

Central Illinois Life News

Pastors Speak Out

In this column, we share reflections of Pro-Life Pastors from Central Illinois. The following is by Pastor Donald L. Blasing of the First Evangelical Free Church of Brimfield, IL. All of the pastor's articles from past issues are available on our web site at www.missionnet.com/cirtl/. If you are a member of the clergy seeking an additional forum to speak out for Life, this column is open to you. Contact us at CIRTl.

Time Is Of The Essence

It's Christmas Time!!! A time of shopping and of gifts. A time for children and for toys. A time of laughter and of joy. A time for shepherds watching their flocks by night and angels announcing peace for all mankind. A time for wise men bringing their gifts to the newborn King and celebrating this new life. A time for a stable, a manger and a young virgin named Mary giving birth to the Christ child. What a time for joy and a season of love. A time for peace and celebrating life. A time of the year when we try and bring out the best in a fallen mankind.

But we know too well that there is a darker side to our times of joy --times of sorrow. There are times when instead of the giving of life --there is the taking of life. Rather than love for a newborn child being born -- there is death. If it were of natural causes, as in the cases of miscarriage, there would be great grief and expression of sorrow at the loss of the life. But when it's planned, calculated, and all cleanly taken care of in a "Medical Clinic", even the grief is hard to identify and even harder to deal with. It's there, it's just not dealt with. To admit that there is grief is to admit that something terribly wrong has occurred, a tragedy has happened, and no one wants to deal with that reality.

Too many times I have had to try and pick up the pieces of broken lives, where after years of denial, they have finally come to the reality of what happened so long ago. These wounds were not healed over time. The sorrow, that had been kept deep inside and had not been expressed to anyone for years, came gushing out with all the force of Niagara Falls and it left them emotionally drained, exhausted and sitting limp on the living room floor. There was no time of rejoicing or peace, no love being demonstrated, only the expression of deep sorrow and eternal regret. (continued on



Coming Events

During Sanctity of Human Life week, January 17 - January 24, 1999, the following events are scheduled:

Women's Pregnancy Center fundraising dinner, Tuesday, January 19, 1999. The dinner will be at the Pere Marquette Hotel in Peoria. Contact the Women's Pregnancy Center for reservations.

Forty Hour Prayer Vigil, January 20 - January 22, 1999, in front of the abortion center on North University Street in Peoria. Call Dan Smith at 691-3611 to volunteer to stand for an hour of prayer.

Family Resources Center Open House, Thursday, January 21, 1999 from 5:30 - 6:30 p.m., 321 Main Street, Peoria, before the Walk for Life and the Sanctity of Human Life Rally.

Walk for Life, 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, January 21, 1999 at the Peoria County Courthouse. After prayer we will walk together to the Rally carrying signs showing our support for the sanctity of all innocent human life.

Sanctity of Human Life Rally, 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 21, 1999 at Sacred Heart Church across from the Peoria Civic Center. The rally will feature special music and prayer along with reports on local Pro Life efforts. Rev. John Queen, senior pastor of Grace Presbyterian Church in Peoria will give the keynote address.

The National Right To Life Oratory contest, Illinois preliminaries, will be held in Normal, IL on Saturday, April 17, 1999. Participants will present a 5-7 minute Pro Life Speech. First prize is \$200 plus an expense-paid trip to the national contest in June 1999 in Milwaukee, WI. Second prize is \$100. Interested students should submit name, address, and phone number, requesting an entry form and rules to : IFRL Oratory Contest, 2244 Irondale Rd, Green Oaks, IL 60048.

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So what must we do to restore our time? The answers are many but let me offer only a few.

