

# Central Illinois Life News

## Pastors Speak Out

I

n this column, we share reflections of Pro-Life Pastors from

Central Illinois. The following is by Fr. Bowan Schmitt, Associate Pastor of St. Thomas Church of Peoria, IL. All of the pastor's articles from past issues are available on our web site at <http://www.cirtl.org>. 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.

### Violence: The Fruit of Abortion

I am sure all of us have been affected in some way by the horrific tragedy that occurred at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado (April 1999). Certainly, our entire country grieves at the death of the many High School teens and faculty who were victims of meaningless violence. Sadly, the lives of 13 people were taken away by the bullets of 2 Columbine students; who in the end, took their own lives by committing suicide.

"This tragedy is an outrage," cries the public! . . . "These teens were innocent young men, and women who had their whole lives ahead of them." . . . "They will never have the opportunity to enjoy adulthood, and the wonders of life." . . . "There must be something done to curb this violence!" These types of comments, along with many others, are surfacing in our nation, as our country cries out in disgust and frustration. "What are we to do?" we now ask of each other.

I am convinced that the answer to "What are we to do?" is rooted in the current situation in our country that permits and encourages "legalized abortion". Whether we realize it or not, "legalized abortion" attributes to the great loss of "respect for life" which shows its ugly face in so many ways in our country. The shooting at Columbine High is one of these "ugly faces".

Sadly, as "legalized abortion" continues, Pope John Paul II says, "There will be a



## Coming Events

During coming months, the following pro life events are scheduled in the Peoria area:

**Central Illinois Right To Life Fundraising Garage Sale** Begins Thursday, June 17, 1999 and goes through Saturday, June 19, 1999. The sale will be at the Holy Family School in Peoria. See the enclosed flyers for more information.

**July Fourth Parade:** Members and friends of Central Illinois Right To Life will walk together in the July 4th Parade in West Peoria. Meet at 9:30 AM on the 4th at the West Peoria fire station. Call Sondra McEnroe at 673-4833 for more information.

**Annual 5K Run/Walk:** This year the race will be on August 21st. It will be at Bradley Park in Peoria and will start at 8:00 AM. Trophies are awarded to male and female winners in several age divisions. Contributions are needed to help purchase the trophies for the run. Call Dan at 691-3611 or CIRTl at 685-3034 for additional information.

**Annual Peoria Area Life Chain:** Central Illinois Right to Life will sponsor the annual Life Chain on Sunday, October 3, 1999. Participants will stand in witness to their commitment to the Sanctity of Human Life along University Street and Glen Avenue in Peoria. Don't miss this chance to show your support for the unborn. Call Dan at 691-3611 for more details. Organizational help and church coordinators are also needed.

### Pro Life Events Remembered - Forty Hour Prayer Vigil

In January 1999, members and friends of Central Illinois Right To Life held a Prayer Vigil for forty hours over three days on the sidewalk in front of Peoria's abortion clinic. People from many area churches stood in prayer at this vigil. This was the second year that a Prayer Vigil has been held in conjunction with the Sanctity of Human Life Rally. Our silent prayerful presence focused on divine intervention to prevent the death of more children and for the mothers who will suffer from the loss of those children.

*darkening of our conscience, making (continued on page 2) it increasingly difficult to distinguish between right and wrong, - especially in regard to the respect of human life".*

Is it a wonder that when mothers are able to freely kill innocent babies within their wombs, that others will also begin to think, "it is all right to kill innocent human beings?" Is it a wonder that when a child in a mother's womb is treated as an "object" instead of a "person", that other people in turn, will begin to treat others as "objects", using them only as a "means" to accomplish some end?

*"What are we to do about this violence?"* cries our nation.

In order to "curb violence" and protect innocent lives, our nation must come to understand that every individual is known and loved by God; that every individual has been willed by God and made in His image and likeness; that "human life" is under the special protection of God; and as a result – that every individual must be afforded the first and most fundamental of all human rights – the right to life.

Unfortunately, however, when the murder of an innocent human being is called a "right", as it is now with "legalized abortion", we lose sight of the fact that life is a gift from God, and thereby fail to affirm each person as an individual. Such blindness makes it difficult to "love ourselves". For how can we truly "love ourselves", if we do not think of ourselves as special persons, created and endowed with worth and dignity by God?

