



**The Catholic Vote, October 26, 2004
11:30 a.m. ET
Host: Lisa Wheeler**

Operator: Good day, ladies and gentlemen and welcome to the Catholic Vote conference call. At this time all participants are on a listen only mode. Later we will conduct a question and answer session and instructions will follow at that time. If anyone shall require assistance during the conference please press “*” then “0” on your touch-tone telephone. As a reminder, this conference is being recorded. I would now like to introduce your host for today's conference, Ms. Lisa Wheeler of Catholic Outreach. Ma'am you may begin.

Lisa Wheeler: Good day ladies and gentlemen, my name is Lisa Wheeler and I am the media liaison for Catholic Outreach. Welcome again to this conference on the Catholic vote. Before I turn this over to Mathew Pinto, the co-founder of Catholic Outreach, I wanted to identify briefly our commentators for your purposes since they will be presenting their statements and answering questions during the Q&A. Mathew Pinto will identify them more indepthfully at the -- the beginning of each of their presentations. I will identify them now in the order that they will be speaking. Mathew Pinto is an author and co-founder of Catholic Outreach. Mark Brumley is president of Ignatius Press, Kim Marshall is the director of Generation Life. Fr. Frank Pavone is the national director of Priests for Life. Fr. Tad Pacholczyk is the director of Education for the Catholic Bioethics Center. Fr. Tom Euteneuer is the president of Human Life International. This distinguished lady and these exceptional gentlemen are available for interviews this week, if you would like to speak with them more indepthfully following this conference. Fr. Tom Euteneuer is available for Spanish language publications. Following this conference, please e-mail me at lisaw@catholicoutreach.com or by phone at 770-509-0531 to make those arrangements. Thank you very much. Now I will turn this over to Mathew Pinto to begin the statements.

Mathew Pinto: Lisa, thank you very much and thank you to everyone for being with us. Good morning. As Lisa said, my name is Mathew Pinto and I am one of the founders of Catholic Outreach. We are a Catholic lay run media publishing and education apostolate -- or ministry. As you know, we are just one week away from what is one of the most important elections of the past 100 years. There has been extraordinary interest from the media and among the electorate about this election. We at Catholic Outreach expect a very strong voter turn-out and we are very pleased with this. We also believe that this is -- it's a very good thing when the culture debates issues of greater importance than let's say, who win will Donald Trump's PB show, The Apprentice. We are concerned however that the culture at large is -- largely one consumed with entertainment and devoid of deep critical thinking. We seem to be making choices based on sound bytes and sentimentality versus logic and what has been revealed by our creator. This is where Catholic Outreach comes in. We are a group of lay Catholics who simply want to help Catholics and non-Catholics alike understand better the teachings of Jesus Christ as presented through the unbroken 2000 year old tradition of the Catholic Church. We do not endorse any candidate or party. We simply educate people on the teachings of Christ as brought through -- as brought to us through this tradition. To this end, we have gathered

together leading Catholics commentators from a variety of organizations to join forces in a project that we call the Catholic Voter Outreach, specifically featuring a new book, *The Five Issues That Matter Most*. The Catholic voter outreach is being done expressly to educate Catholics on the key moral issues that face Americans in this upcoming election. The approximately 90-page book is easy to read, it's written mostly using a question and answer format. It contains just six chapters. Our panelists today will speak on each of those. Please note that the book is called *The Five Issues That Matter Most*. This is important, we are not saying that the five issues addressed in this book are the only important issues in the election. We are saying however, that because the Catholic Church teaches clearly on these particular issues, they are considered foundational or non-negotiable issues precisely because they are rooted in natural law which is the law written by God into the hearts of all men and women. We are not addressing issues where the Church allows people of goodwill to disagree and still remain firmly rooted in the Catholic tradition. We are simply addressing what we see as foundational, non-negotiable issues. We are holding this conference today in light of the proximity of the election and also because today, we are releasing a free downloadable form of our book, *The Five Issues That Matter Most*, so we can disseminate it to a wider audience in a very short period of time. The free downloadable pdf is now available at catholicoutreach.com. In short, these are not tenets, these five issues are not tenets of one particular faith, but are rooted in the divine law and therefore supersede the vims of the culture or the platform of any party. They are also embraced by many of the great religions of the world and are therefore not strictly Catholic issues. They are true and must be rejected if as a nation, we are to consider ourselves in good standing with the divine law.

The Church and her members cannot make its voice heard in the political realm precisely because it operates in a culture governed by politics as do the Church's members. We are morally obligated to look out for the common good of our families, our culture and our nation. At this point I would like to introduce the first of our six speakers, all of whom will take approximately two minutes each to explain the issue they wrote about in *The Five Issues That Matter Most* book. After each of the contributors speak, I will give a brief one minute close and then open up this call for questions. We should have approximately 40 or so minutes for questions. Due to the distinguished credentials of our panel, I believe it will be a fruitful session and one that will benefit your readers and your broadcast audiences. Our first speaker is Mark Brumley, he is the president of Ignatius Press and he will take a few minutes to discuss his opening chapter in the book, why some issues are more important than others. Mark.

Mark Brumley: Thank you Matt. That some political issues are more important than others is pretty much common sense. 150 years ago, the predominant issue was slavery, even though there were people who thought things such as higher or lower tariff ups or relations with Mexico and things of that sort were more important. The fact of the matter is whether one human being can own another human being was more important than those other issues. Issues that directly involve basic human rights such as the right to life are more important than issues that don't. Threats to human life which are immediate, grave and widespread are more important issues of concern than other issues. Attacks on institutions is fundamental to the well being of society, such as the family founded on marriage, are more important than questions of whether or not we should raise or lower taxes or support or oppose particular policies on school lunch programs. To say that some issues are more important than others as Matt pointed out, is not to say that other issues are not important. More important means just that, more important, not exclusively important. Abortion, euthanasia, experimenting on embryonic human beings, stem cells, human cloning and things of this sort are grave threats to human life. So called same sex marriage is a grave threat to the institution of marriage and family life, what it means to be married, what it means to be a family. Consequently issues -- these issues have a certain priority, should have a certain priority for voters who take seriously the right to life and takes seriously marriage and family life. This is especially true, although not uniquely true, for Catholics

whose Church witnesses to the importance of fundamental human rights such as the right to life and the dignity of marriage and family life. Sometime it's said that Catholics should look at a wide range of issues touching on human dignity. And of course this is true. Though on most issues reasonable Catholics can and do differ. We can ensure debate whether or not to have war with Iraq or whether the war with Iraq is just, whether or not to raise or lower taxes, whether or not to increase or decrease social welfare spending, whether or not the conditions which justify the use of capital punishment exist in the United States and so on. On these issues the Catholic Church allows a fairly wide range of acceptable Catholic opinion. On the issues such as abortion, euthanasia, embryonic stem cell research, human cloning and same sex marriage, the Catholic Church has a single genuinely, although not uniquely, Catholic position. And so as you hear the participants to the discussion this morning, as they touch on issues of abortion and same sex marriage, euthanasia, stem cell research and human cloning, bear in mind that the positions that they espouse are not unique or peculiar to the Catholic Church. When candidates for office say that they are personally opposed to one or some or all of these evils but can't impose their views on others because those views rest on articles of faith, those candidates don't represent the Catholic understanding of those issues which includes an obligation on the part of office holders to protect and promote the right to life and to defend the institution of the family founded on traditional marriage. Because these issues are not peculiarly Catholic, candidates who espouse a 'I am personally opposed to' position are being disingenuous because the positions that the Church witnesses to, on these issues are widely shared by other Christians and even by non-Christians and even by people of no religious faith what so ever.

