



# ProVita

Online Newsletter of the  
University Faculty for Life



This edition is released in the aftermath of the U.S. national election and as we approach the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*. Whither the pro-life movement in the wake of the election? We continue our series in which we focus on a pro-life approach to a particular academic discipline. This time we look with **Lucia Silecchia** at Law.

UFL Updates .....	1
Scholarly Opportunities.....	4
Resources.....	5
Focus on the Disciplines.....	7
Editor’s Corner .....	9
Masthead .....	10

## UFL Updates

**I**n which we highlight the scholarly activities of our organization, members, and chapters, including publications, talks, and consultations.

### UFL

- **Cardinal O’Connor Conference for Life.** UFL is co-sponsoring the Cardinal O’Connor Conference for Life in Washington, D.C. on January 26. The keynote speaker will be Helen M. Alvaré. There will be a panel on “Women Leaders of the Pro-Life Movement,” including Lila Rose, Melissa Ohden , Marjorie Dannenfelser and Sr. Veronica Mary, S.V. Breakout sessions will include: **Steven Mosher** on the international Pro-Life movement, **Hanna Klaus** on Theology of the Body, **William L. Saunders, J.D.** on

Pro-Life Law, Jennifer Lahl on Bioethics, Fr. Charles Connor on Cardinal O’Connor and the Culture of Life, Thomas Peters on Pro-Life Media, Sally Winn on the History of Pro-life Feminism, Kristen Day on and Msgr. Stuart Swetland on the Death Penalty. Please join us if you are coming to the March for Life on the 25th! You can register on the [conference web page](#).

- **2013 Conference.** The 2013 UFL conference will be held at the University of San Francisco from May 31 to June 1. More information can be found on the [UFL web page](#). The calls for papers can be found at the end of this newsletter, as can the information about the University Faculty for Life Scholarly Achievement Award in Creative Writing, Literary Criticism, or Research.

### UFL in the News

- **Richard G. Wilkins**, professor emeritus at the Brigham Young University J. Reuben Clark Law School, unexpectedly collapsed and died of a heart condition in November 2012, at 59 years. Richard was a dedicated pro-life attorney and law professor. He taught Constitutional Law and International Family Law and related courses for twenty-five years. As a young lawyer working as an Assistant to the Solicitor General of the United States under Rex E. Lee, he helped file a brief on behalf of the United States in *Akron v. Akron Center for Reproductive Center for Reproductive Health* in support of the abortion clinic regulations enacted by the City of Akron, Ohio. The first brief filed by the United States that asked the Court to overturn *Roe v. Wade* influenced Justice O’Connor to file her famous dissenting opinion in *Akron* in which she criticized *Roe* for being "on a collision course with itself."

Richard wrote several powerful law review articles criticizing Roe and calling for its reversal. He helped write, and then defend, Utah's abortion regulations, many of which were upheld in the courts. Richard worked tirelessly in international law (especially at the UN and UN conferences) to defend the family against western-led efforts to impose on third-world nations legal policies to deconstruct the family including abortion-on-demand.

Richard retired from BYU to become the Director for seven years of the Doha International Institute for Family Studies and Development, a leading clearinghouse for pro-life and pro-family international scholarly collaboration which became the leading institute promoting and protecting family values in the Muslim world.

Richard "relaxed" on the stage; he played Scrooge in "A Christmas Carol" for nearly 28 years in Salt Lake City. He is survived by his wife, Melany, and their four children.

- **Lynn Wardle** is quoted in article "[Supreme Court leaves itself some 'wiggle room' for gay marriage cases,](#)" in *Deseret News*.
- **Teresa Collett** is quoted extensively in "[Abortion Doesn't Unrape You: Following Election Disaster, Anti-Choice Activists Look to Re-frame Discussion of Rape,](#)" on the RH Reality Check web page. She was also quoted in the Huffington Post's "[Abortion may be legal, but very difficult in many states; in past 2 years, 41 set new limits.](#)"

## Publications and member activities

- **Frank Beckwith** has written a two-part article on [The Catholic Thing](#) web page called "Roe at Forty." The first part is, "[The Court's Failure to Address the Question of the Unborn's Moral Status.](#)" The second part is "[The Court's Two Unwarranted Stipulations.](#)"

