

## Abortion as a familial, cultural, religious and entertainment issue

Sr. Rose Pacatte | Jan. 4, 2011 NCR Today

After my reflection on a Christmas advertising campaign that [featured an image of an ultrasound of a baby Jesus in utero](#) [1] and seeing the new film "Blue Valentine," [this opinion piece by Ross Douthat](#) [2] in yesterday's *New York Times* seems especially thoughtful.

"Blue Valentine" got some controversial press due to an NC-17 rating it received from the MPAA for an oral sex scene, and then when it was down-rated to an R upon appeal.

I thought "Sex and Other Drugs" was much more problematic from the explicit sexuality perspective, but "Blue Valentine" stems from every bad sexual choice the key figure, Cindy (Michelle Williams) makes. Her sexual history may be more realistic than most people think: first sexual experience at 13 and by the time she is in her early 20's she has had more than twenty sexual partners. She is in the midst of an abortion when she tells the doctor to stop, and he does.

Cindy is educated and comes from an emotionally abusive Catholic family. When she becomes pregnant by one guy, she gets another working class man, Dean (Ryan Gosling), to marry her.

But first they have "the conversation": Is it mine? What are you going to do? Keep it? Abortion?

This is a depressing film, the bright spot is the little girl -- their daughter -- who lives.

There is explicit sex, but the rating is not the issue -- the irresponsible sexual behavior of the character is. The MPAA only does content analysis, they never consider what the movie means.

There is no overt conscience-searching in the film -- only Cindy's maternal instinct to choose the life inside her.

The marriage is doomed because Dean is happy making a living for them, but Cindy wants more for Dean and herself. She pushes and is cruel. The problem is Cindy never grew up. She's emotionally damaged with a good education. The immature are not good communicators.

There is no happy ending in "Blue Valentine". If Cindy's father had not been so cruel, if she had had the benefit of an integrated religious education and wholesome family life, maybe she wouldn't have started having sex at thirteen and seeking an abortion as an adult and marrying out of desperation.

What choices will Frankie, the little girl, make when she turns 13?

The piece by Douthat concludes that abortion is a legal issue and that the unborn have no legal protection. Alternatives such as adoption are more and more expensive and difficult -- and in-vitro procedures to produce a baby, or manipulate his or her genetic make-up, have created a complex ethical and moral morass in which kids who raise themselves only have their instincts to go on.

Abortion is a familial, cultural, human, religious and entertainment issue as well. I appreciate Douthat's calm

and reasoned reflection.

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**Links:**

[1] <http://ncronline.org/news/way-heart>

[2] [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/03/opinion/03douthat.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/03/opinion/03douthat.html?_r=1)