Mathew Pinto: Okay Mark, thank you very much. Our second speaker is Ms. Kim Marshall, director of Generation Life, who will explain why the abortion issue is perhaps the key foundational issue in this election.

Kim Marshall: Matt, thank you very much and it -- it was a real honor to participate in this book as well as just being in this press conference today. Abortion is homicide. It is the intentional direct killing of innocent human beings. Natural law supports this, science supports this, even though there has been a quite a veil placed over that. And intellect supports this. Therefore according to the -- to (evangelia in vitae), it is never listed to allow this to take place but also to support or to promote someone into legislative office that would favor abortion or favor this type of behavior and this type legislation. So the right to life being a fundamental need for all human beings, for our entire society, makes this a primary fundamental issue when we are called to exercise our right to vote because all other rights will hinge or not believe -- you know, protecting the vulnerable, the sacredness of life and protecting it from its very beginning. Because if we can treat life as sacred and if we can have laws in place that protect that from the very beginning that -- that more -- that will permeate to all the other life issues, because we have so many violations along the entire spectrum of life and being alive and especially what we are seeing with euthanasia and Terry Schiavo in Florida. Some things that are coming to the forefront of the press and the media and especially with this upcoming election, are things like the continual veto that has been placed on the partial birth abortion ban. All abortion is wrong, all abortion is heinous. If you know anything about the partial birth abortion procedure, it is particularly inhumane. It's -- it's hard to fathom that with our technology and where society has come with intellect and development, that this is something that we still allow to take place. And then another thing that -- another thing that's coming to the forefront is the appointment of Supreme Court Justices. We are 30 plus years into this problem of abortion being legal and therefore you know, becoming more widely accepted and also readily available to women. Without any benefits you know, with -- with all these empty promises that abortion was supposed to change the problems of marriages and child abuse and abuse of women, the empty promises have not been -- they are empty, they have not been fulfilled. So especially importantly right now during the election with the Supreme Court Justices. So Generation Life is a group of young people and we represent you know, hundreds and thousands of young people here in the United States. We want leaders and legislators to match Catholic morality because we truly believe that American citizens can vote for

legislators and place them in office and these legislators can help shape our culture and we do want a culture that promotes life and that -- that has values, that has black and white morals. And this really comes down to the fact that it's really about children, it's about unborn children and I don't know how much arguing you have to do and how much back and forth because it's a very black and white issue when we are dealing with abortion. It's hurting children, it's hurting women, it hurts all other members of society.

Mathew Pinto: Okay, I am -- I am sorry, Fr. Pavone.

Fr. Frank Pavone: Yes, I am here.

Mathew Pinto: I am sorry, I was just speaking that you were with Priests for Life and you will take two minutes to discuss the euthanasia issue and its ramifications on the culture.

Fr. Frank Pavone: Thank you very much and thanks to all of you who are participating. Euthanasia, like abortion is a fundamental issue in this and every election simply because it deals with the question of how the state respects and protects human life itself and the right to life. In the question of euthanasia and assisted suicide, neither the Church nor any of the groups represented here are saying that every and any means has to always be taken to keep somebody alive. We recognize that in certain medical circumstances, there is such a thing as a worthless treatment. But there is never such a thing as a worthless life and it is the blurring of that line which is causing the threat to our civilization. The blurring of that line is seen for example in the case of Terry Schiavo, who I had the opportunity to visit recently. She is very much alive, very much alert and she is not a dying patient. So if somebody says, well why should we keep her alive, it boils down to the same question of why should we keep any of us alive. The fact is she isn't dying in the first place. Simply because she is functioning at a level that is less than the rest of us normally function at, then that is no reason to consider her life to be of less value. And this is precisely why euthanasia and abortion are as -- the Bishops, not only individual Bishops but the entire body of Bishops have said is -- are foundational issues and they have said that in Living The Gospel Of Life, a 1998 document. The reason is that ultimately we are talking about what kind of government do we have. Do we have the type which like our declaration of independence, recognizes that our rights come from God and government cannot tamper with them or do we have the type that says our rights including life, comes from government and that government can take them away. Well that's what government does when it legalizes abortion and euthanasia and that is in fact the meaning of a totalitarian regime, something that our votes should not choose on November 2nd.

Mathew Pinto: Thank you Fr. Frank Pavone. For those who are just coming on, this is the Catholic Vote media call. My name is Mathew Pinto, one of the co-founders of Catholic Outreach, a lay run media publishing and education ministry. Our fourth speaker is Fr. Tad Pacholczyk of the National Catholic Bioethics Center, who will take four minutes to discuss two issues. Stem cell research which has been in the news much recently due to the death of Christopher Reeve as well as cloning and then he will be followed by two other speakers and then we will begin our question and answer session. So Fr. Tad, welcome.

Fr. Tad Pacholczyk: Thank you very much Mathew, and thanks to all of you who have joined us today. These issues in bioethics, it's kind of surprising to see how much of a prominence they have begun to -- how much of a prominent position they have begun to take in the discussion around this election, because generally everyone talks about embryonic stem cell research and adult stem cell research. For many people, these are quite obscure notions. But because of people like Christopher Reeve, we have seen a great deal of advocacy and promotion of these areas and it has become important to be able to inform people accurately, not only about some of the great moral concerns that surround these

technologies, but also about the current state of the science because a lot of over-billing and over-hyping has been taking place with respect to prognostications about the future of embryonic stem cell research. So when we recognize that, what we all desire are to come to real cures, the question is how can we achieve that in such a way that we don't violate the integrity of good medical practice and good clinical research, but how can we go after those cures in such a way that we respect the humanity of every human being and not that we allow ourselves then to instrumentalize certain human beings to exploit certain human beings in the name and interest of others who are seeking cures. And that's why it's so critical to stress that the real prospect for cures in the future lies so clearly with the adult stem cell research rather than with the stem -- of embryonic stem cell research which is a much more distant kind of a project. The disadvantages of embryonic stem cell research are well known in terms of their ability to form tumors and other problems of immune rejection and adult stem cell research on the other hand, is being used today without either of those two problems to effect a number of remarkable treatments and cures, including for people like Christopher Reeve who are quadriplegics or facing other kinds of spinal cord injuries.

