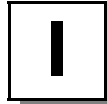


Central Illinois Life News

Pastors Speak Out



In this column, we share reflections of Pro-Life Pastors. For this issue, we feature excerpts from a proclamation on assisted suicide and euthanasia by the Catholic Bishops of Illinois.



Coming Events

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

FACING THE END OF LIFE

When Americans talk about death and dying, they often talk about controversy. Debates rage over assisted suicide and euthanasia, the role of medical technology, and the cost of health care. We, the Bishops of Illinois, write to you to proclaim that as Catholics we need to consider death in the context of our faith. Jesus Christ suffered, died, and rose from the dead. This central truth of our faith provides meaning to our lives. Because of who Jesus is, we are called to eternal life.

Our faith in Christ's resurrection and our hope for eternal life does not, however, remove the worry and concern that many have about how they will die. We must also acknowledge that fear of pain, unnecessary suffering, and the specter of dependency and helplessness are reasons why some are so frightened of the end of life. Some individuals seek control over every aspect of dying, and even ask for assistance in suicide or euthanasia. To those who are so frightened of the end of life they seek to control or hasten it, we respond by a consideration of three crucial issues: the role of medical care at the end of life, the proper understanding of suffering and the value of suffering, and the difficulty we as Americans have with loss of independence and control.

The Role of Medical Care at the End of Life

Our society demands clear answers and sharp distinctions. Catholics intent on faithfully following the dictates of their faith know that the Church's teaching authority does not extend to a definitive

Annual 5K Run/Walk: This year the race will be on August 25th. 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. We also need homemade pies to give away. Call Dan at 691-3611 or CIRTL at 685-3034 for more information.

Annual Peoria Area Life Chain: Central Illinois Right to Life will sponsor the annual Life Chain on Sunday, October 7, 2001. 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.

Walk for Life, Coming in January of 2002, on or near the 29th anniversary of the notorious Supreme Court decision, Roe v. Wade, which put millions of unborn children at risk. After prayer we will walk together to a rally, carrying signs proclaiming our support for the sanctity of all innocent human life.

Sanctity of Human Life Rally, Also coming in January of 2002. The rally will feature special music and prayer along with reports on local Pro Life efforts.

Pro Life Events Remembered - July Fourth Parade:

Members and friends of Central Illinois Right To Life walked together in the July 4th Parade in West Peoria again this year. Call Sondra McEnroe at 685-3034 for information on next year's parade and on other upcoming Pro Life events in the Central Illinois area.

pronouncement on every (continued on page 2)

clinical decision. We often are obliged to do our best in difficult situations guided by a conscience that is informed by the faith of the Church and the competent advice of a caring physician.

There are two extremes that must always be avoided. The first is an attitude that one can end life, either by an action, like a lethal injection, aimed at killing a patient or by deliberately withholding therapy with the goal of bringing about a person's death. The second extreme mistakes our respect for the value of life with vitalism, the erroneous belief that our life on earth has absolute value and all means must be taken for its preservation. The role of medicine is to respect the inestimable value of life while realizing the death of the body is not always a defeat.

Doctors need to learn more about pain and symptom control. Treatment of serious illness must always consider the need to relieve the physical distress of the person suffering as well as recognize the reality that all people will die. Physicians should not impose aggressive life-sustaining therapies on persons for whom such treatments will simply prolong the dying process. Likewise, doctors do wrong who insist on maintaining invasive life support when the patient or his or her family make clear that the burdens of treatment far exceed the benefits.