- **Teresa Collett, Lynn Wardle, and Lynne Marie Kohm** contributed to the new volume of the *St. Thomas Journal of Law and Public Policy* reviewing the academic treatment of abortion and euthanasia in a variety of law school textbooks. Collett authored the preface "Silence of the Law (Textbooks)," *6 U. St. Thomas J.L. & Pub. Pol'y* 1 (2011), UFL members Wardle and Kohm co-authored "The 'Echo Chamber Effect' in Legal Education: Considering Family Law Casebooks", *6 U. St. Thomas J.L. & Pub. Pol'y* 104 (2011), and the final article in the volume is "Bibliography: Life Issues in Legal Scholarship" *6 U. St. Thomas J.L. & Pub. Pol'y* 206 (2011).
- **Jeff Koloze** wrote "Latino Literature on the Life Issues: Commentary on Tato Laviera's 'Jesús Papote,' Judith Ortiz Cofer's 'Silent Dancing,' and *Bella*." *Journal of Teaching and Education*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (2012) 53-62.
- The ProLife Center at the University of St. Thomas sponsored an evening of post-election reflections by **Teresa Collett**. A video of the talk can be found on the [Center's web page](#).
- *Homiletics and Pastoral Review* recently published an article by **Robert Gotcher** called "[The Catholic Identity of a Retirement Community.](#)" The importance of ethical treatment of end-of-life issues is highlighted.
- The **Notre Dame Center for Ethics and Culture** held its [13th Annual Fall Conference](#) from November 8-10, 2012. The theme this year was "The Crowning Glory of the Virtues: Exploring the Many Facets of Justice." As always, the conference's topic opens many avenues for pro-life scholarship, and included many UFL members. [Videos of many of the major talks](#) will soon be available on the NDCEC web page.
- The 2012 (20th Anniversary) Annual national meeting-conference of the **Society of Catholic Social Scientists** held at Kellenberg Memorial High School, Uniondale, Long Island, New York on

October 26-27, 2012. Many UFL members gave presentations, including **Jane Gilroy** (History), **Robert Kinpoitner** (English), **Clara Sarracco**, **Scott Salvato** (History), **D. Brian Scarnecchia** (Humanitie), **Richard Myers** (Law).

Session 2 features talks about the Long Island Chapter of UFL, including: a panel discussion organized by **Jane Gilroy** called, "Purpose, History, Activities, and Future of University Faculty for Life/Long Island Chapter"; "LIC/UFL: Purpose and Goals," by **Jane Gilroy**; "History and Highlights," by **Robert Kinpoitner**; "Recent and Planned Activities," by **Clara Sarracco**; and "Reaching Students and Possible New Directions," by **Scott Salvato**.

- **Jeff Koloze**'s paper, "Representation and Rhetoric of Abortion in the Film *Bella*" has been accepted for presentation at the National Association of Hispanic and Latino Studies conference (Baton Rouge, February 2013).
- **Dr. Frederick Dyer**, Ph.D., has created an extensive archive of materials about [Horatio Robinson Storer, M.D. \(1830-1922\)](#), one of the early physicians who crusaded against abortion in the second half of the 19th century. According to the web page, Storer, a Boston physician, was not only instrumental in getting anti-abortion laws on the books in various states (with the cooperation of the AMA), but also was one of the founders of the discipline of gynecology.

There are links to Storer's personal journals, letters, books, articles, the *Journal of the Gynecological Society of Boston*, which he founded.

- In the summer, **Michael New** wrote two columns on LifeNews.com on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Casey Decision . "[Casey Decision at 20: Pro-Lifers Make Progress on Abortion](#)," and "[ProLife Movement Has Made Big Gains Since the Casey Decision](#)."

