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ABOUT CMF

The Christ Medicus Foundation is a 501(c)(3) Catholic nonprofit organization that defends religious freedom and builds Christ-centered Catholic health care. Our mission is to share Jesus Christ's healing love in health care, to build authentically Catholic care, to defend life and religious freedom, and to protect the poor and vulnerable. We work for a person-centered health care system.

For over 20 years CMF has educated religious and lay leaders on the intersection of healthcare, the exercise of faith and religious freedom, and the defense of the right to life. CMF has launched coalitions, campaigns and conferences to educate and form Catholic laity to make Christ-centered healthcare decisions.

TITLE X CONTRACEPTION

BY JORDAN BUZZA, JD



In April of 2019, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) enacted the *Protect Life Rule*.¹ This rule prohibits family planning clinics that receive federal funds under the *Title X Family Planning Program* from performing or directly offering referrals for abortions.² Planned Parenthood subsequently chose to opt out of *Title X* in August of 2019,³ and that rightly received a great deal of fanfare.⁴ The realities of abortion make it the greatest issue of our time,⁵ so the fact that Planned Parenthood has less resources to indirectly support abortion is a positive development. However, the fight to fix *Title X* is not over, because it continues to fund clinics that provide contraception.⁶

Contraception is wrong on a practical,⁷ philosophical,⁸ and theological⁹ level. Similarly, the idea that it is healthcare,¹⁰ that people require it,¹¹ and that it should be provided free of cost is flawed.¹² Unfortunately, *Title X* has always operated from a pro-contraceptive position. From the program's inception¹³ up until the *Protect Life Rule's* enactment, contraception has been pushed by *Title X* as a necessity.¹⁴ In fact, *Title X* was run under the basic premise that an unplanned pregnancy is a "challenge...to reproductive health."¹⁵



This anti-life mindset is certainly not limited to *Title X*.¹⁶ The contraceptive mandate was a central feature of the Affordable Care Act,¹⁷ and it will be in Medicare for All legislation.¹⁸ Even amongst Catholics, contraception has broad approval,¹⁹ so passing legislation that limits it in any way faces more than an uphill climb. While this is discouraging, we have a duty to the truth that contraception is intrinsically wrong.²⁰ In light of that duty, we cannot capitulate.

The *Protect Life Rule* has already taken steps to limit funding to clinics that offer contraception, though they are still funded.²¹ Positively, the rule has increased the funding of clinics that do not offer contraception and instead teach natural family planning and encourage abstinence.²²

A new *Title X* rule could go even further. Just as the *Protect Life Rule* stopped funding abortion clinics, a similar rule could stop funding clinics that provide contraception. Luckily, there is nothing inherent to *Title X* that explicitly requires contraceptive funding, so such a rule would be possible. That rule would also allow even more funding to be given to clinics that truly allow women and families to improve their health and embrace the beauty, wonder, and responsibility that comes with our sexuality.

Any such changes to *Title X* will be met with stiff resistance. That resistance, coupled with the looming threat of Medicare for All, which will mandate both contraception and abortion²³ and virtually eliminate Catholic healthcare, makes it easy to lose focus on *Title X*. The question we must ask ourselves though is: How will we protect the dignity of the human person under Medicare for All if we cannot do it now? We need to stand for truth and support a rule that would eliminate funding for clinics that provide contraception under *Title X*.♦



Jordan Buzza is the Director of CMF CURO. He is a practicing Catholic and a new father to Joseph with his wife Mariah. Jordan has a BA in Political Science and a BA in Sociology from Duquesne University. He has a JD from the University of Southern California Gould School of Law, where he served as Editor-in-Chief of the *Review of Law and Social Justice*. After graduation from law school, he served for two years as a FOCUS missionary at the University of California, Berkeley and joined the CMF CURO team shortly thereafter.

PROTECTING HUMAN LIFE IN ITS FINAL STAGES: PREPARING FOR THE BEATIFIC VISION

BY MICHAEL ARTHUR VACCA, JD

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This article presents a concise, Catholic understanding of two interconnected realities: the obligation to protect human life until natural death, a moral issue, and the need each of us has to prepare our eternal soul to encounter Christ at the end of life, a spiritual issue.¹ Much of the confusion regarding end of life issues stems from disassociating these two realities that are inseparably connected.

