Pro-Life, Pro-Choice: Shared Values in the Abortion Debate

Bertha Alvarez Manninen
Vanderbilt University Press (December 2014)
Softcover $24.95 (240pp)
978-0-8265-1991-7

Here's an idea: let's delete the word "abortion" from our vocabulary so as to start a more civilized conversation about how to deal with unwanted pregnancy. Both sides of the debate can begin by acknowledging areas of shared values. Everyone (except for the extremists on both sides) can agree, for example, that more expansive, affordable support services would help needy mothers to stay in school, continue working, etc., while they raised their children. That, and pro-choice feminists can surely appreciate the miracle and wonder that is early fetal life, even as they advocate for a woman's right to make decisions about her body.

In *Pro-Life, Pro-Choice*, Bertha Alvarez Manninen delicately explores the ethics of abortion, believing that a majority of men and women of all ages are tired of the traditional abortion rhetoric. An associate professor of philosophy at Arizona State University, she teaches on abortion ethics and champions the middle ground, stressing to her students (and readers) that "*pro-choice* is not synonymous with *pro-abortion*." She also mulls the elephant in the room for many on the pro-choice side. Namely, is there such a thing as irresponsible pregnancy, and do some women choose abortion for trivial reasons?

Heady, challenging stuff, to be sure, but her book is an important step in moving the conversation along.

MATT SUTHERLAND (Winter 2015)