1. We must recognize the times from which we have come and in which we now live. When I was in High School in the 70's and studying my courses on embryology, I was taught that what was in the womb was a form of tissue. It passed through various stages of development and no one really knew at what point it became a life. Today, we know better, it's a life and we must continue to scream "It's a Life." But the times have changed and today the argument isn't about life it's about freedom (which abortion doesn't give) and tolerance and social progress toward a new society where individuals have freedom and the right to choose their own destiny in life. Who, in this politically correct world, would ever want to stand against the nobles of freedom, rights, individuality, tolerance and progress toward a new society (whatever that would be). It sounds so good -- but then so did the message of Hitler who sold the third Reich on the idea of social progress and a new society. Remember that he started with the physically and mentally handicapped before he convinced thousands of the need to exterminate the Jews. This progress toward a new society actually sounds to me like a socially refined version of the "free love" message of the sixties. Let's let everyone be able to freely express their love without assuming responsibility for their actions. That's what brought us to where we are today. But then look who's calling for the reforms of society, those who accepted the ideals of the sixties.

2. We must recognize that time is of the essence. Today, time is seen as a precious commodity. We buy pagers and cell phones to save time while in the car. Our food is fast and microwaveable so we can save time. It seems we can always make more money, but we can't make more time. So we use our money to save us time. Many are finding that it is easier to ask for a person's money than it is their time. This is even more evident in the fight for life. With the passage of time is the loss of life. That means we need to do what we can as quickly as we can. We need to devote our time and our money to the saving of lives. The apostle Paul says it best when he writes "Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil." (NASB)

3. Finally, we must recognize that there is a time for forgiveness. Let's not let the darkness overshadow the light. Remember that Jesus did come as a light in the darkness and the light of the world. He came to give life abundant to all who would forsake their sins, confess them to Him and believe that He is the one sent from the Father to give eternal life to all who believe

(Jn 5:16-47). He is the ultimate answer to the times in which we live. He is the one who redeems and forgives and sets free and gives joy and peace and love. He is the one to whom the angels longed for and rejoiced at his birth. It is Jesus who was born, that now gives eternal life (Jn 10:10). He was the one that both lowly shepherds and stately kings came to worship. He was the one who fled to Egypt to escape Herod's rage when all the male children were killed. He is the one who is intimately aware of our times and is able to heal and to forgive!!

We must not only continue to proclaim the gospel message, we must continue to demonstrate it in our offer of forgiveness to those who have been through the darkness of abortion. In this season of Joy and giving to those who are less fortunate, let's

Pro Life Events Remembered

Cemetery of Innocents

In November 1996 we built a memorial to the unborn, called the Cemetery of Innocents. We set up 18,000 small crosses arranged in the shape of the United States in a field along Interstate 155 south of Tremont, Illinois. Each cross represented 2000 American lives killed by abortion since 1973. Matthew Boyle, the creator of similar memorials previously, brought this idea to Illinois. During six Saturdays, beginning at dawn, we constructed the Memorial and held a prayer service for those who died by abortion. Bishop John Myers, the Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Peoria, gave the invocation at the first Memorial Service. People from many churches volunteered in this effort. The Memorial stayed up visible from the highway throughout the winter.

Hundred Hour Prayer Vigil

In January 1998, we held a Hundred Hour Prayer Vigil for one hundred consecutive hours on the sidewalk in front of Peoria's abortion clinic. People from over 50 area churches stood in prayer at this continuous vigil. Although the weather was at times bitterly cold, our silent prayerful presence focused on divine intervention for

not neglect to remember those who are the less fortunate of all – those who through no choice of their own have lost their life. And let us pray that peace, love, joy and goodness can once again be restored to the heart and soul of our nation.

40 Hour Prayer Vigil

To remember the 40 million killed by abortion, we are preparing a *Forty Hour Prayer Vigil* on the sidewalk in front of the abortion center at 7405 N. University from January 20 - January 22, the anniversary date of the Roe v. Wade decision. We hope that Christians from many churches can join us for an hour, or perhaps an hour a day during the three days. We will pray especially for the mothers of aborted children because they among the living

HELP!!! Single? Children Grown? Semi-retired? WE NEED YOU!!! Do you have an hour or two now & then to help Central Illinois Right to Life's board members with a project? Can we put you on a list of prospective volunteers to contact in the future. Remember, the "Pro-Choice" i.e. the pro-abortion crowd

has countless workers and millions of dollars. We operate on a bare-bones budget and are dependent on willing volunteers. If you could help a little in any way, it would be greatly appreciated and immensely gratifying. Please fill out the coupon below and mark

Outreach Committee News: *Each Child ... An Eternal Soul*

On the third Monday of each month, the Outreach Committee of persons interested in bringing the Pro Life message into their churches meets at the upstairs conference room of the Christian Center at 4100 War Memorial Drive at 7:30 p.m. We come together to share ideas, pray, and to renew our efforts to reach people with the Pro-Life message.