- **Michael New** also published a [review](#) of **Jane Gilroy**'s book on Ellen McCormack. McCormack's 1976 presidential campaign was an important moment in the history of the pro-life movement. New notes: "This campaign is nicely chronicled in Jane Gilroy's new book *A Shared Vision*. Gilroy gives some well-deserved attention to the accomplishments of a pro-life pioneer. She also details a presidential campaign that, despite taking place 36 years ago, still contains important lessons for today's pro-life activists." New closes his review with this observation: "The pro-life movement unfortunately has devoted few resources to chronicling its own history. Thus by giving pro-life pioneer Ellen McCormack some overdue recognition, Gilroy has done her readers a fine service."
- Last year, the *Journal of Christian Legal Thought* published its inaugural edition. In that issue, they asked various law professors to write short essays recommending a piece that should be read by those in the legal profession. **Lucia Ann Silecchia** wrote an essay for that collection entitled "[Pope John Paul II's Evangelium Vitae and the 'Horizon of the Good'](#)" The essay invites readers to consider the lessons of Pope John Paul II's "Evangelium Vitae" for modern lawyers and argues that this well-known encyclical is both a strong, eloquent defense of vulnerable human life, as well as a call to all those involved in the law to consider the demands of law, conscience, and morality in the public and private spheres.

## Social Networking

- Don't forget, UFL is on Facebook and Twitter. On Facebook you can "like" the "University Faculty for Life" page. On Twitter follow "Faculty4Life". Our blog can be found at [www.ufl.org/blog/](http://www.ufl.org/blog/). There is also an active "University Faculty for Life" subgroup of the "Pro-life Professionals" group on LinkedIn.

## Scholarly Opportunities

**I**n which we highlight opportunities for members to engage in further research on and networking regarding the issues of abortion, infanticide, and euthanasia in their respective fields.

### Calls for papers, conferences, other opportunities

- **2013 Conference.** The 2013 **UFL Conference** will be held at the University of San Francisco May 31-June 1, 2013. The call for papers is at the end of this newsletter. Additional information about the annual conference is available on the [UFL web page](#).
- **Scholarly Achievement Award.** **UFL** is now accepting submissions from college and university students for its Scholarly Achievement Award in Creative Writing, Literary Criticism, or Research. Guidelines for the contest, a one-page flyer and other materials can be found at the end of this newsletter and on the [UFL web page](#). The deadline for the 2013 contest is Saturday, 11 May 2013.
- **Thomistic Institute.** The Thomistic Institute will be hosting two pro-life conferences this spring.

First, a “Thomistic Circle” called “Advancing a Culture of Life: Veritatis Splendor Twenty Years Later” will be held at the Dominican House of Studies in Washington D.C. February 22-23, 2013. Speakers will include Fr. Timothy Bellamah, O.P., Dominican House of Studies, Dr. Douglas Farrow, McGill University, Dr. Christopher Kaczor, Loyola Marymount University, **Dr. Jeanne Schindler**, Villanova University, and Fr. John Corbett, O.P., Dominican House of Studies. For more information, see the Institute web page [here](#).

The second will be on April 5-6, 2013, called

“Advancing a Culture of Life: Pro-Life Argument in the Coming Generation” at the Catholic Center, New York University.

Speakers include David Novak (University of Toronto), Rusty Reno (First Things), Angela McKay Knobel (The Catholic University of America), Fr. Thomas Joseph White, OP (Pontifical Faculty of the Immaculate Conception), Carter Snead (Center for Ethics and Culture, University of Notre Dame), Yuval Levin (Ethics and Public Policy Center), Paige Hochschild (Mount St. Mary’s University), Anna Halpine (World Youth Alliance), **Francis Beckwith** (Baylor University), Ryan Anderson (Heritage Foundation), Mary Eberstadt (Hoover Institution), Ashley Samelson McGuire (AltCatholicah). This symposium is co-sponsored by: The Thomistic Institute, Washington, DC, Center For Ethics and Culture, Notre Dame University, First Things, The Institute for Religion and Public Life, New York, NY.

Both events are free and open to the public.

### Other opportunities

- **Truth and Charity** is a new online publication of Human Life International. They intend to publish 3-5 original/unpublished articles each week on issues relating to life, the family, and defending/articulating the mysteries of the faith.