There have been some work carried out in Portugal that involved using special cells derived from the nasal passage, from the olfactory bulb in the brain and those cells have been able to treat patients with spinal cord injuries so that a number of months later, they have been able to recover partial movement in their limbs. In addition, recently, some of the patients were gathered in Washington in a session that was reviewing adult stem cell successes. And two of the women who went to Portugal for this treatment mentioned that they are able to apply a brace to their legs and are able to walk a certain distance now because of that. So, we have very acceptable ways that we can promote real cures without having to involve ourselves in the direct destruction of early human embryos. And when we talked about those early human embryos, we were reminded of course, that they can come not only from frozen embryos, but also from cloning and specifically from therapeutic cloning. And when that is done, one faces the prospect of an even more radically depersonalizing kind of medicine where we generate an identical twin for the express -- pre--meditated purpose of the demise of that twin in order to get immune matched cells that can then be used in the treatment of humans -- of -- in fact, of the identical twin of the person who is cloned. So, the church here stresses that this issue requires a great deal of scrutiny because it does involve the lauding over the -- of the weak by the powerful, by those who are in their weak embryonic stage, is being utilized by those that have already passed through those dangers. Thank you.

Mathew Pinto: Thank you, Father Tad. Our fourth or rather our fifth of our six speakers is Christopher West. He is an author, a speaker and an expert on theology of the body, a body of teaching given to us by Pope John Paul II on what it means to be human and how we can find authentic happiness and liberation. Christopher will speak for a few minutes on some of the problems and ramifications in the culture, if the culture embraces same sex marriage. Christopher?

Christopher West: Thank you, Mathew Pinto. The question of same sex marriage comes down to one very basic fundamental question that literally has ramifications for all of humanity and it is this. Why are there two sexes? Is this something meaningful or is this something meaningless? The church teaches that this is something critically meaningful. The culture teaches or is getting to the place of teaching that this is meaningless. What are the ramifications of the way you answer this question, why are there two sexes? Well, if this is meaningless, if the difference of the sex is meaningless, then in the final analysis, life has no meaning. There is no reference point for culture. There is no order of human relationships. There is no order of human love. And this can only mean chaos for society. Here we are dealing with the fundamental conviction that if the core of culture is the family. But, what is the family? We can only adequately answer this question if we have an understanding of why there are two sexes. The church teaches and natural law demonstrates clear as the sky is blue, that the difference between the sexes is of critical meaning for the future of humanity. We are

beholden to that meaning, if indeed, there is a meaning to the difference of the sexes. And if indeed there is a difference or a meaning to the difference of the sexes, this means there is an order to human life. That is the key to human flourishing. And that order of human life revealed through the difference of the sexes, that is the key to human flourishing, is precisely the gift of man to woman and the gift of woman to man that it -- that establishes the family. That family in turn, becomes the foundation of human life. No ideology can erase this truth from the human spirit, that the difference of the sexes is critical for the foundation of human life and the foundation of culture. Yes, we are in a crisis in the family today. But we must elect officials who work to rebuild and rehabilitate the family, not to redefine it. Thank you.

Mathew Pinto: Thank you Christopher. Our final speaker and contributor to the book is Fr. Tom Euteneuer of Human Life International. He will speak for a few minutes on the Catholic conscience and the duty to vote. Fr. Tom?

Fr. Tom Euteneuer: All right, good morning. Thank you Matt. I appreciate all of your participation in this conference. Pleasure to be with you. We live in a free society. We reap the benefits of being free. And I think, sometimes we don't always appreciate what a free society is like. As I travel around the world, I see societies that are in various states of slavery or loss of freedoms and we have the fullest expression of freedom that we can have. But, often times, our expression of freedom is divorced from the truth. But, as they say, freedom is not free. Freedom costs a lot. Freedom has a heavy price tag. Freedom requires a number of things which are important for us to maintain that freedom. Number one, we must have the free and responsible participation of the electorate if this freedom is to be maintained. The electorate, the people must choose to be free and participate in that process. Secondly, an electorate must stand upon a very solid moral foundation and this is a constant message of all the founding fathers of our -- of our great land. If we erode that moral foundation, then we slide perceptibly and inevitably into tyranny. I was just in the country of Zimbabwe and you can really appreciate how much you value your freedom when you go to a country like that, which has all the trappings of democracy and freedom, but doesn't really exist as a free country. And so, I believe that this election will show how much our society takes the requirements of a free society seriously. I also think this election is sort of a referendum on how Catholics take the benefits of this kind of freedom in conjunction with the truth, seriously. For Catholics right now, there are many efforts to get them to vote. Catholics have a responsibility to participate in the democratic process and many Catholics are now reminding our -- our Catholic population of that. We are almost 25 percent of the electorate and we not only have a right to vote, but we have a duty to vote and participate in that process. And that helps our country to be free. We -- we are part of that freedom. We also, as Catholics, have a right and a responsibility to shore up the moral foundation of our nation. This is absolutely critical right now and probably, more than ever in our whole history. One ancient author said that Christians are to society like the soul is to the body. In other words, he was saying that Christians are, as Jesus said, salt and light to the world, they preserve it and they enlighten it. Christians are the conscience of our society because we -- the conscience is what speaks to us of the voice of God, that still small voice in the very heart of our souls and it mediates between the individual and the divine. The conscience of a person as well as the society reminds the individuals and the society as a whole of objective moral principles that are rooted in the things that never change. And so, I think, these issues are extremely important for us right now in this election and this time in our national history because we are faced with some objectively evil and wrong things going on in our society. We are -- we are faced with unjust laws that prohibit the free flourishing of certain classes and members of our society like the unborn children. We are faced with a crisis of moral leadership and Catholics have a responsibility to speak out about that and to give a conscientious participation in this democratic process because the people of this land are the ones who choose the leaders of this land. And Catholics have a grave obligation to participate in that process. I will -- I will end with a quote from Bishop Thomas Wenski from Orlando, who recently

participated in a debate on these issues on Mother Angelica's EWTN. He said Catholics are not a -- are not single issue, but rather, are single minded and I think that's a fine distinction. We are single minded in offering centuries of traditional thinking on the most important subjects. We are single minded in offering our contribution on the moral law and the natural law which effects every human being, not just Catholics. And we are single-minded in offering as a gift, our well articulated grasp of the moral issues that come to us from our Catholic tradition and this is something that we need to offer to a society that is in grave need of all this things. So thank you.

Mathew Pinto: Thank you Fr. Tom. At this point we -- we are doing pretty well with Tom, we have about 30 minutes or so to address your questions and we want your questions. And every one who is on this call is absolutely welcome here. We are glad you are here, we know that you are people of goodwill who have genuine concerns and needs. And, so I appreciate you being here and believe that this will be a fruitful time, any time we can dialogue with love, with openness, I believe the evil one does not like it but our heavenly father does like it. So we will begin taking questions and Heather, I am going to ask your assistance to help this flow smoothly as this is our first call here. And so Heather, please -- and now if you do have a specific question for one of these six speakers, you can state that as well as in your question or I can sort of -- maybe delegate to whom I think would handle it best. So Heather, if you can let us begin.

