

Catholic Professionals' Group

NOVEMBER 2013 NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 1: ISSUE 5

How to Pray

WITH FR. JOHN FAHEY

SATURDAY

NOVEMBER 30, 2013

Paragon Clinical
977 N. Oak Lawn Ave.
Suite 104
Elmhurst, IL. 60126

5:30 CHECK-IN / NETWORKING

6:00 JEFF CAVINS' VIDEO: *BIBLE
TIMELINE: THE STORY OF
SALVATION, PART 2*

7:00 GUEST SPEAKER: FR. FAHEY

9:00 SOCIAL / NETWORKING

*Wine & appetizers will be
served throughout the evening.*

For More Information

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www.catholicprofessionalsgroup.org

*Catholic Professionals' Group
welcomes professionals to
participate in monthly meetings
where they can socialize with
other professionals who share
Catholic values, discuss topics
relevant to our faith &
professions, and enjoy spiritual
nourishment under the guidance
of Roman Catholic Priests.*

Health Care & The Human Person: Have We Lost Our Perspective?

October 26th (Oakbrook Terrace)

Bioethics Panel a Smashing Success!

When one thinks of holistic medicine, one typically thinks of herbal remedies, acupuncture, chiropractic, and the like. But after the October 26th Catholic Professionals' Group bioethics panel discussion, *Health Care and the Human Person: Have We Lost Our Perspective?*, it is abundantly clear that medical care provided with a view toward preserving each patient's God-given dignity through all stages of life is undoubtedly authentic holistic medicine. What is also evident is that such whole-person health care is perilously close to extinction, with, among other things, federal and state mandates forcing health care providers to conduct "quality of life" assessments using metrics that weigh one person's relative worth against that of another.

Against this backdrop, Sheila Liaugminas, host of Relevant Radio's *A Closer Look*, kicked off the bioethics panel with a deeply moving keynote address, and moderated the ensuing discussion among a variety of medical, legal, and business experts.

Making up the panel were: Dr. Robert Lawler, MD, Pro-Life Obstetrician and Gynecologist; Dr. Michael McDonnell, Pro-Life Internist, Certified Physician Executive, and Chief Medical Officer, Mercy Hospital, Chicago; Mary Ann Krupa, Pro-life Nurse, Resurrection Hospital, and facilitator of the Bethlehem Project; Thomas Brejcha, President and Chief Counsel, Thomas More Society; Erica Laethem, PhD(c), Director of Clinical Ethics, Presence Health; Fr. Timothy Fiala, Pastor of St. Domitilla Church, Hillside, IL, Dean of Vicariate IV-B, and former Director of the Integritas Institute of Ethics at the University of Illinois at Chicago; and Chris and Mary Anne Yep, owners of Triune Health Group and plaintiffs in a lawsuit over the so-called contraceptive mandate in the Affordable Care Act.



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Beginning her address with a quotation from Pope John Paul II, Ms. Liaugminas read, "The future of democracy in fact depends on a culture capable of forming men and women who are prepared to defend certain truths and values." Thus taking John Paul II's personalism as her starting point, Ms. Liaugminas noted that, in his *ad limina* address to the Bishops of the United States in 1998, Pope John Paul II said, "A society or culture that wishes to survive cannot declare the spiritual dimension of the human person to be irrelevant to public life." Ms. Liaugminas also observed that Pope Benedict similarly referred to the "new humanism" in his 2008 address to the United Nations General Assembly, when he stressed that, before governments can talk about free trade, arms control, or other issues, they must first look at their people as human persons, inherently dignified, and, at core, spiritual beings, because the first freedom a human has does not come from a nation-state, but is inherent in their being, their dignity, and their fundamental right to religious freedom.

Answering in the affirmative that we have indeed "lost our perspective," because we have lost our moral compass as a society -- nationally and globally -- Ms. Liaugminas stated that, in order to preserve our religious freedom, uphold the dignity of the human person, and engage the world in order to make a difference, we must first know the truth. However, as Ms. Liaugminas pointed out, there is a dire need for clarity, given that, through gradual, creeping semantic engineering by the media and "power elites," words no longer mean what they used to mean. For example, the terms "person," "health," "care," "human," and "dignity" have become so contorted and distorted with the result that we, as a culture, now defend the indefensible, among which are euthanasia, assisted suicide -- even for depression -- and abortion on demand.