Among the Board of contributors is **Fr. Joseph Koterski** of Fordham University, **Steve Mikochik** and **Fr. Brian Mullady**

They are currently looking for more writers. Some may be able to contribute regularly, whereas others may be able/willing to write one article for the Forum.

## Resources

**I**n which we highlight scholarly journal and online articles and resources regarding abortion, infanticide, and euthanasia representing all sides of issue.

### Roe v. Wade

With the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, many articles have been written. Here is just a sample:

- *Time* Magazine's cover story for their [January 14<sup>th</sup> issue](#) asserts that the pro-abortion advocates have been losing ever since *Roe v. Wade*. It contains a commentary by Emily Buchanan, executive director of the Susan B. Anthony List, called "[Pro-Life and Feminism Aren't Mutually Exclusive](#)." Not all pro-life commentators are convinced by the thesis of the cover story. For instance, Pia di Solemni wrote "[Why 'Time' Magazine 'Pro-Life' Cover Might Be No Big Deal](#)" for the *National Catholic Register*.
- Justin Dyer wrote "[Fictional Abortion History](#)" for *National Review* in which he discusses the continued distortions by historians and lawyers when addressing the historical background for the *Roe v. Wade* decision. The two "fictions" he mentions are "(1) abortion was a common-law liberty at the time of the American founding and (2) the primary purpose of anti-abortion laws in the 19th century was to protect women rather than the lives of unborn children."

### Recent research and data

- In the February 2012 *Journal of Medical Ethics* (*J Med Ethics* doi:10.1136/medethics-2011-100411), Alberto Giubilini and Francesca Minerva argued in "[After-birth abortion: why should the baby live?](#)" that the status of the new-born and the fetus were morally equivalent, thereby making infanticide a legitimate option. Robert George characterized the pro-infanticide arguments in "[It's no longer just Peter](#)

[Singer](#)," on the *Mirror of Justice* blog soon after the issue was released.

Charles C. Camosy's responded in an essay in the *Washington Post*, "[Is Infanticide 'Madness?'](#)" Camosy begins by noting the controversy over the article on "after-birth abortion." He mentions that the *Journal of Medical Ethics*, where the original article appeared, is going to publish an issue devoted to infanticide that will include diverse views.

Camosy then contends that pro-lifers ought to respectfully engage arguments in favor of infanticide and ought not to label pro-infanticide arguments as "madness." Wesley Smith has written [a response to Camosy's essay on National Review Online](#). Smith takes issue with Camosy's approach.

- Kevin Miller notes several valuable articles in the *National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly*. In the Winter 2011 issue there is a review, by Germain Kopaczynski, OFM, of Joseph W. Dellapenna's *Dispelling the Myths of Abortion History*. The Winter 2011 issue also continues a conversation about the mechanism of action of "Plan B" (the levonorgestrel "emergency contraceptive") with a letter by Nicanor Pier Giorgio Austriaco, OP, who has been arguing that the scientific data indicate with 'moral certitude' that "Plan B" affects only fertilization, not implantation.

Miller also notes the conversation between Martin Rhonheimer and some critics of his 'vital conflicts' theory continues in more than one recent issue. This theory is often used by Rhonheimer and others to adjudicate difficult life-issue cases. The Winter 2011 and Summer 2012 issues contain contributions by Rhonheimer, Marie A. Anderson et al., who reply in turn to Rhonheimer, Benedict M. Guevin, OSB, by Kevin L. Flannery, SJ. Helen Watt

Finally, on the topic of organ donation, the Summer 2012 issue contains an essay,



“Objections to Donation after Cardiac Death: A Violation of Human Dignity,” by Gina M. Sanchez, and an article, “Preserving Totality and Integrity in Donation after Circulatory Determination of Death,” by Thomas J. Driscoll Jr.