Those who are not health care professionals also have a responsibility in improving end of life care. First, we need to work with legislators and others to improve access to health care in our country so all individuals with life-threatening illnesses can receive excellent care. Second, as individuals, we need to consider the type of care we would like to receive in the event of a life threatening illness. In Illinois, the Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care allows an individual to appoint a spokesperson to assist the physician in making decisions about care in the event the patient is unable to participate in the decision making process. Third, when we face end of life decisions for ourselves or our family members, we should choose on the basis of a conscience informed by our faith in Jesus Christ and Church teaching. Several points can guide us in formulating an advance directive (such as establishing a Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care) or when we are faced with the necessity of deciding about life-sustaining therapy in the midst of a medical crisis. There is no obligation to resort to every type of therapy in an effort to preserve life regardless of the likelihood of outcome. At the end of chronic illnesses like cancer or dementing illnesses, the benefit of life prolonging therapy is greatly limited. For those who are suffering from metastatic cancer, end-stage congestive heart failure, or advanced Alzheimer's disease or other dementia, it is difficult to see any justification for resuscitation in the event of cardiac arrest or the prolonged use of intubation and mechanical ventilation. The fact that aggressive therapy need not be continued is not to be misconstrued as an allowance that one can refuse ordinary care. Decisions around the refusal or removal of artificial feeding and hydration can be difficult and troubling for families as well as physicians and staff. We want to provide what is the most compassionate and productive care for the good of those we love. When a person can swallow and digest food, it is never appropriate to stop feeding by hand and giving sips of water. On the other hand, to provide artificial feeding and hydration in some cases at the end stages of terminal diseases, like cancer, might directly increase the suffering of the patient and perhaps even, inadvertently, hasten death. In every case and on every occasion we may not do anything that is aimed at causing or hastening the death of a patient. The National Conference of Catholic Bishops has provided principles that assist family members and physicians in making the necessary moral and ethical decisions on the provision of artificial feeding and hydration. Realizing that each case differs from every other case, families, physicians, and staff should feel free to consult with competent Church ethicists and advisors in reaching a decision. This consultation can also provide comfort for the caregivers in knowing that they have made a morally

“Let me say plainly that no man’s blood can be laid at my door, for I did not shrink from declaring all God’s message to you. And now beware! Be sure that you feed and shepherd God’s flock— His church— purchased with His blood— for the Holy Spirit is holding you responsible as overseers.”

The Apostle Paul to The elders of Ephesus in Acts 20:26-28 (Living Bible)

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 ... Deserves Protection!*

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.

Central Illinois Right To Life will be making the Greater Peoria Dining Tour coupons available again this year. Good News - The price is \$25. By purchasing from CIRTL, you fund Pro Life efforts, not to mention saving lots of \$\$\$ on meals in local restaurants. Call 685-3034 for more information or to order your coupons.

Recently, whistle blower Stanek received her second formal reprimand from her employer, (continued on page 4)
(continued from page 6)

Christ Hospital, who cited Stanek for the following violations of company policy. According to Advocate Christ Hospital: Stanek's testimony both publicly and to Congress was not truthful

Stanek is not allowed to encourage pickets on her own time

Stanek is harassing fellow workers and calling them at home

Stanek's testimony is inconsistent

Nurse Stanek denies she has violated hospital policy. The final charge, regarding inconsistencies in her testimony, according to the hospital, arose from a misquote in a local newspaper which the medical facility acknowledges as a misquote. RFM NEWS has learned Stanek, allegedly, could be fired for any of these infractions, according to the reprimand from Christ Hospital.

A legal expert told RFM NEWS the hospital is treading on dangerous grounds by attempting to stifle Stanek's First Amendment rights. Stanek refused to address any of the legal ramifications resulting from Christ Hospital's reprimand with RFM NEWS.

Garage Sale Report

Central Illinois Right To Life held its annual fund-raising garage sale in June at the Holy Family school in Peoria. Thank You! Thank You! to all who participated in this year's event, including students from St Thomas and Notre Dame schools. We depend on the generous workers and on the donation of quality items as well as the many customers. This money helps fund the billboards, mailings, and other local prolife efforts.

Holy Family Parish has hosted our sale for several years. We have been able to save lives in Peoria in part because of their generosity and we are deeply grateful.

Finally, thanks to those who have made CIRTL part of their regular giving throughout the year. Your contributions enable CIRTL to continue to stand for life in Central Illinois.

Upcoming Event Sponsored by the Crisis Pregnancy Center of Canton, IL

Fall Fund Raising Banquet - October 26, 2001 - in Canton

This year, the speaker will be Jill Stanek, the nurse from Christ Hospital near Chicago who blew the whistle on the live birth abortion procedure being used there.

(see above article)

Jill spoke at the Central Illinois Right To Life - Sanctity of Human Life Rally in January of 2001 in Peoria - She is an informative and challenging speaker

Reserve your seat early by calling 647-6126

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.

sound decision that best serves their patient and loved one. (continued on page 5)

We must not let some of the ambiguities of end of life decision making lead us, on one hand, to a neurotic fear that we will incur Christ's judgment for not acting with sufficient care, and on the other hand, to choose reckless or misguided care for our loved ones. In consulting with legitimate Church teaching, our consciences can be formed so that decisions made even in emotionally laden situations are moral, compassionate, and appropriate.