Operator: Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen if you have a question at this time, please press the "1" key on your touch-tone telephone. If your question has been answered or you wish to remove yourself from the queue, please press the "#" key. Again ladies and gentlemen, if you have a question at this time please press the "1" key. One moment.

Mathew Pinto: Okay, it looks like we have a question in queue, so Heather do you announce who it is or do I

Operator: Yes, I do. Our first question comes from Bill Fancher, of American Family Radio.

Bill Fancher: Thank you very much for giving us this opportunity to hear and I appreciate the Q&A. Matt, this is for you if I -- if I might, USA Today released a poll yesterday, that said 72 percent of Roman Catholics don't think communion should be denied to pro-choice Catholic politicians. Is -- do you see this as a rebellion against the teaching of the Church or do you see this as an informational problem, an educational problem. How do you -- how do you view that?

Matt Pinto: I would also like Mark Brumley and Fr Frank Pavone to weigh in on this as well. I actually Bill, absolutely think that it's -- it's an education issue. I think few Catholics would deny, if we simply ask them just a simple array of half a dozen to ten or so questions as they came outside of Mass, few Catholics would deny that they -- they know the faith very well, very few Catholics have read the official doctrines and teachings of the Church, the encyclicals and other -- so, I really think that it is an epidemic issue, it's a problem -- it's a major problem of Catholics not understanding the full ramifications or the full breath of what the Church teaches and why. And it's one that -- that needs to be remedied, but Mark and Father or someone else, would you like to weigh on this as well?

Mark Brumley: This is Mark Brumley. I distinguish between Catholics who attend Mass every week and Catholics who attend Mass from time to time or don't attend Mass regularly at all. I think it's been consistently shown that those Catholics who attend Mass regularly --and by the way the definition of a practicing Catholic is someone who attends Mass every Sunday. That's the minimal requirement to be a practicing Catholic. I think it's been shown in certain -- that the surveys -- the survey, practicing Catholics, very widely from surveys such as involved self identified people -- people who say, I am Catholic but they may not in fact be practicing Catholics. I agree with Matt, it's largely an issue of cogenesis and instruction formation, those who think through the implications of what it means to go

to communion and what it means to takes some positions on ethical and deeply important moral issues at odds with what the Christian tradition says. We will see there is a fundamental incompatibility with knowingly and deliberately taking a say, a pro-choice position so called, on the issue of abortion and receiving holy communion in a Catholic Church. As Archbishop Chaput of Denver says, in order to receive communion we have to be in communion and to be in communion means to embrace and accept the -- among other things, the commandment that is, thou shall not kill.

Fr. Frank Pavone: This is Fr. Frank Pavone. Just one other thing that, this reflects a -- the problem that abortion is too abstract, we still don't have in the general populus a handle on how violent it is. I presume these Catholics would agree that a -- an active terrorist should not receive communion. I don't see the difference if you are willing to kill the innocent, whether you use forceps or commercial air planes.

Mathew Pinto: Heather, if we can go to our next call?

Operator: Thank you, our next question comes from Nick Thomm from Ave Maria Radio.

Nick Thomm: Hi, I am Nick, I have a question in the afternoon at Ave Mario Radio, directed to whoever would like to take it. Regarding the issue of conscience, when one goes to the voting booth, what should be the role of conscience play -- one of the common questions we get is that, you know, I have a clear conscience voting for a pro-abortion candidates you know, lay out the reasons why but would argue my conscience dictating to me that I can't vote for this person, why is that not a good enough answer?

Mathew Pinto: Mark, Fr. Pavone, I know you speak on these issues or Fr. Tad, any -- any of you contributing to this?

Mark Brumley: Well obviously conscience has to be formed and the basis of -- of a sound conscience for a Catholic is the teaching of the Church and so the teaching of the Church word is clear on issues you know, it's the right principles to help us decide which candidate we should vote for.

Mathew Pinto: Father? One of the fathers?

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Fr. Frank Pavone: Fr. Pavone here. Yeah, I would simply say you know, there is no way not to be able to use to your conscience in the voting booth because, conscience is simply your own mind, judging what action you should take the next time you act and so you are obviously -- to say, I have to use my conscience is -- it's a redundancy to even say that. The question is, as Mark just pointed out what -- your conscience is not the source of what is right and wrong, it is the compass by which you read what's right and wrong and has to be pointed in the right direction.

Mathew Pinto: Christopher West, I know you -- you think and write on these issues of the formation of conscience and the role of morality as it -- as it slipped out from the culture, any additional thoughts from this?

Christopher West: Just a quick thought and it is this, that what is needed here when a person who claims to be a Catholic is acting in a way contrary to Church teachings, it's not merely blind obedience to what the authority of the Church teaches but a transformed heart and this is the cause of conversion, not merely blind obedience, although on the road to conversion that might be a step in the process but, just to address this question, of Catholics who do not think for themselves, I want to add this into the mix that, what is needed is a transformation of heart. What we realize when we open our hearts to what the church teaches is that these truths are not being imposed on us from the Vatican, these truths are already stanced in the deepest level of our humanity and the Church is trying to awaken in

us, the truth that is already there -- not impose a view from without but awaken in us, that spark of God's plan for all of us that exist deep in the human heart.

Mathew Pinto: Okay, and --.

Mark Brumley: Chris, can I throw something in there, Chris -- that comes to mind in response to what you just said, we also want to be clear that the Church -- Church teaches something because it's true. It's not true because the Church teaches it

Christopher West: Right.

Mark Brumley: And so we as Catholics, when we embrace the teaching of the Church, we are embracing the truth.

Mathew Pinto: And because this is a big issue, I want to have one more comment on this and then I would like to get to as many questions as possible. So I ask all commentators say what needs to be said -- all of the authors and contributors.

Fr. Tad Pacholczyk: This is Father Tad, I thought I might add a reflection on this as well that conscience is sometimes presented in -- you know, in such a way that it is a kind of contrary force where you say, because of my conscience or because I have a clear conscience, I feel it's okay to vote in a pro-abortion action or on behalf of the embryonic stem cell research and so on. And of course, the problem is that there is really some dissidence that is going to be a part of that decision because it's not a decision that has been made in conformity with the truth of matters. In other words, a person who does that often uses his conscience in a way to be like a lever to actually go after something else, rather than the real truth that is grasped by conscience itself. So in other words we are all called to a deeper level, not only a formation of our consciences but a deeper level of sincerity in being attendant to what we know deep within ourselves to be true.

Mathew Pinto: Very good. Heather, if you can bring on our next question.

Operator: Yes sir. Our next question comes from Geofrey Diamant from the Star Ledger.

Geofrey Diamant: Good afternoon, everybody, thanks for taking the time, I appreciate it.

Mathew Pinto: Hi.

