

[From the 2008 Religion News Service]

COMMENTARY: CATHOLICS DEMS AND BISHOPS  
IN FOR A BUMPY RIDE

(By Phyllis Zagano)

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi is clearly confused about Catholic teaching on life issues. On NBC's "Meet the Press," Tom Brokaw asked her: "When does life begin?" She answered, "We don't know." Pelosi said "that as an ardent, practicing Catholic," this is an issue she's studied for a long time. "And what I know is, over the centuries, the doctors of the church have not been able to make that definition."

Pelosi is wrong, and some Catholic bishops have tried to correct the record.

I don't think the Democrats are worried.

A few years ago I rode the New York-to-Washington shuttle with a prominent politician who is a Catholic and a Democrat. He said that U.S. bishops collectively squandered their moral authority with the priest pederasty scandal. Whether for so-called "liberal" or "conservative" causes, he said, Catholic bishops are the political touch of death. No one listens to them. Including, it seems, Catholic-educated Pelosi. While the bishops try to straighten out Pelosi, who confuses medieval discussions about "ensoulment" with historical teachings on abortion, the Democrats are trying to sound like they are both for and against abortion.

Brokaw backed Pelosi into a theological corner by playing part of a televised interview in which California Pastor Rick Warren asked Sen. Barack Obama (and, later, Sen. John McCain), "At what point does a baby get human rights?"

Catholicism calls that two questions: First, is the embryo human life? Second, when does the embryo become a person? Obama addressed both questions. He said "If you believe that life begins at conception . . . then I can't argue with you." He also basically said deciding when the embryo becomes a person was above his paygrade. After seeing the Warren-Obama replay, Pelosi muddled Brokaw's question. She said—incorrectly—that the church only decided human life begins at conception "like maybe 50 years" ago.

Wrong, Madame Speaker. "The Didache" (the teachings of the apostles collected a generation after Christ) says, "You shall not procure an abortion, nor destroy a newborn child." Several church fathers—from Tertullian to St. Jerome—and the apostolic constitutions all forbade abortion. Some, however, confused matters by talking about ensoulment, asking when the human being became a human person. The ensoulment debate seems stuck in Pelosi's memory, and could be what she was talking about. She said St. Augustine thought ensoulment occurred about 30 days after conception. But trying to figure out ensoulment only leads to debate over whether abortion is merely similar to murder (killing a human being) or actually equal to murder (killing a human person).

No one knows for sure when the developing human being becomes a person with a soul. It might be at conception, or it might not. So Christianity, with other religions, has historically forbidden abortion in the face of this dilemma because the human being is always potentially a human person. The earliest fertilized egg is not a future banana or frog. It is human life. What's fascinating is that Sens. Joe Biden and John McCain agree that life begins at conception. And although neither expects (or possibly wants) help from the bishops, McCain has the most to gain by Pelosi's misstep.

Pelosi is at best misinformed, and has misinformed a nation. The Catholic bishops will try to counter her bad information. And

Catholic politicians, who have increasingly ignored a lot of Catholic teaching, don't seem to think that what the bishops say will make any difference. Seatbelts, everybody. It's going to be a bumpy ride.

HONORING DR. ROBERT F. KNAUTZ

HON. DALE E. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 23, 2008

Mr. KILDEE. Madam Speaker, it is with profound sadness that I announce the passing of Dr. Robert F. Knautz, the founding principal of the U.S. House of Representatives Page School. "Dr. K," as he was affectionately known by many of his former students, died on September 17, 2008, at Suburban Hospital in Bethesda, MD. He left an indelible mark on the House Page School, the institution he was charged with creating in 1983. The House Page Program owes a tremendous debt of gratitude to Dr. Knautz for his vision for the School, his commitment to quality education, and his compassion for students.

Dr. Knautz was a proud son of the Land of Lincoln. He was born in Chicago, IL, and remained throughout his life a devoted fan of both the Cubs and the Bears. Dr. Knautz obtained his undergraduate and graduate degrees from Northern Illinois University, earning his bachelor's degree in political science in 1963 and his master's degree in the same subject in 1970. Dr. Knautz also received his Ph.D. in education administration from Northern Illinois in 1982.

Before joining the House Page School, Dr. Knautz spent nearly two decades as an educator and administrator. He taught fifth grade and sixth grade for 2 years each, eighth grade for 3 years, and high school for 3 years. Dr. Knautz made the transition from teaching to administration in 1973, first having dual responsibility for a kindergarten through third grade building and a high school because the two buildings were adjacent to each other. Later he accepted a position at Hiawatha High School in Kirkland, IL, where he served as principal for 7 years.

As a result of a series of reforms in 1983, the U.S. House created the House Page School. Dr. Knautz saw the advertisement for the House Page School principal opening, and applied for the opening. In late July 1983, he flew to Washington to interview. He was offered the job the same day, accepted, and had to move his young family to Washington, D.C. When Dr. Knautz first arrived he lived in the Congressional Hotel (which became House Annex I and was later renamed the O'Neill Building), on the same floor as summer pages, who were moved into the hotel the previous year.