The protection of human life until natural death is violated by euthanasia and assisted suicide² in all its forms.³ What is often ignored is that euthanasia and assisted suicide can prevent people from preparing for the most important meeting of their lives: the meeting with Jesus Christ in the Particular Judgment.⁴ The reason this is so is because the suffering that is averted by euthanasia and assisted suicide can be a God-given means of purifying the soul for eternal blessedness.⁵

To understand the threat to human life in its latter stages, we should consider the way suffering is viewed by contemporary culture. In particular, if this world is all there is, then suffering is meaningless and the goal of life becomes engaging in as much pleasure as possible. If pleasure is the ultimate goal, then we must strive to eliminate suffering at all costs, which is a practical and philosophical hedonism.⁶ If, however, this life is a preparation for eternal life with God or eternal life without God, then we must be careful to live a good life. For purposes of brevity, a good life consists in being united with Goodness and Life Himself, Jesus Christ. It is precisely because our suffering unites us to Christ that we should accept and even embrace these opportunities as precious gifts.⁷ This spiritual teaching parallels the moral principle that our life was given by God and should only be ended by Him in His time. In effect, euthanasia/assisted suicide is a double robbery: it robs God of our life, which is His to dispose of, a moral evil, and it robs us of the opportunity to prepare for God, a spiritual evil.

This double robbery can be affected through commission and omission, that is, by action and inaction. The injection of a lethal substance into the bloodstream is as morally blameworthy as denying appropriate food and hydration. In principle, we are morally obligated to use ordinary (proportional) care in preserving our life, but not obligated to use extraordinary (disproportionate) means.⁸ Unfortunately, palliative care which appropriately seeks to make the patient comfortable at the end of life has been redefined to mean making the patient comfortable by prematurely killing them.⁹ There is even a federal hospice bill to restructure the practice of medicine towards making patients comfortable, often through immoral means, rather than actually focusing on curing illnesses and injuries.¹⁰ To make matters worse, a prevalent means of determining death via neurological criteria as opposed to cardiopulmonary criteria, so-called “brain death,” is an unreliable means of determining death which is sometimes used to justify euthanasia under the pretext of virtuous organ donations.¹¹ All of this is masked by code words like “self-determination,” “dignity,” “choice,” and “autonomy.” These same words that can express the inviolable dignity of the human person are redefined and used as rationalizations to prevent our brothers and sisters from preparing to meet the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

May the Holy Spirit enlighten our minds to do all that can reasonably be done to protect our lives and to ensure that we are prepared to meet the Lord.¹² Many wonderful Catholic organizations are committed to the defense of human life from conception till natural death.

Lord, please send out more workers into your vineyard to protect human persons made in Your image and likeness. ♦



Michael Arthur Vacca is the Assistant Director of Ministry and Policy Development for CMF CURO. He is a devout Catholic with a passion for praying over others in the power of the Holy Spirit. He is an attorney and graduate of Hillsdale College and Ave Maria School of Law. He has worked for the Pontifical Council of the Family in Rome, where he advised the Church on pro-life and pro-family issues. Michael is the Managing Editor of the International Center on Law, Life, Faith, and Family. He is author and coauthor of various articles on bioethics, law, and faith.

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1 42 C.F.R. § 59 (2019). 2 Id. at § 59.5(a)(5).

3 Remarks by Alexis McGill Johnson, Acting President and CEO of Planned Parenthood Federation of America on Title X, Planned Parenthood (Aug. 19, 2019), <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/about-us/newsroom/press-releases/trump-administration-gag-rule-forces-planned-parenthood-out-of-title-x-national-program-for-birth-control>.

4 *Planned Parenthood to Pull Out of Title X Program*, Catholic News Agency, (Aug. 16, 2019), <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/planned-parenthood-to-pull-out-of-title-x-program-41717>; Alexandra Desanctis, *Planned Parenthood Exposes Its Dedication to Abortion*, National Review, (Aug. 15, 2019), <https://www.nationalreview.com/2019/08/planned-parenthood-exposes-its-dedication-to-abortion/>.

5 *In USCCB Debate, Chaput Defends Prioritizing Fight Against Abortion*, Catholic News Agency (Nov. 11, 2019), <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/in-usccb-debate-chaput-defends-prioritizing-fight-against-abortion-47695>.

6 *Some contraceptives can also act as abortifacients, meaning that they can undermine the purpose of the Protect Life Rule*. See William F. Colliton, Jr., *Birth Control Pill: Abortifacient and Contraceptive*, American Association of Pro-Life Obstetricians and Gynecologists, (Dec. 17, 2019), <https://aaplog.org/birth-control-pill-abortifacient-and-contraceptive/>. However, this article will be focused on the nature of contraception vis-à-vis preventing conception.

7 Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae* § 17 (1968); Zooey Maraist, *Women Discuss the Sexual Revolution in Light of #MeToo*, Arlington Catholic Herald, (June 4, 2018) https://www.catholicherald.com/news/local_news/women_discuss_the_sexual_revolution_in_light_of__metoo/.

8 Paul VI, supra note 7, at §§ 10-12; Fr. Matthew Schneider, *We Must Explain Why Contraception is Wrong*, National Catholic Register, (May 1, 2019) <http://www.ncregister.com/blog/frmat-thew/we-must-explain-why-contraception-is-wrong> (“There is a certain immorality with fully impeding with the natural purposes of organs or acts.”).