Geofrey Diamant: Hello I was writing a story about if there is an issue, little bit more specific and I hope it may be one of you, specifically Fr. Pavone who I think I saw speaking about this on -- a cable news show. The issue of the proportionate reasons issue that I guess was -- has been brought up in the few months through Cardinal Ratzinger's note -- I am -- I am guessing that all of you are familiar with this -- everybody on this phone call is probably familiar with this. Could you speak a little bit to that, I know -- I guess several -- you know, several months ago I guess -- at least in the winter or spring, the focus seemed -- the focus seemed to be on whether politicians could receive communion if they supported abortion and -- and now what seems to be going at the Catholic voters themselves with some Bishop saying -- different Bishops seems to interpreting Ratzinger's note in different ways and I guess I wanted to hear a couple of people on this panel address that.

Fr. Frank Pavone: Yes, this is Fr. Frank, the proportionate simply means the -- the same thing it means in the dictionary, something of -- of equal magnitude and not just some Bishops but all the Bishops together including Cardinal Ratzinger in that very memo, say that abortion is not proportionate to

war, it's not proportionate to capital punishment, it's not proportionate to other moral issues. So the -- the interpretation there on the part of the Church is -- is very clear.

Mathew Pinto: Any other comment on that?

Kim Marshall: This is Kim Marshall, and I -- just to support Fr. Pavone, just from sheer numbers, if you look at any other issue, that people are dying from you know, in the United States of America on a daily basis. We have 4000 children -- innocent, unborn children dying from the violence of abortion every single day, so back to the proportion.

Mark Brumley: This is all for right now, I just weigh in on this, the commentator who is opposite to Fr. Pavone on the O'Reilly Factor the other night, was -- did a pretty good job in wiping out all distinctions and this is -- this is -- this is why we are talking about this issue right now because there are distinctions and we do say if there is something that are intrinsically wrong and there are absolute moral principles and when you wipe out those, you live in a relativistic society and Catholics are not relativistic about their moralities, so I think we have to constantly be clear that -- that there are certain issues that take absolute priority over others and they bind our consciences, whether in private life or in voting for public officials.

Fr. Tad Pacholczyk: This is Fr. Tad.

Mathew Pinto: Okay let's -- I was going to move on just for the sake of time to --

Fr. Tad Pacholczyk: Okay.

Mathew Pinto: -- to the next question. Heather?

Operator: Thank you, our next question comes from Garry Beausoleil from SRN News.

Garry Beausoleil: Thank you very much. I had a question for Fr. Euteneuer. Senator Kerry, this past week and again repeated his claim that although he has tremendous respect for the Bishops, he disagrees with them on the issue of abortion. Could you -- criticize that statement in light of what the Holy Father has to say about truth and veritatis splendor.

Fr. Tom Euteneuer: Yes, I thank you for the question. I think it goes back to a comment I -- that I just made about certain absolute issues that bind our consciences and Senator Kerry is being very irresponsible in -- I am saying -- promoting himself as a good Catholic and I am saying that he is going to disobey the Bishops in matters of public concern. So I think it -- it all comes down to the belief that the Bishops have, which is rooted in the Catholic tradition and the -- and the moral law, which is binding upon all of us and which they are very clear about that there are issues which bind our consciences, there are intrinsically evil things that we cannot allow our vote in a democratic society to endorse or to advance in any way. So I -- I think that, this kind of hypocrisy in a public forum is very damaging to the perception of Catholics and -- and to the conscience of the Catholic people.

Mathew Pinto: Okay, let's go on, Heather to our next question.

Operator: Thank you. Our next question comes from Mike McManus of Ethics and Religion.

Mike McManus: Thank you. It would be helpful if each of you would identify yourselves as you speak because we can't know who is speaking -- I don't know who was just speaking, for example.

Mathew Pinto: Mike and one thing we will do -- and Lisa and Heather, correct me if I am wrong, but when will the manuscript be up or when can we have the download ready for our reporters, so they can get the names correctly.

Lisa Wheeler: Immediately after the conference, they will be out -- I can sent out a release with that phone number to the guy.

Mathew Pinto: Very good going. Mike, you will have all those names you need.

Mike McManus: Okay, there is a new Gallup poll out this morning which is disturbing to -- in my mind and I would assume to yours. It says according to the new data, practicing Catholics support Bush by a slight 51 to 44 percent margin. However among the most committed Catholics, those who attend church every week, the Catholics are essentially tied with 49 percent supporting Bush, and 47 percent supporting Kerry. Non-practicing Catholics prefer Kerry by a wide 55 to 42 percent margin. So this data suggest as Gallup that if the election were held today, the Catholic vote would be evenly divided between Bush and Kerry. Now, up to this point and polls earlier by Gallup on the -- of the most deeply committed Catholics found that the more deeply committed the Catholics were, the more they practice their faith, the more they went to Mass every week, they were more likely to be pro-life and less likely to be pro-choice. Now it seems to be slipping in a very major way and I just would like your reactions, anybody.

Mathew Pinto: Anyone?

Fr. Frank Pavone: Well this is Fr. Pavone. First of all, there is -- there has certainly been in the last couple of elections, a movement of practicing Catholics away from their democratic loyalties because they have seen the change in the party. So -- I think it is important to look at this poll in the light of -- you know that -- the overall consensus of polls. But the other -- the other thing about it is unfortunately, some people in my position namely priests, some dioceses and offices have -- have outright misrepresented Church teaching. I have documents here on my desk from some offices of -- of social justice that have then gone into -- gone into pulpits and have outright contradicted what the Bishops have said in documents like Living The Gospel Of Life and I am not -- I would not be surprised if that accounts for some of this, namely that practicing Catholics were thinking they are hearing the Church's message on certain things, when it is not the Church's message at all.

Mathew Pinto: Okay, Heather our next question.

Mike McManus: All right.

Operator: Thank you. Our next question comes from Paola Singer from News Day.

Paola Singer: Hi, everyone, my question is -- do you not believe as many people do that, the war in Iraq is the most important issue in this election? I mean how do you weight that issue?

Mathew Pinto: Comments, please.

Fr. Tom Euteneuer: Well, this is Fr. Euterneuer, I can -- I can make a comment on that. Remember that the Catholic Church teaching is not as categorical about war as it is about abortion and other life issues which are intrinsically evil in themselves. War -- the Catholic Church never says that the war is intrinsically evil because the person or a country may defend itself legitimately from an aggressor and the question of whether this war is just or not is another -- is another question and that has to be dealt with you know, by minds who can see all the subtleties and all the -- take in all factors when

you are debating that and Catholics are literally divided about this issue. But war is in a different category than abortion for example, because abortion is intrinsically evil and I think that binds Catholic consciousness and that's why that is top of the issues in -- for Catholics in this election.

Mark Brumley: This is Mark Brumley. Even if it were the case, that the present war in Iraq is unjust, it would not be the -- the evils attending that war and the injustice that would be involved with the war would not even begin to compare to the evils of abortion and embryonic stem cells and so on. There is no comparison when you have 4000 children killed every day, not simply -- as a matter of just sort of a private evil, but as a matter of something that is approved and backed up by the police power of the state and that's the situation in the United States today.