To illustrate this point, Ms. Liaugminas recalled a 1970 editorial that appeared in *California Medicine*, the official journal of the California Medical Association, which essentially was a linguistic and philosophical call to arms against the traditional view of the human person and a push for an ethic of relative value, due in part to limited resources and a purportedly exploding human population. That editorial begins: "The traditional Western ethic has always placed great emphasis on the intrinsic worth and equal value of every human life regardless of its stage or condition. This ethic has had the blessing of the Judeo-Christian heritage and has been the basis for most of our laws and much of our social policy. The reverence for each and every human life has also been a keystone of Western medicine and is the ethic which has caused physicians to try to preserve, protect, repair, prolong, and enhance every human life which comes under their surveillance. This traditional ethic is still clearly dominant, but there is much to suggest that it is being eroded at its core and may eventually even be abandoned. This of course will produce profound changes in Western medicine and in Western society."

As Ms. Liaugminas pointed out, the California Medical Association, citing "new demographic, ecological, and social realities," predicted in 1970 that a "new ethic of relative rather than of absolute and equal values will ultimately prevail as man exercises ever more certain and effective control over his numbers, and uses his always comparatively scarce resources to provide the



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nutrition, housing, economic support, education, and health care in such ways as to achieve his desired quality of life and living." Such discourse is reminiscent of the rhetoric of the progressive National Socialist movement in Germany in reference to those, young or old, deemed "unworthy of life."

The editorial also opines that the shift toward a relative ethic of human worth "has affected the churches, the laws, and public policy rather than the reverse. Since the old ethic has not yet been fully displaced it has been necessary to separate the idea of abortion from the idea of killing, which continues to be socially abhorrent. The result has been a curious avoidance of the scientific fact, which everyone really knows, that human life begins at conception and is continuous whether intra- or extra-uterine until death. The very considerable semantic gymnastics which are required to rationalize abortion as anything but taking a human life would be ludicrous if they were not often put forth under socially impeccable auspices. It is suggested that this schizophrenic sort of subterfuge is necessary because while a new ethic is being accepted the old one has not yet been rejected."

The editorial ends with: "It is not too early for our profession to examine this new ethic, recognize it for what it is, and will mean for human society, and prepare to apply it in a rational development for the fulfillment and betterment of mankind in what is almost certain to be a biologically oriented world society."

Referring to this supposedly "rational" worldview as a "surreal cultural free-for-all," Ms. Liaugminas urged the audience to become engaged against the march toward relativism. In so doing, she remarked that the defense of the truth requires that it first be taught, and that even the founding values of our country embodied the principle that freedom has to be ordered to truth and that certain laws are universal and binding on everyone's conscience. Ms. Liaugminas, calling on leaders to defend life, stand for family values, and pursue social policies that are properly ordered to justice and true freedom, noted that the core of religious freedom is the right to conscience itself and that a decent society hinges on three pillars: (1) respect for the human person, including the mentally or cognitively impaired, the frail, and the elderly; (2) the institution of the family; and (3) a fair and effective system of law.

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With that theme in place, Ms. Liaugminas then introduced the panelists one-by-one, pointing out their remarkable contributions to preserving the dignity of the human person through their professions and practices. The energetic exchanges among the panelists touched on many different aspects of health care, ethics, law, and business, including: the view that rights are mere possessions of the individual, not inherent properties which define individuals; the notion that one opinion is as good as another and that reasonable minds may differ; the current legal battles over health care; the definition of a well-formed conscience; what makes someone a "good person"; and end-of-life issues, particularly as to care-taker burnout and persons who have lost their cognitive abilities.

After a delightful meal and dessert, the evening concluded on an upbeat note, the energy palpable, with the attendees poised to go out into the world to continue spreading the truth about the dignity of the human person. Despite the late hour, many guests lingered past the 10PM conclusion of the panel and stayed long after the closing of the bar, somewhere close to 11PM.

For a great slideshow of the event, please visit our website at: www.catholicprofessionalsgroup.org There is also a link to purchase an mp3 download of the keynote address and full panel discussion.

