

February 25, 2011

Memo to: Good Friends of the Foundation

From: Maria McFadden

Re: Mid-winter blues?

“Now that you are feeling better, you’ve got to send me some of your stuff—so we can argue,” bantered my mother’s surgeon at our last office visit. When we’d first gotten to know him, we’d told him what we did here at the Foundation, and he replied that he was “pro-choice,” although with reservations—he immediately brought up hard cases (as do lots of people). We hadn’t had much chance since then to talk about anything but my Mom’s medical condition—but, thank God, our last visit was so good that we had time to chat. He is open-minded, intellectually curious, an excellent surgeon, and a good man—so I will send him the *Review* and hope it makes a difference.

Perhaps he is like a lot of Americans, “pro-choice” but in . . . an unexamined way. I think he’d be shocked to know what *really* goes on in the abortion industry; indeed, I suspect he *was* shocked—as many were last month—by gruesome news accounts of Philadelphia abortionist Kermit Gosnell’s “house of horrors,” and by videos of Planned Parenthood employees sanctioning sex trafficking—the latter the result of an undercover investigation led by Live Action’s Lila Rose. The truth is that “pro-life” is not a fringe or radical position; it is the way things are meant to be in a healthy society. Respecting the dignity of human life is a law written in our hearts, a law many of us instinctively honor in the interactions we have every day. If the good doctor reads the *Review* I send him, he may find more to agree with than he had thought. After all, he, unlike “Dr.” Gosnell, has dedicated his life to saving the lives of others.

The *Human Life Review* is dedicated to saving lives as well. It exists to break through the screen of distortion put up by an increasingly sick society that regards the unborn, the elderly, and the disabled as potentially inconvenient and therefore disposable. It is this “pro-death” position that is truly alien and destructive. And yet it has become mainstreamed, accepted—a kind of inversion of reality. We believe that the *Review* can change minds and hearts simply by being “radical” enough to tell the truth. That is what keeps us going here, despite the challenges we constantly face. These last few months have been sort of an endurance test. My mother (and our senior editor) Faith McFadden went into the hospital on December 6th for what was expected to be a 7-to-9-day stay—she ended up being there for a month. My siblings and I and our dear friends took turns being with her through hopeful days, disappointing days, and the inescapable dreariness of holidays spent in a hospital. Things are much better now. She’s been recuperating at home and is regaining her strength, slowly but surely, so, as I have been reminding her, spring—though it seems like the impossible dream this year—*will* come.

Back here at the office, we are also recovering: A family business means that a crisis in the family affects everyone. Nonetheless, we are only slightly behind schedule compared to last year. The new issue of the *Review* is at the printer and will be on its way to you soon—some articles are already available online (at www.humanlifereview.com). This issue includes a terrific analysis of last fall’s election results by William Murchison, speeches and photos from our Great Defender of Life Dinner, and a special section examining the “Open Hearts, Open Minds and Fair Minded Words” conference that took place at Princeton University in October. The *Appendix* section, by the way, features an article by Lila Rose about how she became a pro-life activist in college.

But here’s the “blue” news: Though your response to my end-of-the-year appeal was overwhelmingly generous, we still fell short of what we needed. It’s not that you haven’t done your share—so many of you have done more than that!—it’s that there are not *enough* of you. In order to survive, we need more readers, and supporters, but in order to *find* them we need financial support—it’s a frustrating cycle. Another problem is that some funders of pro-life causes have decided to restrict donations, for instance, to buying ultrasound machines for pregnancy centers. This is absolutely a life-saving investment, and we applaud these efforts—we too have made such donations through the Foundation’s “baby-saving” matching-grant program.

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So I understand, even encourage, the wish to give practical help; *our* great challenge is to make people see that what the *Human Life Review* does—e.g., creating a record of the pro-life debate—is *also* crucial. Does any one of us really doubt the power of ideas, and words, when used to perpetuate evil? Or good? In the issue you will receive soon, Wesley Smith writes about Peter Singer, the philosopher who has an esteemed chair at Princeton—he was one of the hosts of the “Open Minds” conference—from which he teaches that it is *morally permissible to kill disabled infants, or adults*, because sometimes they have less worth than healthy apes. How many young minds does he influence with his words? On the other side, we have received countless requests to reprint an article the *Review* published in 1977 on the distinction between active and passive euthanasia by Professor Thomas Sullivan. Just last week we heard from Dr. Sullivan, who asked if the article might be posted on our website. He also told us that it has been in print (notably in collections of essays put out by Oxford University Press) continuously since 1977!

And this brings me to another point: As is often the case here, though financial matters are worrisome, there are greatly encouraging signs that our message is getting out. Our new book, *The Debate Since Roe* (superbly edited by our managing editor Anne Conlon), is garnering much attention—we have been receiving a steady stream of phone calls and Internet orders. Our website itself has been updated to include PayPal, so that people can subscribe or donate online, or “shop” in our new bookstore. But perhaps most important: People who visit our site can discover the *Review*, and the wealth of information, inspiration, and encouragement we have been providing the pro-life movement for nearly thirty-six years.

I keep thinking that what we really need are more “angels”—special supporters who see that the *Review* is *unique* and important, and who will help us get it into the hands of those, like Faith’s surgeon, who need to be exposed to the truth about the battle for life. There are many ways *you* can be an angel: simply by renewing your subscription (or purchasing a *gift subscription*), by buying copies of *The Debate Since Roe*—for a church or school group, for example—or even alerting us to funding opportunities. In the meantime, we have made some simple decisions to ease the strain: For one, we are raising our subscription price by \$5 (it hasn’t been raised in almost 10 years)—at \$30 a year, it is still less than taking your family out to the movies! And our next issue, Winter/Spring 2011, will be a double one—we are blessed to be overfull with excellent articles, and running them in one big issue will save us from going to the printer twice—a break that will help us survive.

And survive we will—I have always had the long view in mind, ever since I promised my father I would continue the *Review*. (He never promised *me* it would be easy!). He also told me that I would need to keep asking for help, and so I am—with *deep* appreciation for what you have already done. May spring come soon with blessings for you and yours.

Yours faithfully,

Maria McFadden
President

P.S.: I would welcome a call (212 685-5210) or email (maria@humanlifereview.com) if you have any questions about how we are doing here, or ideas for helping us. And of course you can always write me a letter (Human Life Foundation, 353 Lexington Avenue, Suite 802, NY, NY 10016).

P.P.S.: As always, I am enclosing a reply card; you may also renew your subscription or make a contribution—via PayPal or your credit card—on our website at www.humanlifereview.com.