Christopher West: It's Christopher West, I just like to add to that comment, talking about the visible and the invisible here. We see flashed on our television screens, images of the war, and we see visions and images of the injustices every day. It's very present to us. I would argue that Mark's point would be backed up in our own hearts and consciences, if the same images of the horrors of abortion were flashed on our TV screens everyday.

Fr. Tad Pacholczyk: This is Fr. Tad and I would just make the added distinction that when we are talking about war, I had mentioned earlier there is not only the aspect of self defense but that in war, one is talking about life that is not necessarily innocent and that's of course, what the discussion centers around. Meanwhile, in the case of abortion or the destruction of human embryos, that life is always and without exception, innocent and therefore stands in a category of its own and is non-negotiable. Earlier, there was a question about Kerry's kind of waffling back and forth, and I think the difficulty there is that he doesn't seem to have a clear grasp of the non-negotiables of the Catholic faith that he professes. And that raises significant problems as he then attempts to articulate certain statements about being a Catholic.

Mark Brumley: This is Mark Brumley, if I could throw in one more point. If we are talking -- with respect to the question about whether or not the war is the -- you know, single decisive issue in the present debate, if we are talking about the Presidential race, it seems to me clear that the two major candidates at least are both supportive of the war so that the Catholic is not in a position of choosing between one person who opposes the war in Iraq and another person who supports it.

Mathew Pinto: Okay, Heather if you can move us to our next question.

Operator: Thank you, our next question comes from Lora Sheahen from Beliefnet.

Lora Sheahen: Hi, everyone this is Lora Sheahen from Beliefnet.

Mathew Pinto: Hello, Lora.

Lora Sheahen: Hi, I -- I think that one issue a lot of Catholics are struggling with this election is what the last caller mentioned, they are wondering what to do in terms of both abortion and the war and I for example, met several people who are practicing Catholics, they go to Mass, they believe in the teachings of the Church and they are against abortion but they don't feel that President Bush has turned back the tide in any way. They don't feel that voting for him for four more years would you know, limit more abortion or change the status quo and because of that and because they are morally opposed to the war, they feel that it's a moral choice to vote for Kerry in that sense. So I guess my question to Fr. Pavone and perhaps to others that is if Bush is re-elected, will there really be fewer abortions in America. You know, the only thing I have heard of and I could just not be fully informed, is that he

has turned back -- he has placed restrictions on abortions, I believe in military hospitals overseas, but I am not aware of -- of other steps that have been taken in that direction, so that's my question.

Fr. Frank Pavone: Okay, thanks. This is Fr. Pavone. The -- the President has been able to lay into the law certain foundational pre-conditions, if you will, of making abortion illegal, not the least of which is the Born Alive Infants Protection Act, which for the first time, put into the law a distinction between the -- the distinction between the choice of the mother and the right of government to protect the life of that child and that -- so that even if an abortion fails, you can't say well, the mother wanted the child dead, so kill the child anyway. No, the law can step in and draw a line and say this child can be protected despite the mother's choice. Now, there are many other things, of course, the Supreme Court is -- is critical to the outcome here because whether or not abortion is going to remain under the -- the dominion of the court, if you will, not even allowing the states to ban it, is going to depend on what kind of nominees the President chooses and the Senate confirms and of course, the candidates have made their positions on that well known. So that will have a tremendous impact and -- and further more, obviously the President in his -- in his public role -- internationally, it has a tremendous effect at the United Nations, whether we are going to export abortion and secondly, the - - having someone in that position speaking about the fact that we have to make room for the unborn child and bring about a change is, that makes a critical difference just in the -- the building of the culture and the way people think about this.

Fr. Tom Euteneuer: Now, this is Fr. Euteneuer. I wanted to add to what Fr. Pavone said about the international dimension of the President's role -- well, you know -- while he can affect public policy in the United States to some degree with regard to abortion because it has been sectioned off as a -- as a legal issue but the -- the President of the United States can effect international policy on promoting abortion around the world such as the Mexico City policy, he is the one that delegates the US delegation at the United Nations -- so I think that we have to think a little bit more globally when we talk about abortion because we are talking about an industry that is exported around the world from the United States and the western world and the President of the US has a lot to do with limiting abortions as they go out from here to other countries.

Kim Marshall: This is Kim Marshall and I just want to comment. You know, John Kerry has promised (indiscernible) parenthood now, that when he is appointing new Supreme Court Justices, that he will make sure that these you know, they "keep the right to choose" legal and so I think that there is a danger and you know, a danger and a kind of a trap in that mindset that the people thinking, there is no way around this and you know the war should take precedence or Bush isn't really doing anything anyway which is -- which is a fallacy. That would just feed into the continued legality of abortion. So we must be very, very careful so as to not to get caught in that trap.

Mark Brumley: This is Mark Brumley, again I would underscore a point to the extend that one can divine what exactly John Kerry's position on the war with Iraq is and there is some question about that. He certainly hasn't indicated a wholesale opposition to the war and consequently a vote for John Kerry is not per se, a vote in opposition to the war.

Lora Sheahen: Okay thank you all.

Mathew Pinto: Okay, Heather if you can move us to our next call please.

Operator: Thank you, our next question comes from Dennis Crowley of United News.

Dennis Crowley: Hello, how are you ?

Mathew Pinto: Hello Dennis.

Dennis Crowley: Great, I have seen in some local elections, not just this election but I have seen over the past couple of years, television ads and bumper stickers by candidates who say I am pro-woman because I am pro-choice. Now the implication here being because I support abortion, that means I support a woman's right to choose and because I support a woman's right to choose, that makes me more "more pro-woman" than somebody who is pro-life who opposes abortion. In a case like this, be that a local election or a national election -- the Church does and individual Catholics and dioceses do have an obligation to stand up in the pulpit or elsewhere and say, here is the definition of abortion because in my opinion that's kind of slanted logic. I mean it just, it promotes abortion as a choice and it totally ignores the child in the womb. Now have you run up against this at all.

Mathew Pinto: I would like Kim Marshall, Fr. Tom and Fr. Frank to weigh in on this and what we are going to do, is we are going to extend for no more than 15 minutes because from my screen here, it looks like we have at least another half a dozen people on the queue and we are trying to get those question quickly. So Kim, Fr. Tom and Fr. Pavone.

Kim Marshall: Matt thank you so much. Dennis, thanks for that great question and that great comment because it's very, very confusing. But as the only woman on the panel and just to promote the voice of women, women deserve more than abortion. Okay we deserve better than that, abortion and the veil of "choice", it does not protect us, it does not protect our femininity, it does not protect our maternity and the converse of that bumper sticker or that poster that you mentioned is you know, pro-women, pro-child, pro-life and this -- the moral relativism that we are getting caught in and the arguments of choice, the word choice, it --it completely denies that there are good choices and there are bad choices, there are choices that promote life and there are choices that promote death. So those are -- those are my comments on that.