- One of the ways to get a heads up on upcoming books in the area of abortion, euthanasia, and infanticide is to go to Amazon (or some other book store, I presume) and type in “Abortion,” “Infanticide,” or “Euthanasia” in the search field. Then sort by publication date. The first books that show up will be books that are in the pipeline, but haven’t been published yet. Of course, most of them will not be scholarly, but some will be, such as [Routledge Library Editions: Women’s History: Abortion in England 1900-1967 \(Volume 7\)](#) by Barbara L. Brookes (Oct 30, 2012). And even those that are more journalistic might be of some scholarly interest. For instance: [Generation Roe: Inside the Future of the Pro-Choice Movement](#) by Sarah Erdreich (Mar 26, 2013).
- On Public Discourse, Michael Fragoso has written a two-part article entitled “[Abortion and the Courts: A Brief Political History of Judicial Conservatism](#)” and “[Abortion and the Courts: Judicial Nominations are Imperfect but Matter](#).” Fragoso takes issue with the view that presidential elections don’t matter because judges appointed by Republican presidents have been, from the perspective of the pro-life movement, “at best—part of the problem and—at worst—the heart of the problem.” In the second part, Fragoso closes with this observation: “The fact is that the Republican Party’s commitment to judicial conservatism over the past thirty years has, as a matter of principle, favored and will continue to favor the pro-life movement. Because the fight to reorient the courts has been long and imperfect, it is all the more important that those committed to a culture of life see it through, especially now that it is finally

creating real openings for authentic pro-life policy.”

- **Abortion in other countries and cultures.** Ogland, Curtis P.; Verona, Ana Paula. “Religion and attitudes toward abortion and abortion policy in Brazil.” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 50:4 (December 2011), 812-821.

Nasir, Muhammad Abdun, “The Majelis Ulama's fatwā on abortion in contemporary Indonesia” *Muslim World* 101:1 (January 2011), 33-52.

Baeke, Goedele; Wils, Jean-Pierre; Broeckaert, Bert. “‘There is a time to be born and a time to die’ (Ecclesiastes 3:2a): Jewish perspectives on euthanasia.” *Journal of Religion and Health* 50:4 (Dec. 2011), 778-795.

Cohn-Sherbok, Dan, “Judaism and euthanasia.” *Modern Believing* 52:3 (Jul. 2011), 27-33.

- **Other Research.** Jones, D.A. “Aquinas, Augustine, and Aristotle on ‘Delayed Animation.’” *The Thomist* 76:1 (January 2012).

Petri, Thomas, O.P. & Michael A. Wahl. “Live Action and Planned Parenthood: A New Test Case for Lying.” *Nova et Vetera*. 10:2 (Spring 2012), 437-62.

- The REPROHEALTHLAW-L listserv of the Reproductive and Sexual Health Law Programme has been replaced by the [reprohealthlaw](#) blog. It includes information on court decisions, resources, news, fellowships and jobs. You can sign up to receive updates by e-mail.

## Web pages

**I**n which we highlight web pages that members have found to be helpful for pro-life scholarship:

The Polycarp Research Institute, a research effort recently begun by Chris Kahlenborn, MD, hopes to promote a great variety of research that “seeks to improve the physical, psychological and spiritual condition of mankind.” They will work to encourage and disseminate research in a wide variety of areas, some of which are related to the pro-life cause, such as “The continued study of the ABBC link, that is the Abortion, Birth Control Pill, Breast Cancer link.”

### Other News and Analysis

- Lifesitenews.com reports here that the University of Texas has found that there was insufficient evidence to investigate research done by Mark Regnerus into the effects of same-sex parenting on children. Regnerus had been accused by LGBT activists of fraudulent research.

If this is evidence of a trend, it bodes well for pro-life researchers, who also may be accused of misconduct in studies in controversial areas. At least some administrations will stand behind those that conduct research that draws conclusions that run contrary to the received positions of the dominant academic culture.

- Here is an essay by Michael Paulsen, “The Right to Life and the Irrelevance of Rape,” that addresses an issue that has been highlighted in a couple of controversies concerning the statements of pro-life candidates during this election cycle.

Here is key portion of his argument: “The fact of rape is irrelevant. Rape is tragic, awful, horrible, gut-wrenching—an unspeakable crime of great emotional harm—but rape is essentially irrelevant to the morality of abortion. The issue is the human status, or lack thereof, of the unborn child—whether he or she has a right to live, or may instead be killed for reasons society deems sufficient good cause or simply leaves to the mother’s unrestricted choice.”