Another grave consequence of allowing legalized abortion in our country is that we have created an impersonal environment that makes it extremely difficult for individuals to reach out and truly "love others". If we do not comprehend that we ourselves – as individuals – are precious, have value, dignity, and worth; and are deserving to be treated with love and respect, how can we expect members of our society to treat each other the same way?

Clearly, legalized abortion has engendered in many of us a self-demeaning mentality that we have little or "no self-worth". This mentality, I believe, shines through in the tragic events that took place at Columbine High School. The two shooters, by their actions, revealed that they had little respect for themselves, or for their classmates and faculty!

Would things have been different if the shooters realized that they and their classmates were beloved children of God, loved by Him, and created with an incomparable value and worth? Might this violence have been avoided if the shooters were affirmed and loved more fully?

One thing is certain. If violence is to be overcome, there must be a new purity of heart! There must be an increased realization that the human person, regardless of one's size, health, age, gender, or color, has value because of the simple fact that each man and woman is a person created by God.

When the sanctity of human life is privileged and when our current laws regarding abortion are overturned, we will have a real chance to be able to realize and believe in the dignity of our own humanity, and to be able to love others. Only then will violence be curbed. However, given our present laws regarding abortion, we are a long way from acquiring such sanctity.

*"This tragedy is an outrage",* cries the public! *"These teens were innocent young men, and women who had their whole lives ahead of them."* Should not our nation be shouting similar words every time an innocent child becomes a victim of violence through the abortion industry? Should not our nation be promoting through its legislation the belief that all life is sacred, especially the most innocent -- the unborn?

Focusing solely on gun laws, the makeup of the mass media, or even inter-group hostility, will not bring about a significant reduction of violence in America. The problem is more generic than this. Our culture currently denies us the fundamental right to life. Such disrespect must be changed!

As we approach the new millennium, we must be persons who will bring about change if peace is to replace violence. Everyday, each of us has opportunities to help friends, *(continued on page 6)*

*Seventh Annual Right To Life*  
**Benefit Garage Sale**

**Thursday, June 17, 9 am to 5 pm**

**Friday, June 18, 9 am to 5 pm**

**Saturday, June 19, 8 am to 10 am - Half Price Sale**

**Saturday, June 19, 10 am to 12 pm - \$2 Bag Sale**

**Holy Family School Gym**  
**Corner of Sterling & Gale, In Peoria**

- \*Nice, usable, clean clothing for all sizes \*Clean household items**
- \*Nice, clean linens \*Kitchen items \*Appliances in working condition**
- \*Lawn & garden items \*Craft items \*Exercise equipment \*Nice books**
- \*CDs, tapes and music \*Antiques**

***Donation Drop Off Dates***  
***Monday, June 14, 8 am to 8 pm***  
***Tuesday, June 15, 8 am to 8 pm***

*Sorry, we cannot accept magazines or baked goods or  
large appliances, (refrigerators, washers, etc.)*

*Please, No Junk!*

***Don't Miss This Sale To Beat All Sales!***

**New Central Illinois Right to Life Board Member**

In April 1999, the board of Central Illinois Right To Life added a new at-large member - Liz Boudreau of Peoria, IL. Liz has been active on the Outreach Committee, and is dedicated to the Pro Life Cause. She immediately went to work with other board members on an important project - *establishing pro life billboards in the Peoria Area*. This has been a difficult project, primarily because billboard companies are reluctant to provide space to Pro Life Groups for fear of retaliation by the pro abortion crowd. If you will contribute financially or volunteer on this project, contact Liz at [rmbwood@ocslink.com](mailto:rmbwood@ocslink.com), or at CIRT.L.

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 ... Irreplaceable***

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. Members have also helped organize and contribute to our new internet site. 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\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_
- DONATION : \$5\_\_ \$10\_\_ \$15\_\_ \$25\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_ Thank You!
- VOLUNTEER HELP : Please put my name on your list of volunteers.