Past topics discussed have included presentations of The Hard Truth video to church groups, other Pro Life videos, how to stop Planned Parenthood, how to be an effective Pro Life advocate, and other Pro Life activities. At recent meetings we have also worked on organizing the annual fund raising garage sale and have put together mailings and newsletters like this one.

Anyone interested in joining this effort should come to our meetings or call Dan Smith at 691-3611.

Central Illinois Right to Life: Membership and Volunteer Drive

If you would like to help defend life in Central Illinois, become a member of Central Illinois Right to Life and continue receiving our quarterly newsletter by returning this form and enclosing the annual dues of \$10.00.

Name : _____

Address : _____

City : _____

State : _____

Zip Code : _____

Telephone : _____

MEMBER DUES : \$10__

DONATION : \$5__ \$10__ \$15__ \$25__ Other_____ Thank You!

"Any country that accepts abortion is not teaching its people to love, but to use violence to get what they want. This is why the greatest destroyer of love and peace is abortion." (Mother Teresa addressing The National Prayer Breakfast in Washington D.C., February 3, 1994.)

A Morning At The Clinic

The Temperature? 30 degrees. Subtract ten. A mild wind? Subtract another five. So I dress accordingly. A couple of hours may seem like twice as many. I arrive before 8:00 AM and three people are already there, holding their signs and praying. (We stand on the sidewalk in front of the abortion mill, not trespassing on "Private Property"). One large sign depicts the face of a baby entitled: "Life." Soon a group from Bradley University arrives and they pray for awhile before going to class. A worker from a local hospital comes and joins us in prayer, with her sign: "ABORTION HAS TWO VICTIMS - ONE DEAD, ONE WOUNDED." Another faithful picketer (a retired mailman), arrives holding a poster showing a realistic picture of a baby's head being held by forceps, with the question "MATTER OF CHOICE?" On his way to work a lawyer stops by to pray and picket with a hand-lettered sign giving a warning: "The Womb Is The Most Dangerous Place In The World." My poster bears the message: "GOOD OR BAD - LIFE IS FOREVER."

Workers from the abortion mill have been driving in and clients also begin to enter. Some pass by, hoping to get in by another way to avoid going by us, their maneuvers would be amusing if the issue was not so serious. Many couples enter, a few with a baby seat in the back of their car. We stand silent, raising our signs and praying. The responses are varied. Some laugh at our efforts to inform them of the risks and dangers. Others give us 'the finger', make a face, or stick out their tongue. Many try to avoid eye contact, bending down below window level or shielding their face with their hand. Once a couple drove in and the girl had her coat over her head. Some look sad and unhappy. We pray earnestly, knowing that while some may disregard the consequences, many do not know the effects of abortion, especially the very young and the first timers. The number of clients usually range between twenty and thirty when the abortion mill is doing 'business' twice a week on Wednesdays and Thursdays. We believe that saving the life of a baby is VERY worthwhile and that God will bless our efforts. We are trying to serve Him and invite others to share His work and rewards.

Sister Mary Jo Yutt

Sister Mary Jo Yutt is a member of the Board of Directors of Central Illinois Right To Life. Sister is also associated with the Family Resources Center, located in down town Peoria. This article along with information about Central Illinois Right To Life and the Family Resources Center is available on the internet at : www.missionnet.com/cirtl/ .



Look for Central Illinois Right To Life posters on Peoria busses again this year. This is just one of the ways that we strategically use the resources available to us to spread the Pro Life message in Central Illinois, made available by supporters just like you.

BENEFIT GARAGE SALE : One of our biggest fund raisers is an huge annual garage sale held around the third weekend of June. It is at Holy Family School in Peoria. We fill the gym and cafeteria with good quality items; small appliances, furniture, sporting goods, household and baby items, lots of clothes for everyone, and much more!