- Two researches, John Gurdon from the UK and Shinya Yamanaka from Japan, who pioneered the production of stem cells used for treatments out of adult cells have won the Nobel Prize (bbc.com). Yamanaka was motivated by ethical concerns over embryonic stem cell research. He was once quoted as saying, “When I saw the embryo, I suddenly realized there was such a small difference between it and my daughters, I thought, we can’t keep destroying embryos for our research. There must be another way.” (“Induced Pluripotent Stem Cells: The Ethical Embryonic Alternative.” LifeNews.com)

## Focus on the Disciplines

**I**n which we explore the way a scholar in a particular discipline can promote the culture of life. This issue **Lucia H. Silecchia**, of Columbus School of Law of the Catholic University of America, focuses on Law:

### Law and Life: The Dignity of Life and the Teaching of Law

**I**t is no surprise that human life questions interest law students. These profound moral questions are also critical legal matters. Law professors have rich and varied ways to advance the dignity of human life – in ways both direct and subtle. What follows are four brief thoughts on doing so.

First, while protection of life is often considered a Constitutional matter, questions can arise in nearly all classes to challenge students to ponder the inconsistency with which our law treats life.

- In Trusts & Estates, question why preborn descendants have legally protected inheritance rights beginning at conception and, yet, have no legally protected right to life itself.
- In Criminal Law, question why one who kills a pregnant woman may be legally liable for the death of her preborn child and, yet,

the very same child has no protection if he or she perishes through abortion.

- In Environmental Law, question why preborn endangered animals enjoy expansive legal protection, while preborn humans go defenseless.
- In Human Rights Law, question why the phrase “right to life,” ubiquitous in international treaties, is interpreted in a way that renders it worthless for protecting the most vulnerable life.
- In Juvenile Law, question why in the same era that children’s legal rights are expanding (at times to the detriment of responsible parents), the very youngest of our children see their protection eroded.
- In Women’s Law courses, which often focus so heavily on the alleged good that abortion access brings, question why, worldwide, there is no widespread outrage that our very youngest females are selectively denied the most fundamental of their rights in even vastly greater numbers than our youngest males.

Raising such questions in courses where students may not expect them could prompt some to consider the legal irrationality of our failure to protect human life.

Second, legal scholarship on pro-life matters can also make a valuable contribution. Many lawyers who practice on the front lines of the fight for life do consistent, creative, and thoughtful advocacy. However, they lack the luxury that academics have of being able to devote substantial amounts of time to conducting novel research, developing new arguments, and disseminating their work to a wide audience. Because every branch of law has some nexus to the protection of life, it should not be difficult for pro-life law faculty to add their oft-absent perspective to academic discussion and help dispel the view that none in higher education are committed to the pro-life cause. When well done, this can invite others to look at issues a little bit differently, as all good scholarship should. It can also be of enormous assistance to pro-life advocates who may benefit from the analysis such scholarship contains.

Third, it is not easy for today’s law students to be pro-life. Academia -- supposedly seeking diverse dialogue -- is often hostile to pro-life ideas. Faculty members can be of enormous help to pro-life students who struggle with how to challenge and transform the culture surrounding them. Law professors have the opportunity to let students know that they respect human life by providing advice on finding professional opportunities for pro-life advocacy, supporting students leading or starting pro-life student groups, attending events sponsored by those groups, and encouraging students who want to bear public witness to the dignity of life.

Students come to law school full of idealism. I am often awed by the ways in which many hope to devote substantial parts of their lives serving the vulnerable. While bar associations and the legal academy routinely praise this instinct, they generally do not see “vulnerable” in a way that includes the unborn (or, at the other end of life, the seriously ill.) Law professors can help change this by encouraging those who know that failing to protect the most weak and vulnerable leads down a path that threatens the dignity and life of all.