Unlike most principals, Dr. Knautz had to literally create a school from scratch. Also, since the new House Page School was scheduled to open on September 6, 1983, he had only 5 weeks to do so. Dr. Knautz was not only responsible for developing the curriculum, hiring teachers, and cleaning the physical plant; he was also responsible for purchasing textbooks, ordering supplies, and obtaining furniture. Dr. Knautz worked 15-hour days for a month to complete the preparations for the school opening and also found a place for his family to live in his rare spare time.

For Dr. Knautz, being the founding principal at House Page School was one of his proudest professional moments. He served as principal of the House Page School for 18 years until he retired in 2001. Many of the curriculum ideas and school policies he developed are used today at the School.

Dr. Knautz is survived by his wife Mary, daughter Elizabeth, son Jon, brothers Ronald and Roger, and a host of nieces and nephews. He was a loving father, a caring husband, a gifted teacher and brilliant administrator, always putting his full faith in people. The House of Representatives is forever grateful for the service of Robert F. Knautz.

TRIBUTE TO MARK GERALD

HON. JAMES E. CLYBURN

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 23, 2008

Mr. CLYBURN. Madam Speaker, it is my honor today to pay tribute to a conscientious constituent, a dedicated educator, and an outstanding role model. Mark Gerald is being honored by the town of Mullins, SC, for his tremendous service as a coach at Mullins High School. This is a job in which he excelled, never losing focus or dedication even as he suffered debilitating treatments for colon cancer.

Mark Gerald is a 22-year employee of Marion County School District #2. He has held coaching positions for the Mullins High School junior varsity and varsity football teams and the men's basketball programs. He has served as athletic director and head coach of Mullins High School men's varsity basketball program. Coach Gerald has dedicated his adult life to the very district from which he graduated.

He left Marion County and enrolled at Fayetteville State University in Fayetteville, NC. After graduation he returned to the community and the people he loved, and has never left. Coach Gerald never turns his back on anyone in need. He reaches into his own pocket when a player needs a pair of shoes, or when a student doesn't have the basic necessities.

As a coach, Mark Gerald believes in creating a family atmosphere for his players. He spends his summer vacations traveling with his team attending summer camps and organizing the annual Mullins High School Alumni game and picnic during the month of July. He helps students young and old. For the youth, he sponsors the Raymond Felton Basketball Camp. He has successfully secured many college scholarships for his graduates. His dedication to athletics and his athletes has paid great dividends. His teams have won several state division titles and a state championship.

In July 2007, Coach Gerald was preparing for the alumni game when he fell seriously ill. He was initially diagnosed with diverticulitis, but within months he learned he had colon cancer. This spring, he successfully underwent surgery to have the diseased portion of his colon removed. Currently he is undergoing chemotherapy treatments.

Despite his health challenges, Coach Gerald rarely misses a day of work. He schedules his doctors' appointments in the afternoons and never misses any practices or games. He has never let anyone hear him complain, and he continues to smile even through the difficult

times. Last season despite his health crisis, Coach Gerald led his team to a 21–0 regular season and another division title. The only loss of the season came in the state playoffs, and his team lost by only one basket.

Coach Gerald draws strength from his family and his faith. He is married to the former Linda Diane Bethea, and they have two children and two grandchildren. He is also a deacon at Mt. Olive Baptist Church, where he has been a lifelong member.

Madam Speaker, I ask you and my colleagues to join me in applauding the outstanding dedication, leadership and determination demonstrated by Mark Gerald. He is an extraordinary example for all of us to follow. I wish him Godspeed, and continued success and happiness.

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HONORING REVEREND DOCTOR  
HARVEY J. JOHNSON

**HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 23, 2008*

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, today I mourn the passing of a dear friend of mine, the Reverend Doctor Harvey J. Johnson.

Madam Speaker, born and raised in the Gulf Coast region of Texas, Rev. Dr. Harvey J. Johnson was a fixture of Texas. For the last 24 years he served as pastor of the Cathedral of Faith Missionary Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas, where I had the pleasure of counting him as my friend.

Madam Speaker, Rev. Dr. Johnson was a member of many important Dallas area community groups including the Together Dallas Task Force, the Dallas Independent School District's Advisory Board, the City of Dallas Board of Adjustment of which he was chairman, and he was a member of the Texas Attorney General's Child Support Board.

Madam Speaker, Rev. Dr. Johnson is survived by his wife of 35 years, Elnora Johnson; a son, Reverend Nathan (Michelle) Johnson; four daughters, Candy S. Wade, Sharon D. Brown, Felicia D. (Craig) Holloway, and Helena J. (Michael) Hill, 15 grandchildren; 2 great grandchildren; one brother, Melvin Byrdlon; one sister, Vinnell (James) Briscoe; and a host of nieces, nephews, other family members, church members, and friends.

Madam Speaker, Rev. Dr. Johnson cared deeply about his community and dedicated his life to serving it. For this our community was always better and he will be missed.

