

ABORTION TRUTHS NO ONE CAN DENY

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

William Donohue

It does not matter how strongly a person may champion abortion rights, there are some stubborn facts that cannot be denied. It is their side—the pro-abortion side—that must tippy toe through a linguistic minefield. Our side never has to be careful, and that's because we don't have to lie.

If ever this was shown to be true, it was on grand display last summer when the *New York Times Magazine* ran a lengthy story on the subject of "twin reduction." The term was coined to describe a situation where a pregnant woman is notified she is carrying twins, but she only wants one. Hence, the decision to abort one of them. Now you know what "twin reduction" means.

The woman discussed in this article, "Unnatural Selection," was 45 and had been trying for six years to get pregnant. She tried it all—ovulation injections, donor eggs—with nothing to show but her fertility bills. Then her luck changed. But when she learned she was carrying two children, it didn't sit well with her. So when she was 14 weeks along, she chose to have what the writer aptly called "half an abortion." Both babies were healthy, but one had to go. The woman's reasoning was brutally honest.

"Things would have been different if we were 15 years younger or if we hadn't had children already or if we were more financially secure. If I had conceived these twins naturally, I wouldn't have reduced this pregnancy, because you feel like if there's a natural order, then you don't want to disturb it. But we created this child in such an artificial manner—in a

test tube, choosing an egg donor, having the embryo placed in me—and somehow, making a decision about how many to carry seemed to be just another choice. The pregnancy was all so consumerish to begin with, and this became yet another thing we could control.”

If this sentiment doesn't underscore the veracity of the Church's teachings on life, nothing does. Unwittingly, to be sure, this woman hit on all the critical points. It was her unnatural pregnancy—the separation of marital love from procreation—that made her “twin reduction” decision so palatable. She is also right that there is a “natural order,” although she is either blissfully ignorant about its source, or simply doesn't care. She is right again that it was her “consumerish” mentality that allowed her, and her supine husband, to “reduce” her pregnancy.

The author of this piece, Ruth Padawer, was eerily objective. “The procedure, which is usually performed around Week 12 of a pregnancy,” she said, “involves a fatal injection of potassium chloride into the fetal chest.” In other words, the poison is designed to kill. Indeed, she is not unaware of the outcome. “The dead fetus shrivels over time and remains in the womb until delivery.” She continues, “Some physicians found reduction unnerving, particularly because the procedure is viewed under ultrasound, making it quite visually explicit, which is not the case with abortion.” The eye doesn't easily lie.

Choosing which kid to kill can be taxing. “If both appear healthy (which is typical with twins),” Padawer writes, “doctors aim for whichever one is easier to reach.” How good he aims is important. “If both are equally accessible, the decision of who lives and who dies is random.” The term “who lives” cannot logically refer to anything other than a human being, since there is no record of a woman giving birth to an elephant or a spider.

“To the relief of patients,” the author concludes, “it’s the doctor who chooses—with one exception.” And what could that be? “If the fetuses are different sexes, some doctors ask the parents which one they want to keep.” How thoughtful of them. But given the nature of the decision, it won’t be long before a “pre-twin reduction agreement” will be drawn up by their lawyer. By the way, they have a term to describe the baby who is selected to live—he or she is called a “singleton.”

In an article that is over 5000 words long, there is exactly one sentence that acknowledges the “feelings of guilt” that parents may experience. Of greater interest would be the “feelings of guilt” that the surviving child might have to eventually deal with. It merits one sentence. Regarding the likelihood that the surviving child may turn with anger toward his parents for depriving him of a sibling, nothing was said.

It’s not just our side that sees through this macabre of deceit. One of the more honest, if reluctant, advocates of abortion rights is William Saletan. Commenting on this article, he said, “the main problem with reduction is that it breaches a wall at the center of pro-choice psychology. It exposes the equality between the offspring we raise and the offspring we abort.” Ever blunt, he comments, “You can’t pretend that one is precious and the other is just tissue. You’re killing the same creature to which you’re dedicating your life.” At least he gets it.

It is telling that pro-lifers are not the ones who are tongue-tied when confronted with issues like “twin reduction.” It is similarly revealing that people like the author of the *Times Magazine* piece can describe the subject in such clinically cold terms.