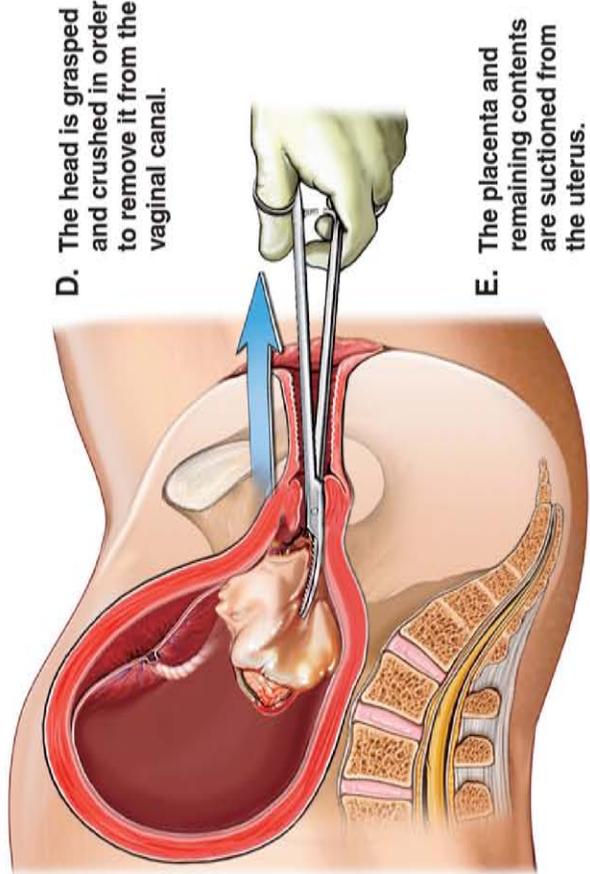
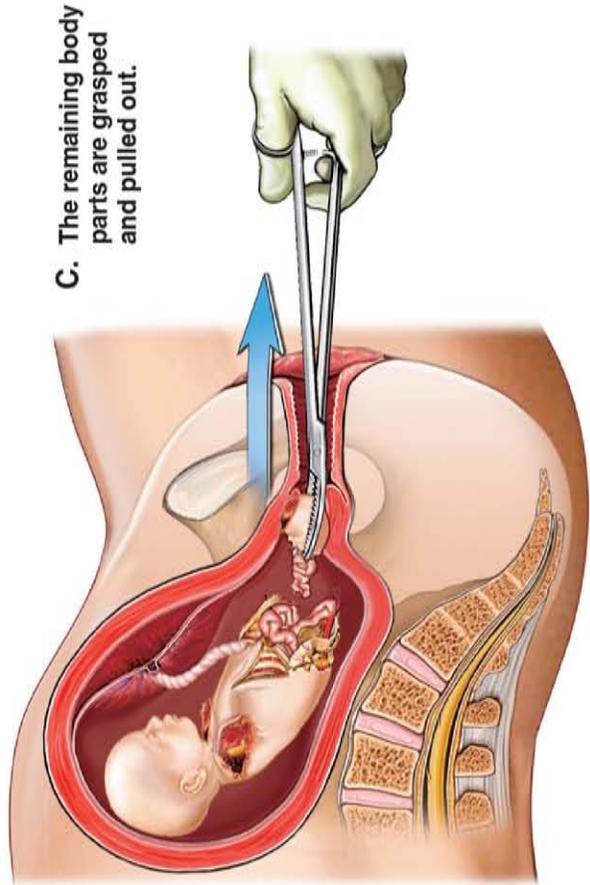
For the last decade, I have been arguing that we can make

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Dilation and Evacuation Abortion (D&E) of a 23 Week Old Fetus



Cut-away view of mother's pelvis



Pray with us for Life

PrayerCampaign.org is our prayer website. Visit there often for prayer campaigns, intentions, and resources, and to join the over 87,000 people in our cause "Pray to End Abortion."

January intention: That judges may decide cases in a manner consistent with the fundamental right to life.

February intention: For the protection of the free-speech rights of pro-life groups and individuals.

January 14-22, 2014: Novena of Reparation for Roe vs. Wade

March 5- April 17, 2014: Lenten Prayer for Life

Our Legislative Priority

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legislative progress by focusing on other forms of late-term abortion, particularly on the "D and E" dismemberment procedure. Hence, Priests for Life started, some years ago, the "Stop D and E" campaign (see StopDandE.com).

This doesn't mean, of course, that we stop working to eliminate abortions in the earliest stages of pregnancy. **Every abortion is equally wrong and we will not rest until every child is protected.** But you have to slow a train down before you stop it, and legislatively, you have to pass the pro-life measures that you have the political and legislative support to pass at the moment, while working to build support for all the rest.

So let's move forward with confidence, using the diagram that is found on page 3 of this newsletter to educate people about what we are talking about.

Gear up for Elections 2014!

The entire US House of Representatives, and a third of the Senate, will be at stake in the elections of Nov. 4, 2014, as will many Governors and state legislators. Prepare with us now! PoliticalResponsibility.com is our Priests for Life election website, and VoteProLifeCoalition.com is the coalition we're asking groups to join for common action.

Remember, no issue is more important than whether the candidate is willing to do all he or she can to protect the right to life. We need public servants who know the difference between serving the public or killing the public!



For more information scan with your smartphone

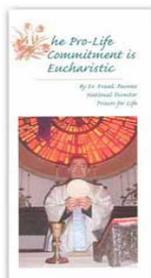
Keep up with Fr. Frank at FrFranksBlog.com!

Featured Products

Start the New Year right! Grow in a pro-life spirituality.

Missionaries of the Gospel of Life Manual

This missionary manual lays out the details of the formation program to become a Missionary of the Gospel of Life.



The Pro-life Commitment is Eucharistic

This brochure explains how Catholic teaching about the Eucharist shows us why we are pro-life. Receive one for free or 100 for \$20.

Pro-Life Examination of Conscience

This brochure poses questions to reflect on how you can be a more effective pro-life advocate. Receive one for free or 100 for \$20.



Send ___ *Missionaries Manual (#1938)* at \$2.00 each for a total of \$_____.

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Send *Pro-Life Examination of Conscience Brochure (#104)* ___ One copy for free or ___ pack (s) of 100 for \$20.00 each for a total of \$_____.

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