# 1999 BENEFIT GARAGE SALE

**PRO-LIFERS, "DO YOU CARE ENOUGH TO HELP?"  
CENTRAL ILLINOIS RIGHT TO LIFE  
7TH ANNUAL BENEFIT GARAGE SALE**

Thursday, June 17, 9 am - 5 pm, Full Price Sale  
Friday, June 18, 9 am - 5 pm, Full Price Sale  
Saturday, June 19, 8 am - 10 am, Half Price Sale  
Saturday, June 19, 10 am - 12 pm, \$2 A Bag Sale  
Holy Family School Gym; Sterling @ Gale Ave, Peoria, IL

**We need donations of :**

- \*Nice, usable, clean clothing for all sizes
  - \*Clean household items in working condition
  - \*Nice, clean linens
  - \*Kitchen items
  - \*Appliances in working condition
  - \*Lawn & garden items
  - \*Craft items
  - \*Exercise equipment
  - \*Nice books
  - \*CDs, tapes and music
  - \*Antiques.
- \*Please, No Torn, Broken, Or Soiled Items. We Cannot Accept Magazines Or Baked Goods or Large Appliances, (Refrigerators, Washers, Etc.)*

**DONATION DROP OFF DATES:**

**Monday, June 14, 8 am - 8 pm  
Tuesday, June 15, 8 am - 8 pm**

*Volunteer Help Is Desperately Needed Monday, Tuesday, And Wednesday Before The Sale, As Well As Thursday, Friday, And Saturday During The Sale, And Immediately After For Clean-Up And Agency Pick-Up. Perhaps Your Church Group Could Sponsor Time Slot At Your Convenience. Remember, We Are A Volunteer Organization. "Working For God Pays Very Little But The Retirement Benefits Are Out Of This World. If You Don't Help, Who Will?" Senior Citizens & Teens Are Welcomed & Encouraged. Also If You Are An Experienced Garage Saler Or Have Organizational Skills Or A Talent For Arranging Displays, We need You!!!*

..... ✂

Please Fill Out And Return To CIRTL At 4100 N War Memorial Drive, Peoria, IL 61614,  
Or Call Lori @ 686-2456 or Dennis @ 565-7133  
[Please Circle Preferred Day(s) And Indicate Time(s) You Can Help.] Thank You !!!

I Can Help Monday, Tuesday, And/Or Wednesday, June 14,15,16.  
Time(s) From When To When \_\_\_\_\_

I Can Help Thursday, Friday, And/Or Saturday, June 17, 18, 19.  
Time(s) From When To When \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

"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.)

family, neighbors, and co-workers, come to know and appreciate the Truth about the "gift of life". Let us not waste these precious opportunities to proclaim that each individual, especially the unborn, has great dignity and worth as a person created and loved by God. With reverence and gentleness, may we always be ready through example to give an explanation why every individual must be afforded the right to life!

I pray that we'll go out and make a difference! Let's help everyone come to know and understand the Truth, -- that all peoples, especially the unborn, are loved by God, that they have great worth and dignity, having been created in His image and likeness, and that they have the right to life! I pray that the tragedy in Colorado will lead our nation to reflect upon seriously, and ask ourselves some important questions concerning "Legalized Abortion":

1. How many people in our country are currently crying out in pain and sorrow every time an innocent baby is aborted?
2. How many news agencies, politicians, parents, and town meetings are gathering together, discussing how "there must be something done to stop this horrible violence that is occurring in the womb of mothers?"
3. How many of us are crying out in sadness saying, "these "young ones" will never have the opportunity to live to enjoy adulthood and the wonders of life?"

It's a shame that our country does not act in response to the loss of "innocent life" that comes as a result of abortion, as we have been in regard to the recent tragedy at Columbine high school.

Is there really any difference between these two acts of violence? If we're honest, we'll answer "No". Certainly the age of the victims is different, but nevertheless, an innocent human being's life is being taken away by one who is so often selfish, or angry. Selfish - about their own wants and desires. Angry - at the situation one is in, and determined to do something about it. In both cases, the innocent victims are helpless to defend themselves against such violent force, and they are both not doing anything to deserve this unjust treatment. Perhaps this quote from a post-war German citizen will make my point:

"When they came for the Poles, I said nothing, for I was not a Pole.  
When they came for the Gypsies, I said nothing, for I was not a Gypsy.  
When they came for the Jews, I said nothing, for I was not a Jew.  
When they came for me, no one said anything, for there was no one left."

If pastors do not take a strong, outspoken, and continuous stand between the smallest of those made in the image of God and the servants of the evil one who would prey upon them, who will? Central Illinois Right To Life is providing essays and sermons for your use as Pastors, from other Pro Life Pastors via our newsletter - and on our web site at [www.cirtl.org/pastors.htm](http://www.cirtl.org/pastors.htm) and [www.cirtl.org/sermons.htm](http://www.cirtl.org/sermons.htm). All these resources are yours to use without obligation.