9 Paul VI, supra note 7, at § 13.

10 Pascal-Emmanuel Gobry, *No, Contraception is not Healthcare*, Forbes (July 1, 2014) <https://www.forbes.com/sites/pascal-emmanuel-gobry/2014/07/01/no-contraception-is-not-healthcare/#29b5e8783293>. 11 Paul VI, supra note 7, at §§ 3, 14.

12 Robert E. Moffit, *The Ugly Consequences of Single-Payer Health Care*, Heritage Foundation, (Nov. 1, 2017) <https://www.heritage.org/health-care-reform/commentary/the-ugly-consequences-single-payer-health-care>

13 Family Planning Services and Population Research Act of 1970, Pub. L. No. 91-572, 84 Stat. 1504 (1970) (codified as amended at 42 U.S.C. § 300, et seq).

14 *Providing Quality Family Planning Services*, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, (April 25, 2014), <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/rr/rr6304.pdf>.

15 Id.

16 Frank Newport, *Americans, Including Catholics, Say Birth Control is Morally OK*, Gallup (May 22, 2012)

<https://news.gallup.com/poll/154799/americans-including-catholics-say-birth-control-morally.aspx>.

17 Kathleen Sebelius, *A Statement by U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*, Department of Health & Human Services, (Jan. 20, 2012), <https://web.archive.org/web/20140702150143/http://www.hhs.gov/news/press/2012pres/01/20120120a.html>.

18 Medicare for America Act of 2019, H.R. 2452, 116th Cong. § 2203(a)(17) (2019). 19 Newport, supra note 16.

20 Paul VI, supra note 7, at § 14.

21 Id.

22 42 C.F.R. § 59.2.

23 H.R. 2452 § 2203(a)(17).

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1 Of course, moral issues are inherently spiritual and spiritual issues are inherently moral. I intend a distinction but not a difference. I mean to highlight by the term “moral,” correspondence or a lack thereof with the moral law, and by “spiritual,” living in union with God or failing to do so.

2 The essential distinction between assisted suicide and euthanasia is that the former consists in helping a person to end their own life, whereas the latter consists in a person making the decisive action to end another person’s life. For purposes of Catholic teaching and natural law, we can treat both assisted suicide and euthanasia as the same fundamental, sinful reality because they end a human life prematurely, cutting short the process of natural death.

3 “Whatever its motives and means, direct euthanasia consists in putting an end to the lives of handicapped, sick, or dying persons. It is morally unacceptable.” Catechism of the Catholic Church § 2277 (1994).

4 Id. at § 1022.

5 “Suffering is the greatest treasure on earth; it purifies the soul. In suffering, we learn who our true friend is.” Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska, *Divine Mercy in my Soul: Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska* 342 (3rd ed. 2014). It is important to know that God’s will is active and passive. It is accurate to say that suffering is God’s will for us if we understand “will” in this broader context. God does not want us to suffer for the sake of suffering, but allows it for the sake of purification and love.

6 Hedonism can be defined as “the doctrine that pleasure or happiness is the sole or chief good in life.” Hedonism, Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/hedonism> (last visited 6 September 2019).

7 “Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple” Luke 14:27 (New American Bible).

8 “One must always provide ordinary care (including artificial nutrition and hydration), palliative treatment, especially the proper therapy for pain, in a dialogue with the patient which keeps him informed.” Pontifical Academy for Life, *Respect for the Dignity of the Dying* § 6 (December 9, 2000). Again, “The administration of food and water even by artificial means is, in principle, an ordinary and proportionate means of preserving life.” Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Responses to Certain Questions Concerning Artificial Nutrition and Hydration* (August 1, 2007).

9 Julie Grimstad, *The Federal Closet Euthanasia Bill*, Pro-Life Wisconsin, <https://www.prolifewi.org/blog/2019/2/11/the-federal-closet-euthanasia-bill-why-it-must-be-stopped> (last visited September 6, 2019).

10 Michael Vacca, *Another Avenue for the Culture of Death*, Catholic Journal, <https://www.catholicjournal.us/2018/09/18/hr-1676-another-avenue-for-the-culture-of-death/> (last visited September 6, 2019).

11 Michael Vacca, *Threats to the Sanctity of Human Life*, Catholic Journal <https://www.catholicjournal.us/2019/11/11/threats-to-the-sanctity-of-human-life/> (last visited September 6, 2019); Mercedes Arzu Wilson, *Save the Brain Dead Victims*, http://www.lifeissues.net/writers/wils/wils_03braindeath.html (last visited 6 September 2019).

12 Cf. Matthew 25:14-30 (the parable of the talents).



FOR GENERAL INFORMATION AND TO GET INVOLVED,
CONTACT THE CHRIST MEDICUS FOUNDATION

2150 BUTTERFIELD DRIVE
SUITE 150
TROY, MI 48084

WWW.CHRISTMEDICUS.ORG
(888) 840-7471
INFO@CHRISTMEDICUS.ORG