The Place of Suffering

We have emphasized that some may favor assisted suicide and euthanasia because of a fear of untreated pain. Pain should be treated aggressively. Catholic physicians and health care institutions have a solemn obligation to improve care for the dying with excellent symptom control. At the same time, suffering at the end of life is more than pain from the spread of cancer, or shortness of breath from emphysema, or weakness and fatigue from heart failure. Suffering is part of the existential burden of knowing that our time on earth is ending, facing the loss of relationships and the good things of life, and dealing with the loss of independence and freedom that terminal illness often brings. Even as people of faith, we fear death, for it is the end of the life that we have experienced. This too, is part of the suffering that we find as we face our dying.

We believe that suffering has value to the extent that it allows the individual to be open to Jesus Christ and experience the grace of a life transformed by the power of Christ even when, physically, that life is ending. Such suffering is salvific, for the person experiences the love of Christ in a way that recalls Christ's own love as demonstrated in his willing acceptance of death on the cross. There are those who would twist our Catholic appreciation of suffering into a peculiar glorification of pain. This is nonsense and a perverted caricature. Being in pain is useless. Uniting one's suffering with Christ is redemptive. This is part of our faith and a great truth that should not be lost.

Who Controls our Death and Dying?

When we talk about the end of life, we face our limits: not only limits on our human lifespan, but limits on our knowledge, limits on our ability to understand our world and ourselves, our partial apprehension of the truth, and our fragmentary sense of what it means to be human.

Acknowledging limitations and recognizing that we are unable to control all the aspects of our lives is not well accepted in our society. We are urged to be in charge, to control our destiny, and to reject anything that limits our independence and mastery. ...In the face of a culture that asserts individual autonomy and the ability of individuals to control all aspects of life, we worship one who, as St. Paul writes: "though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross." (Phil 2:6-8).

As disciples of Jesus, the one who accepted the limitations of being human, we believe that there is a more excellent way to face the end of life than individualism, isolation, assisted suicide, and euthanasia. Building a civilization of love amidst our current American culture of death will require many things. Most of all, building a civilization of love means we look to Jesus as our model of what it means to be human. ...We ask you to work with us to build a civilization of love that cares for the dying with the dignity and respect they deserve.

Excerpted by Dan Smith of Central Illinois Right To Life, Inc.

Central Illinois Life News

"Jill Stanek and the Born-Alive Infants Protection Bill"

WASHINGTON, D.C., July 2, 2001 (RFM NEWS) By a vote of 98-0, the U.S. Senate passed a Born-Alive amendment to the Patients' Bill of Rights legislation which was approved by the Senate on Friday, June 9th. The identically worded Born-Alive Infants Protection bill passed the U.S. House of Representatives in 2000, with only 15 dissenting votes. The labor and delivery nurse, who first exposed the use of the live-birth abortion method, which prompted the need for Born-Alive Infants Protection legislation, is allegedly continuing to be harassed at her place of employment. Jill Stanek, the whistle blower who first exposed the fact that Advocate Christ Medical Center, located in Oak Lawn, Illinois, uses this abortion procedure, received her second final warning concerning her activism on the live-birth abortion issue. In the live-birth abortion technique, a mother seeking an abortion is pharmaceutically induced into premature labor. The procedure is completed when the pregnant woman's cervix (the opening at the base of the uterus) is dilated, inducing premature birth. Occasionally, live babies are delivered, but then are left to die, in order to complete the abortion. The story, first reported on by WYLL Radio and City News USA in 2000, has since received national attention. Stanek testified last year before the U.S. House Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution and was scheduled to give testimony again on July 12, 2001, in Washington, D. C. Since it was first revealed the method was being used at Christ Hospital and its member medical facilities, owned by Advocate Health Care Systems of Oak Brook, Illinois, it has come to light the procedure is being implemented throughout the nation.

Unity on the essentials of the Sanctity of Human Life is our objective. We are not seeking uniformity of opinion on all matters.. Therefore, some ideas advocated by the authors of articles in Central Illinois Life News or on the Central Illinois Right To Life website may not necessarily reflect the the personal views of all the members and officers of Central Illinois Right To Life, Inc.

Central Illinois Right to Life, Inc.

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