If you have items you could donate to the sale, please hang on to them and give us a call at the beginning of June. Look for announcements in our newsletter, church bulletins and flyers posted around Peoria. We need lots of help to set up and to work the sale. It's a great way to meet other pro-lifers and to contribute to a worthy cause. Teenagers are welcome. Please keep it mind and give us a call at 685-3034 to volunteer.

My Hero

"I'm gonna getcha!" I say as I dart after my toddler. He squeals with delight and dives onto the carpet. I reach down and start tickling. "Mommy! Mommy!" he shouts between bursts of laughter.

What a wonderful child he is! So full of life, energy, and smiles.

I love being a mother. It's what I've always wanted to be since I was a little girl. Mother's Day is very special to me. Especially now. A few years ago I had my hardest Mother's Day ever.

It was my 30th birthday, and after eight years of marriage, we still were not blessed with any children. I watched my sisters and many friends have babies, but none came for me-

But that all changed when our precious son, Vincent, was born. Now I am forever grateful to another mother. You see, I didn't give birth to Vincent. A beautiful young woman conceived him and carried him for nine months.

She had two little ones at home, was not married, and was on welfare. She realized she would not be able to provide a secure home for this tiny one. She loved him so much, she wanted a better life for him. She wanted him to have a mother *and* a father.

She met us and chose us to be his parents through adoption. We were present at his birth and brought him home from the hospital.

For several weeks thereafter I cried easily. I cried for joy at finally being a mother of such a beautiful, precious boy. But I also cried for his birth mother. I cried because of the sacrifice she made. I cried because she had taken such good care of herself so that we could have a wonderfully healthy baby. I cried because of the gift she offered us.

What a gift! Could anyone give us anything of greater value? A million dollars wouldn't come close. I'm sure some of her friends or family members suggested she have an abortion. It makes me shudder to think what could have happened to him. And I cry again. I cry for so many other precious, beautiful babies that are not given the chance to live, to laugh, to love, and to be loved. And I cry for those women with that heavy ache in their heart; that yearning to be called "Mommy" by a little one reaching his arms up to be held.

This Mother's Day, I pray for other young women faced with an unwanted pregnancy. I pray that they will have the love, the strength, and the courage to follow the example of Vincent's birth mother. **She is forever my hero.**

Lori Ramirez

Lori Ramirez is a member of the Board of Directors of Central Illinois Right To Life. This article originally appeared in the Catholic Post. Lori spoke about some of her joyful experiences with adoption at the Sanctity of Life Rally held in January 1998 at Sacred Heart Church in Peoria. Sacred Heart Church is also the site of this

As our mailing list grows and we establish a presence on the internet, the Central Illinois Right To Life office staff needs an IBM compatible 486 or pentium computer, a laser printer, and a fax machine. Can you help by donating or purchasing these items? Call Dennis at (309)565-7133.

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Central Illinois Right To Life Is Now On The Internet !

Yes, Central Illinois Right To Life is on the web. When you visit our site at www.missionnet.com/cirtl/ you will find timely news from the battle for Life and announcements of coming Pro Life events in Central Illinois. All of the previous *Pastors Speak Out* essays are available as well as many past newsletter articles and updated position papers addressing current Pro Life Issues.

Our site has descriptions of, and contact information for, many of our fellow Pro Life groups in Central Illinois. There are also links to the web sites of important local, state, national, and international Pro Life organizations. Facts and statistics about abortion and euthanasia and information about the current law on these issues are on our Abortion Faqs page.

As the web site continues to grow, we will be adding additional features including a directory of local Pro Life Physicians and Churches, Pro Life newsgroups, and email action alerts.

Many thanks to Kris Severenson at Mission Net (www.missionnet.com), for all of his help in putting this project together. Thanks also to Marilyn Moser who created the new graphics for the site and for Central Illinois Life News.

Remember To Be Sure To Visit www.missionnet.com/cirtl/

Central Illinois Right to Life, Inc.

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