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IN RECOGNITION OF NICK YOVINO

**HON. JIM COSTA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 23, 2008*

Mr. COSTA. Madam Speaker, I rise today along with my colleagues from California, Mr. RADANOVICH and Mr. NUNES to pay tribute and congratulate the distinguished public service of Mr. Nick Yovino. After 37 years, Nick is leaving his position as Director of the Planning Department with the city of Fresno. Mr. Yovino will be honored at a reception held by the city of Fresno on Thursday, September 25, 2008.

Nick started as an intern in October 1971 and upon graduating from Fresno State he took a temporary position in the Planning and Inspection Department at Fresno City Hall. In 1972, Nick became a permanent employee as a Planning Technician with the city of Fresno. In 2000, he became Director of the Planning and Development Department and since that time Nick has been instrumental on numerous development projects helping the city of Fresno become a better place for the entire community. One major focus has been downtown revitalization resulting in the growth of government and commercial enterprises and leading the way toward a vibrant downtown we can all be proud of.

Mr. Yovino played an active role in the General Plans of 1975, 1984 and 2025, as well as plans for the Mixed Use Ordinance, Community Design Guidelines and the Full Entering of the Planning and Building Safety Services Division. In addition Nick was instrumental on the Tower District and Fulton-Lowell Specific Plans, the Bullard Community Plan, the Pinedale and Highway City Woodward Park Community Plan and the Southeast Growth Area Expansions.

Nick has a natural gift and ability of bringing people of diverse thinking together that has always resulted in making the city and county of Fresno a better community for residents and visitors alike. Over the years Nick has been an extraordinary leader and a friend.

Madam Speaker, it goes without saying that Mr. Yovino's dedication and accomplishments in planning and development with the city of Fresno gained him the respect and appreciation from all who had the pleasure to work with him and know him. He worked hard, he sacrificed time away from his family, and he expected little in return. With retirement now a reality, as Nick prepares to spend more time with his children and grandchildren, we thank him and honor him for his many years of service.

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HONORING WILLIAM H. GATES, SR.

**HON. DAVID G. REICHERT**

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 23, 2008*

Mr. REICHERT. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor of a committed philanthropist, an exemplary public servant and an honorable veteran, William H. Gates, Sr. Through a lifetime of work and leadership, Mr. Gates has accomplished extraordinary good; changing millions of lives for the better. Although he cares little about personal accolades and awards—of which he has received many—I believe he is the living embodiment of the spirit of the Presidential Medal of Freedom. It is an award he richly deserves.

An Eagle Scout from Bremerton, Washington, Mr. Gates served 3 years in the U.S. Army during World War II before earning his bachelors and law degrees from the University of Washington in 1949 and 1950, respectively. His law career led to the establishment of one of the largest and most successful law firms in Seattle.

No matter his professional aspirations, Mr. Gates never wavered in his philanthropic spirit. As president of both the Seattle/King County and the Washington State Bar associations,

he focused his efforts on equal justice for the poor and disadvantaged, ultimately prompting the Washington Supreme Court to create an Access to Justice Board, now a national model.

Additionally, he and his late wife, Mary Maxwell Gates, served admirably with the United Way of King County, Washington, beginning in the 1960s and spanning several decades. Mrs. Gates became board chair of the United Way in 1973, a position Mr. Gates presently occupies. In all, Mr. Gates has served as a trustee, officer and volunteer for more than two dozen organizations in northwest Washington.

Perhaps his most lasting and indelible legacy will be his work as the co-chair and CEO of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, a philanthropy with an endowment of more than \$24 billion, the largest in history. With the help of his son, Bill Gates, the founder of Microsoft Corporation, the Gates Foundation has provided an outlet for Mr. Gates to continue his lifelong quest for equality in every aspect of life—especially education.

Most are aware of the inspirational work the foundation has done around the world to combat crises in health and education in some of the most impoverished nations in the world. What is less known is the “smaller” help the foundation provides to local school districts and townships to help spur a promising educational program or fill a gap in technology funds. Countless examples exist nationwide of significant progress made in all areas of education because of a gift from the Gates Foundation.

The incredible vision of Mr. Gates, his son Bill and wife Melinda, is truly a blessing to the entire world and it is a vision Mr. Gates cultivated and perfected over many decades.

The tireless work of Mr. Gates on behalf of the less fortunate in the United States and around the world is well documented. The impact of his lifelong ambitions is legendary. Recipients of the Presidential Medal of Freedom have, among other things, “been leaders in their chosen fields, have led lives of vision and character, and have made especially meritorious contributions to our nation and the world.” I can think of no one who fulfills that description better than William H. Gates, Sr.

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FILIPINO VETERANS BENEFIT  
VOTE

**HON. JOHN L. MICA**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 23, 2008*

Mr. MICA. Madam Speaker, I am truly disappointed that the United States Congress today would even consider giving benefits to Filipino veterans and ignore American veterans who were victims of the Bataan Death March in the Philippines.

In crafting H.R. 6897, which gives all Filipino veterans benefits, did you know that the Veterans' Affairs Committee dumped a provision to the bill that would have authorized \$4 a day for the American survivors of the Bataan Death March?

Did you know that of the 4,500 veterans that survived the march, there are only 1,700 American veterans or spouses alive today? Why would Congress ignore these American veterans and their spouses?