Finally, given our students’ ages, it is likely that we may teach students who face an unanticipated pregnancy. Law school can be stressful and demanding in ways that can make a student feel trapped into making a tragic decision about her unborn child – particularly if those closest to her encourage it. Thus, law (and, really, all) faculty can be practically, lovingly pro-life if they look honestly at their institutions and ask:

- whether such a student will receive support, help and encouragement as she carries her child,
- whether a student would know where to go for help, and whether those she might turn to would encourage her to make a false choice between her child and her studies,
- whether the school’s policies are flexible and accommodating to meet the practical needs she may have,



- what the institution conveys about its willingness to provide assistance of any kind, and
- what you might say or do so that a student knows she can find in you a pro-life friend and confidante at a time when she may desperately need one.

## Editor's Corner

Many years ago I had a conversation with a friend who was pro-choice because he wanted abortion to be an option for women to solve difficulties in their lives. I stuck to the basic question: is the fetus a human being or not? He brought up destitution, rape, abuse, and all the other circumstances someone might seek an abortion. Every objection he produced, I insisted that before one addressed the social issues, one has to address the "metaphysical" question: is it a distinct human life? He eventually became silent. He had never been confronted with the most fundamental question so directly and insistently. I don't know if he ever changed his mind about abortion, but he certainly knew he couldn't get around the most basic question when he talked with me.



I think the abortion debate can be reduced to two questions: 1. Is the unborn fetus an individual, distinct human being? 2. What are the unalienable rights of an individual, distinct human being? Even if one answers the first question "yes," one may still think that in some circumstances the right to life does not apply.

Scholars in many disciplines have been producing excellent philosophical, theological, medical, political, legal, sociological support for a pro-life answer to these questions. The tremendous advances in biological knowledge alone have continued to strengthen the idea that human life begins at fertilization. Philosophical arguments, such as the one by Mark Johnson of Marquette University, have been developed to counter arguments for delayed hominization.

The arguments have been so well-honed and refined over the years that it is hard for pro-life scholars who are aware of the data and arguments in the many fields to understand how someone can remain pro-abortion.

Yet, they do. Some refuse to accept the conclusions of the data and arguments. Others accept that it is a human being and assert that there are some circumstances in which it is legitimate to kill human beings.

This brings to my mind a couple of questions: First, are there any new arguments that can be developed that can actually change the minds of those who do not embrace the pro-life position? Are there arguments that can still be even more fully developed in support of a pro-life answer to my two questions? Or, is a more basic problem that many people cannot conceive of a reality that is not empirical, and therefore wind up defining value in material terms? Are people ultimately Nietzschean relativists, as Allen Bloom said of Americans in *The Closing of the American Mind*?

Is the real front in the intellectual war the prolegomena to the arguments, the questions that are more basic than the basic questions. Can one truly appreciate the infinite value of the unborn if one does not see that they are more than matter or that they are made by God? As long as so many people in our country follow Justice Kennedy in asserting, "At the heart of liberty is the right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life," arguing successfully about when human life begins may be futile. If we are so distorted in our metaphysical thinking, then questions such as my second one, "What are the unalienable rights of an individual, distinct human being?" also can't be answered with any kind of certainty or unanimity.

Scholars in all disciplines can think not only in their own specialties, but also continue to think about ways to articulate the more basic issues in a convincing way. We can revitalize a meta-conversation at our institutions about fundamentals, or first things. We can help develop in ourselves, our colleagues and our

students a philosophical *habitus*, which Bl. John Henry Cardinal Newman said was the final end of a university education.

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Please begin to think about items for next issue, which will come out in February, 2013. We need notices of member's publications, presentations and other activities, calls for papers and notices of upcoming conferences. You can send them to me any time. I will put them on the blog first, and then put them in *ProVita*.

I will also be looking for someone to write a short essay, like Lucia Silecchia's above, about their discipline and the pro-life movement. If you are interested, let me know. So far we have covered literature and law. It would be nice to get out of the L's!

Any contributions may be forwarded to [profgotcher@yahoo.com](mailto:profgotcher@yahoo.com).

