

## Treasuring Our Future Timelines

***"Our choices today powerfully affect future timelines in either positive or detrimental ways."***



29-year old Dom Brand of South Carolina, in an apparently random act in 2020, shot and killed an 80-year-old woman named Mary Ann Elvington. His action resulted in several tragedies unfolding simultaneously. Mary Ann could have lived many more years had she not been shot. Her children were unable to spend time with her for the rest of their lives. No longer could she babysit the grandkids or share the wisdom of her years. The shooter also upset any real prospects for his own future, as he became subject to the criminal justice system and life-long incarceration. So many future goods and future timelines were damaged or destroyed by one wrong action.

Then there was Michael Webb of Clermont County, Ohio, who set his own house on fire with his wife and four children inside in 1990. He poured gasoline on the beds of his sleeping children and around the house before sparking the blaze with a match. The prosecutor concluded that he intended to kill his family, collect the insurance money and start a new life with his mistress. His wife and three of his four children managed to survive the flames, but 3-year-old Mikey perished from smoke inhalation. There were devastating consequences all around. Mr. Webb was sentenced to

spend the rest of his life in jail. His wife and remaining children struggled to move on without the support of their husband or father. Little Mikey's long future timeline, with all its youthful potential, came to an abrupt and tragic close.

Some of the longest timelines we destroy are those of unborn children with almost their whole earthly lives still ahead of them. This is often done in ways that virtually nobody ever sees or notices, through stealth abortions with the "abortion pill," which, according to the Alan Guttmacher Institute, now accounts for about 54% of all US abortions.

The lamentable power to destroy future timelines through abortion was poignantly addressed by Kathy Barnette in a [riveting YouTube video](#) entitled "It wasn't a choice. It was a life." Barnette was recently a candidate for the Republican nomination for the U.S. Senate in Pennsylvania. Whatever her controversial positions may have been on some of the issues of the day, and regardless of what one thinks about her other political views, her personal testimony on abortion ought to be heard by everyone.

# Making Sense of Bioethics

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Kathy was conceived after her mom, Mamie Jo, was raped at age 11. In the video, Mamie Jo, now in her 60's, stresses how abortion cannot be an answer to sexual assault, even as she acknowledges the trauma of her own rape:

It was hard. We were all devastated. But my mother said: 'You know, you're pregnant, so we're gonna get through this,' and she helped me get through it. I don't want to use the word 'choice.' .... [My daughter] was going to be born. I didn't have a choice to say 'You are going to live, or I'm going to abort you.' That wasn't a choice for me, and I thank God it wasn't a choice for me.... Regardless of how old you are, and how the child was conceived, that child deserves a chance. If I had made that 'choice,' where would I be right now without my daughter?

Kathy likewise speaks to the false and damaging 'choice' that abortion can tempt us with. She stresses how profoundly her life matters, as well as the new lives and

timelines of her children, grandchildren and further generations that will unfold into the future:

Before the foundation of the world, God saw me and he decided *that I would be*, and he said in his word that not only did I see you, but I called you. I predestined you. And so as a Christian, I believe in the value of life, that when I was in my mother's womb, he was knitting me together. Even among Christians, even among staunch conservatives, an exception to the rule of being pro-life for many is in the case of rape. And yet my life has value. From me have come two very beautiful and charming and smart kids. I'm married to a wonderful husband and we've made a life for ourselves, and none of this would have happened if the exception to the rule had applied.... You have to be able to see the difference.... I'm left with an overwhelming sense of gratitude, that not only did God see value in my life, but that my family saw value in my life. I'm

very grateful for that. I'm eternally grateful that they chose to allow me to be born.

Our choices today powerfully affect future timelines in either positive or detrimental ways. In choosing to protect human life, we open up a more beautiful and fulfilling future for ourselves and all those around us.

*Rev. Tadeusz Pacholczyk, Ph.D. earned his doctorate in neuroscience from Yale and did post-doctoral work at Harvard. He is a priest of the diocese of Fall River, MA, and serves as the Director of Education at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. Father Tad writes a monthly column on timely life issues. From stem cell research to organ donation, abortion to euthanasia, he offers a clear and compelling analysis of modern bioethical questions, addressing issues we may confront at one time or another in our daily living. His column, entitled "Making Sense of Bioethics" is nationally syndicated in the U.S. to numerous diocesan newspapers, and has been reprinted by newspapers in England, Canada, Poland and Australia.*