In addition, we urge Pro Life Pastors to share your sermons and thoughts with the world outside your own congregations. To this end, we urge you to contribute your sermons and thoughts to the growing library of pro life materials on our web site. Your pro life page on the internet has the potential to reach thousands. Send your pro life essays and sermons to Central Illinois Right To Life at the email or mailing address

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, Pentium computer, a laser printer, and a fax machine. Can you help by donating or purchasing these items? Call Dennis at (309)565-7133 or CIRTL at (309)685-3034.

### **Let's Throw Her In The Trash!**

"Let's throw Julie in the trash!" my 6-year old son whispered to me while giving his 3 -year old sister a dirty look. "Vincent, what a terrible thing to say!" I retorted. "I know you're angry at Julie right now, but you should never say things like that!," "What? What did he say?" Julie asked. I certainly was not going to tell her, but before I could say anything Vincent spoke up with a snarl, "I said 'let's throw Julie in the trash' ha ha ha!" Julie broke into a smile and started laughing. Well, at least she wasn't upset, I thought. Vincent started laughing too and they both began joking about throwing each other in the trash. I rolled my eyes and gathered up our wastebaskets. It was the day to put the trash out on the curb.

As I walked into my bedroom, I suddenly stopped and gasped. "Let's throw Julie in the trash." The words echoed in my mind. Tears welled up in my eyes as I realized the significance of Vincent's words. My precious 3-year-old daughter was almost thrown in the trash! Like the pictures of the pre born children discarded like waste in a trash can, my Julie almost suffered the same fate.

When Julie's birthmother was pregnant, she did what so many people believe is the normal course of action for one in her situation. She was in high school; the birthfather had no interest in becoming a father; she was completely unprepared to raise a child. So she made an appointment at an abortion clinic. Her problem would soon be over, she thought, and she could get on with her life.

As the date approached, she was still determined to go through with the abortion. However, through the gentle but honest persuasion of a young pro-life woman who happened to work with her mother, the truth began to emerge that would soon cause a change of mind. When she realized that the abortion not only might not be the end of her problems, but also could actually pose health risks that could even lead to sterilization, she decided, at the last minute not to go through with it. What if she could never have a baby again? The thought was too much to bear. She decided adoption was the only option for her.

Little Julie was born on my birthday. Her birthmother had met us and chose us to be her parents. Could she ever know what a tremendous birthday present she gave me? Does she realize what a gift Julie is to our whole extended family, our friends, our neighbors? Julie's laughter and smiles, her cute and smart little conversations, her beautiful face - how blessed we all are to have her. How many people will be blessed because Julie is here?

On our last birthday, I found myself paying bills at 11:00 p.m. The house was quiet and still. I wrote a check to donate money to a pro-life organization. I decided to include a short note, "This donation is in honor of our daughter, Julie, whose third birthday is today. She almost didn't make it into the world and into our family. Her birthmother had scheduled an abortion. Thank God she changed her mind and I have my wonderful daughter. God bless your work."

I sealed up the envelope, put on a return label and a stamp and put it aside to be mailed with the bills the next day. Then I walked quietly into Julie's room, I knelt down beside her bed. The night-light glowed softly on her face. She looked so beautiful, like an angel. I began to sob and my heart was full with deep gratitude that Julie was alive, that she was here, that she was my precious daughter.

Now, whenever I take out the trash, I think about Vincent's remark. It reminds me to pray for other babies and their mothers caught in the same situation. How beautiful, unique, and special our children are. No child should ever be thrown in the trash!

Lori Ramirez

Lori is a member of the Board of Directors of Central Illinois Right To Life.

# Central Illinois Life News

**A New Web Site - From Central Illinois Right To Life**

Yes, Central Illinois Right To Life is on the web. We now have our own domain. When you visit <http://www.cirtl.org> you will find 140 pages of Pro Life news and perspective and announcements of coming Pro Life events. All of the previous *Pastors Speak Out* essays are available as well as Pro Life sermon outlines, past newsletter articles, and updated position papers addressing Pro Life Issues. There are personal stories on subjects like adoption that will touch your heart. Our site has descriptions of, and contact information for, many of our fellow Pro Life groups in Central Illinois. There are also links to important local, state, national, and international Pro Life organizations.

Facts and statistics about abortion and euthanasia and information about current law affecting 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](http://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 Visit Us At <http://www.cirtl.org> - and tell others to visit too!**

**Central Illinois Right to  
Life, Inc.**

4100 N. War Memorial Drive

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