## Masthead

Publisher [University Faculty for Life](#)

Editor [Robert F. Gotcher, Ph.D.](#)

Technical [Stephen Feher, of the Ridgefield Group](#)

*ProVita* is the quarterly online newsletter of the [University Faculty for Life](#). Its purpose is to promote research, dialogue and publication by faculty who respect the value of human life from inception to natural death, especially focusing on abortion, euthanasia, and infanticide. More information about UFL can be found on our web site at [uffl.org](http://uffl.org). Editorial correspondence can be sent to the editor at [profgotcher@yahoo.com](mailto:profgotcher@yahoo.com).

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## Twenty-Third Annual Conference "Life and Learning XXIII"

Coming May 31-June 1, 2013  
University of San Francisco  
San Francisco, CA

### Invitation to Attend and Call for Papers

University Faculty for Life is a non-denominational, multi-disciplinary scholarly organization which each year welcomes pro-life academics to a conference on "Life and Learning." In 2013 the annual academic conference will be held at the University of San Francisco in San Francisco CA. Attendance is open to current or former college, university, and seminary faculty and their spouses, graduate students, and others by individual request.

Proposals for scholarly paper presentations are invited. Papers should focus on the life issues of abortion, infanticide and euthanasia. Themes for the conference include the legal, political, social, economic, and medical implications of these topics; relevant legal, philosophical and theological issues; the physical and psychological effects of abortion; and insights from history, literature, the arts, humanities and other disciplines. Paper proposals should be one page (maximum) and should including the working title of the proposed paper, author's name, affiliation, full contact information (including address, phone, fax and email), and a brief abstract or outline. The deadline for receipt of proposals is April 7, 2013. All papers presented at the conference may be submitted after the conference for possible publication in Life and Learning, an annual peer-reviewed selection of conference papers.

### Call for Papers!

To propose a paper, send the proposal (preferably by email attachment) by April 7, 2013 to:

Professor Barbara Freres  
Department of Philosophy  
Cardinal Stritch University  
6801 N. Yates Road  
Milwaukee WI 53217  
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## University Faculty for Life Scholarly Achievement Award in Creative Writing, Literary Criticism, or Research

- \$600 total prizes
- Possible presentation of work at annual conference
- Opportunity for publication

University Faculty for Life will now accept submissions from college or university students for its Scholarly Achievement Award. The contest is open to undergraduate and graduate students at any level. Students may submit work in three categories: Creative Writing, Literary Criticism, or Research. Work submitted in any category must demonstrate the application of a life-affirming perspective on abortion, infanticide, euthanasia, or related issues.

The student scholars who win in any category may be offered an opportunity to read their work before the annual conference of University Faculty for Life to be held 31 May-1 June 2013 at the University of San Francisco. They may have their work published on UFL's website. Finally, winners in each category will receive \$200.

University Faculty for Life is an organization of scholars dedicated to the intellectual and scholarly inquiry of abortion, infanticide, euthanasia, and related issues. Since an increasing majority of college and university students are pro-life, we would like to help these students by encouraging them to strive for scholarly excellence as they examine these issues and by assisting them with building a publications portfolio.

Entries must be emailed or postmarked  
on or before 11:59 PM EST on Saturday, 11 May 2013

### Rules

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students must be enrolled in a college or university at time of submission of work; a copy of an identification card with current college or university sticker will suffice.</li> <li>• The student shall affirm in a cover letter that the work submitted is the student's original work. Please enclose address and contact information in this letter.</li> <li>• Essay submissions must be a minimum of six but no more than ten pages; poetry submissions can be of any length. Both essay and poetry submissions must be double-spaced.</li> <li>• Students retain the right of publication.</li> <li>• A panel of judges will evaluate submissions based on the quality of research and the demonstration of strong</li> </ul> | <p>communication and critical thinking skills. Correct grammar and punctuation are required. Research must follow either the <u><a href="#">APA Manual</a></u> or the <u><a href="#">MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers</a></u>, latest editions. The judges reserve the right to give a partial or no award if the quality of the submissions merits such action. The decision of the judges is final.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students should submit their work electronically in Word format to <a href="mailto:DrJeffKoloze@att.net">DrJeffKoloze@att.net</a>. The cover letter and a hard copy of the paper may be mailed to UFL Scholarly Achievement Award, 10019 Granger Road, Garfield Heights, Ohio 44125-3101.</li> </ul> |
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