Fr. Tom Euteneuer: Yeah this is Fr. Euteneuer. I would simply add that in the -- in the Catholic mind, the Holy Father has made very clear that the freedom must go along with the truth and this whole idea of choice is really an ideology, it comes out of feminine -- radical feminism and it's tied to all kinds of other ideological concepts that take a portion of the truth and twist and distort it and make it, make it what they wanted to be. So we must be very clear that -- that our sense of freedom is always tied to the truth and if we fall for some of these lies, which have come out of an ideology like feminism, then we will not be doing good to anyone let alone women.

Fr. Frank Pavone: Yes and this is Fr. Pavone. The -- the whole concept of the right, the woman's right to choose is contrary to fact because women don't get abortions because of freedom of choice, they get them because they feel they have no freedom and no choice and that's why the pro-life movement which gives them choices is pro-woman.

Mathew Pinto: Let's go on -- Heather to our next question please.

Operator: Thank you. Our next question comes from Robert McFadden, Catholic for Kerry.

Robert McFadden: Hi, this is Robert McFadden for Catholic for Kerry '04. This is open to anybody, in regards to the five non-negotiables, I was wanted to know if the 40,000 people around the world or children who died from today, from hunger are negotiable? Are the lives of innocent children killed by a bombing in Iraq or Afghanistan negotiable? Is the dignity of the father who is unable to provide income and Healthcare for his children because his job was shipped overseas negotiable? Are the future natural resources for our children and grand children negotiable and are the futures of US children living with lead paint on their walls and mercury in the water negotiable? Also I am

interested to know from the panel, your thoughts regarding pollution in the -- indications from prominent medical doctors that show the abortion rate is up under George.W.Bush, while it was down under Bill Clinton.

Mathew Pinto: Thank you for those questions, comments please.

Fr. Frank Pavone: This is Fr. Frank Pavone again, Mark of course every human life is of -- is of equal dignity and no, it is not negotiable to directly kill anybody but you see that's just the point. Nobody in our -- in our government is saying that we should round up the poor and put them to death. Nobody is saying, let's directly, deliberately target innocent children or anybody else in Iraq. We are not -- it is a difference here. What Mr. Kerry and others who are so called pro-choice are advocating for in the law, is the legal permission to directly, deliberately in a planned way, take an innocent life. Now, if there were a policy that said, let's go in to Iraq and directly, deliberately, intentionally kill even one innocent person, then the 'no' that we say to that is just as non-negotiable as the 'no' we say to abortion. Factually however, we are not saying that. Nobody is saying that and that's why there is a difference here in the issues.

Kim Marshall: I want to ask just for -- this is Kim Marshall, just for two points for clarity and I guess I would look to Fr. Pavonne or Fr. Tom. You just threw out -- the reporter just threw out an international number for hunger and I am just wondering if -- if anybody has their (arms) on the international number for abortion -- you know, on a -- I guess on a -- on a daily rate and then I just do want to clarify that, I believe that it is an incorrect statement that abortions are up under George Bush's administration --

Robert McFadden: That's a -- that is correct.

Kim Marshall: Uh-huh, that's --.

Robert McFadden: That would be a correct statement

Kim Marshall: Okay, that -- not in some of the reports that I have looked at, I believe there is a decrease and the other thing I want to comment on --

Robert McFadden: Dr. Glen Staffson and Dr. Patrick Whalen of Harvard Medical Center have done extensive research on this and --

Kim Marshall: That abortion rates are --.

Robert McFadden: -- are indeed up due to economic reasons under the Bush administration, whereas they were at an all time low under the Clinton administration .

Kim Marshall: Okay I would -- I am just questioning that -- what I do know is -- is increasing -- is the rates of sexual purity, young people committing to sexual purity which is really the way to decrease abortions and under the Bush administration, there has been an increase in the abstinence education - - the abstinence only education that is not to be confused with comprehensive sex-ed but I am going to call on Fr. Tom and also Fr. Pavone if -- I don't know if you have the numbers in front of you for different things.

Fr. Tom Euteneuer: Okay, yeah this is --

Mathew Pinto: Actually maybe before we jump in there -- I think there is a principal that maybe someone comment on but Father, I want to hear what you have to say.

Fr. Tom Euteneuer: Sure.

Mathew Pinto: Where is when what -- when a society legalizes something, it sends the message to the people in the society that this is okay, which will manifest itself almost certainly in something being accepted. So even if -- and those numbers are I think could be questioned, but if they are -- the fact in the matter is clearly one would say that this current administration and again we are a non-participant group that this current administration is publicly sending a message that abortion is something that can not be present in the culture, whereas the Clinton administration, I think would send the opposite message. So even if there is a temporary increase -- most logicians, most people looking to logic and -- and I think -- and statistics, would say that it is just a matter of time then before these things come down, but Father, you were going say something.

Fr. Tom Euteneuer: Yes Matt, Fr. Euteneuer here. Well said, the United Nations which is not a pro-life organization okay, says that there are between 55 and 60 million abortions around the world every year. I clarify that surgical abortions not chemical abortions and -- that probably amounts to what about 20,000 a day around the world. So that's -- that's the number that comes officially from the United Nations. Also and regarding the abortion rates in the United States, we really don't know how many abortions are committed in the United States every year. The number you know, officially fluctuates up and down but that number usually comes from the abortion industry or from the CDC which is not a pro-life organization either, so we don't know, in most states, abortionists are not required to report the number of abortions that they do. The number of abortions that are done in private doctor offices are not -- are not known and are not required to be reported, so the number as it actually stands, could be astronomically higher. And also consider the fact that you know, half of the victims of abortions are women. Women you know, who would now be in their child bearing age, who -- who were killed in 1970's or 80's are not around to have any -- any more -- any abortions. So this number could be decreasing -- this abortion number could be decreasing rapidly but that doesn't mean that abortion is going away.

Robert McFadden: Okay.

Fr. Tad Pacholczyk: Fr. Tad, I just wanted to add a quick note to that about -- that when we talk about 40,000 people dying each day from starvation, that we don't always understand all the variables and factors that account for that. In other words, that sometimes there are drought conditions that we have no control over, sometimes there may be a regime or a dictatorship that again, we have very little ability to influence. Meanwhile, in the case of these other non-negotiables that we been referring to, we do have a handle directly on the cause. We know that there are individual for example, physicians who are responsible for overseeing the practice of abortion and that it is possible to very directly moderate or reduce that. So we have a much more manageable, directly manageable kind of a situation there compared to the situation of starvation.

Mathew Pinto: Okay, we have five minutes left and we want to keep to this time schedule, so Heather if you could bring up our next call and --and all participants, if can continue to trying to give short, to the point answers.

Operator: Our next question comes from Joe Giganti, from Veritas Media Group.

Joe Giganti: Thank you. First I want to thank everyone for their time and the message that you bringing out. To pick up on something one of the reporters asked before, seems Senator Kerry and while I know this is not about endorsing or not endorsing candidates, is kind of gone on the offensive in the past week and continues to -- in terms of really saying that he is a good Catholic but he just disagrees -- you

know, the Bishops may not be right on this. Why do you believe this is continuing to be allowed in this -- without a direct or clear response from his Bishop or from the Church hierarchy. I mean, I respect the priests on this phone call and the work they are doing. There doesn't seem to be any hierarchical direct response, were there was in past occasions like -- the example in the 60's of the elected official who opposed civil rights at the time, was ultimately ex-communicated.

