

## Preface

THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE UNIVERSITY FACULTY FOR LIFE took place this year at a unique time in the history of the pro-life movement: between the leak of the Alito draft opinion in the *Dobbs* case in May and the release of the official opinion of the Supreme Court on June 24. The attendees at the conference were cautiously optimistic but also aware of the nearly half-century of hard work on behalf of the pro-life cause since *Roe v. Wade*. No one was taking anything for granted, but there was a palpable sense of optimistic anticipation.

With that psychological context, the conference went ahead smoothly, thanks to the efforts of the organizers and the hosts, the McGrath Institute for Church Life at the University of Notre Dame and the Notre Dame chapter of the University Faculty for Life.

The papers that were presented demonstrated the typical range of careful scholarship across several disciplines that characterizes a UFFL conference. Greg Lookerse, an artist and Assistant Professor at Hope College in Michigan, offers an arresting pro-life take on the monumental, startling sculpture by Damien Hirst called *Verity*. The work, installed on the Devon coast in 2012, has generated much controversy. Lookerse finds fascinating connections to both the Old Bailey in London and the famous Degas sculpture “*Little Dancer of 14 Years*.”

Barbara Freres, Associate Professor of Philosophy at Cardinal Stritch University, examines the important book *What It Means to be Human*, by O. Carter Snead, Professor of Law and Director, de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture at Notre Dame. Professor Freres writes that “Professor Snead diagnoses the problem inherent in the current dominant conception of ‘what it means to be human,’ provides detailed evidence that American law and public policy have bought into and built upon this inadequate foundation, and describes a more correct path. He recommends that we ‘remember the body’ and thus take seriously human dependency, obligation, and the human need for community.”

Charles Bellinger, Theological Librarian and Professor of Theology and Ethics at Brite Divinity School, Texas Christian University, finds striking parallels in seemingly disparate topics in his essay “The War in Ukraine and Abortion: Two Cases of Historical Rhyming.” First, he sees a parallel between the “Russian invasion of Ukraine and the brutality of the Roman occupation of the Holy Land during the time of Christ.” Second, he explores “substantive parallels that can be drawn between slavery, the Holocaust, and abortion.”

Keith Cassidy, Emeritus Professor at the University of Guelph and a recipient of the Rupert and Timothy Smith Award for Distinguished Contributions to Pro-Life Scholarship, surveys the literature about the pro-life movement, now stretching back almost 60 years. He examines some useful and unbiased studies, while also noting that a couple of books point to a “problem with a historical profession which increasingly rejects objectivity and sees its task as the advancement of a preferred narrative.”

Heidi Giebel, a Professor of Philosophy at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, narrows her focus to the power of ultrasound fetal images to change attitudes from pro-abortion to pro-life. Her article examines the ethical and practical implications of this power.

John Lalor is an Assistant Professor at the Mendoza College of Business at the University of Notre Dame. He applies computational textual analysis (CTA) to previous UFFL conference proceedings, to identify interesting trends and themes of presented research and issues.

Bernadette Waterman Ward, Professor of English at the University of Dallas, analyzes a recent novel by Katsuo Ishiguro, *Klara and the Sun*. The novel “illustrates the moral risks of rejecting biological parenthood for imaginary perfections apparently put within our grasp by technology.” The essay explores the novel’s connections to the interplay of nature and nurture, the Romantic tradition, especially the “prophetic books” of William Blake, and Faustian bargains.

Dr. Jeff Koloze (Ph.D. English, Kent State), looks at a different novel, Lisabeth Posthuma’s *Baby & Solo*. After applying a number of common literary theories (including Jungian, critical disability studies, formalism, gender studies, and deconstruction) Dr. Koloze then analyzes the book using five questions central to right-to-life literary theory.

Finally, this issue of *Life and Learning* includes a number of remembrances. First, there are three eulogies of Father Joseph Koterski, the pillar of strength, wisdom, and grace who served the UFFL in numerous roles since its early days. The first two are by UFFL’s president and vice president, R. Mary Hayden Lemmons and Richard Myers, respectively. The other is by Father Joe’s Jesuit colleague, Father John Conley. In addition, there is an appreciation by Father Koterski of two pro-life stalwarts who died a few months before him: Joseph Scheidler and Raymond Dennehy, the 2013 recipient of the Rupert and Timothy Smith Award for Distinguished Contributions to Pro-Life Scholarship.

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