Mathew Pinto: Perhaps Mark Brumley and whoever else would like to weigh in.

Mark Brumley: Why do I think that we don't think see more direct confrontations with Bishops?

Mathew Pinto: Well it seems to be more of a -- not so much of direct confrontations, but seems to be a bit of hesitation on the part of the Church hierarchy to clearly directly address Senator Kerry with some form of action that makes clear that he is not in the right in -- in the stances he taking on this.

Mark Brumley: Well I would like to see more direct response to not -- not specifically -- not necessarily specifically Senator Kerry because he is not the only person that espouses a so called pro-choice which is really a pro-Bush in right's view but I think there have been a number of Bishops who have spoken out and made it clear where the -- the Church's teaching is and what -- what the you know, what the obligations of a Catholic who is seeking to hold public office are. Some candidates for public office are so concerned about non-imposing morality and don't even to seem impose it on himself. So I think that we had any number of Bishops who made it clear what the obligation is. I like to see more -- I think there is concern about not appearing partisan and so on. It is not of course partisan to point out when a candidate misrepresents the teaching of the Church he purports to uphold. It is not partisan at all -- so I would like to see more but I think we have seen leadership on the part of certainly a number of Bishops in the United States.

Mathew Pinto: Okay any final comment on that and see if we can fit in one more question.

Fr. Tad Pacholczyk: This is Fr. Tad. I think the important -- I think a lot of the Bishops may feel the importance of first trying a behind the scenes tactic to contact the individual person who is espousing positions against the Church and yet claiming to be Catholic, trying to work things out that way first and so you know, we may not know at this point, the extend of that that's being going on even perhaps with Senator Kerry. So I think the challenge is to be able to allow that process to go, -- you know, its proper distance before stronger measures end up being then taken.

Mathew Pinto: Heather, if you can lead us to our last call and I want to thank everyone and I will have a closing announcement or two, those who answer the question please be brief and to the point, and let us just go with one, two or three quick responses. So next question, please.

Operator: Thank you. Our next question is from Valerie Mierzwa, from Florida Democrats Life.

Mathew Pinto: Okay. Valerie.

Valerie Mierzwa Hi. First of all, I would like to say that Father Pavone and Father Euteneuer are my heroes and thanks to the seed they planted in me at the first day of recollection at the Basilica on Washington DC three years ago. I have been able to accomplish all that I have done this far for the pro-life movement, under the guidance of our Lady of Guadalupe. Also I would like to thank Lisa Wheeler for posting on Catholic exchange today under their pro-life channel, our top 10 reasons why Florida democrats, for Life of America cannot endorse John Kerry. I would like to say that the recent revelation of the sex scandal within the Catholic Church may have been a blessing in disguise, because we witnessed a faithful Catholic Laity finding their voice in expressing outrage over our

Bishop's utter failure to properly deal with the serious scandal within the church. Scandals that we all knew had been occurring for quite sometime although none of us realized the extent to which it was occurring. Likewise the scandal of artificial contraception, and abortion have also not been seriously acknowledged by both the Church Leadership in the Laity for nearly half a century. To this day, our many Catholic, -- how many church leaders are choosing to remain silent. Now we are being confronted with the consequences of ignoring the sin of artificial contraception and abortion, while being faced with the ultimate insult a Catholic candidate for President of United States, who represents the complete opposite of all that the church teaches on these issues. My question to the panel is, do you believe that the faithful catholic Laity has gained a better understanding of the power we hold, in effecting change in society because of the lessons we have learned from the recent sex scandals. Specifically, that we do not need to wait for Church Leaders to lead us in doing what is morally right.

Mathew Pinto: I think this is a good call to close on a sort of activism type of call what we can move forward, although Christopher at some point, if you want to lay in on -- on some of these issues as well, Christopher West. But who would like to comment or address Valerie's question and comment.

Fr. Tom Euteneuer: This is Fr. Euteneuer. I will just say a word. First of all thank you Valerie, you are one of my heroes, too. Okay.

Valerie Mierzwa: Thank you

Fr. Tom Euteneuer: I think the Catholic Laity have learned that when the leadership of the church is weak the Catholic Laity have to pick up slack, if the Leadership of the Church was strong a lot of issues, the Catholic Laity would still have to be strong and the Church would be much stronger. So I think the idea that we are looking for is a strong Church Leadership and very active Laity and to the extent that the Laity have gotten activated by the scandal, I think it's been very positive.

Christopher West: Christopher West laying in here, just -- regarding the issue of contraception and it's relation to the abortion issue. What we are seeing in our culture today is simply the playing out of the acceptance of contraception, displace itself out in abortion, in homosexuality, in cloning in stem-cell research. We -- we must go back to the quote which is God's plan for making us male and female in the first place, and as soon as you disorient the sexual act away from life, you will have all of these problems. So many people think that the way you solve the abortion problem is by getting contraception out there. That is like throwing gasoline on a fire to try to put it out. When we choose -- when we make a choice to render and act sterile, and then the contraception fails the next step is get rid off the child, I never wanted him in the first place. The solution to all of these problems is a return to the fullness of truth of God's plan for the two sexes. This must be emphasized in all of these discussions.

Mathew Pinto: Okay I want to thank all who have been listening in, we truly appreciate your taking an hour and 15 minutes of your life for these important issues, and we -- we truly pray that you will continue to do your work in an exemplary manner and that you will pass on what is best for the culture and -- and we thank you, we thank all the panelists who were able to join us and who contributed to The Five Issues That Matter The Most book, thank you to Lisa as well for helping. My name is Mathew Pinto from Catholic Outreach, just a few facts. You can reach us at catholicoutreach.com. Also this conference call was recorded and will be available very soon, Lisa Wheeler will send an e-mail to everyone who has logged into the chat room or she will contact you if you did not leave your e-mail address. There is now as of the beginning of this phone call, a free downloadable version of The Five Issues That Matter Most book, so please take a look at it, pass it around to those who you think

would have interest. We thank you once again, Lisa, is there any final thing that I am missing in saying here?

Lisa Wheeler: The only other -- there are several people they did not get to ask questions and of course we apologize that we had a very -- an overwhelming response and we appreciate all the media that participated. If you do want to interview one of the speakers, please you can additionally contact me at my e-mail address, lisaw@catholicoutreach.com.

Mathew Pinto: Repeat that again please.

Lisa Wheeler: lisaw@catholicoutreach.com or by telephone at 770-509-0531.

Mathew Pinto: Repeat that once again, 770 --

Lisa Wheeler: 770-509-0531.

Mathew Pinto: And thank you once again and we look forward to hearing from you.

Operator: Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for participating in today's conference. This does concludes the program. You may now disconnect, have a wonderful day.