

Central Illinois Life News

Pastors Speak Out

In this column, we usually share reflections of Pro-Life Pastors from Central Illinois and beyond. This newsletter we feature the second installment of an article by CIRTL board member Dan Smith with more to come in future issues.



Coming Events

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

BEATITUDES, BABIES AND BASEBALL
(part 2)

Like the players on a baseball team, the beatitudes perform together and the actions of one lead to the others. The prolife and prochoice implications of the first three beatitudes were the subjects of the first three essays. These three essays here consider the middle three beatitudes from the Sermon on the Mount in Chapter 5 of Matthew's Gospel.

- 4 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will receive it in full.
- 5 Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.
- 6 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

These three are the heart, soul and spirit of the beatitudes. Consider each from the perspective of three relationships: our relationship with God, with His laws and with others, especially the least favored of humanity. Just for fun, the introduction to each discussion tells about a baseball player who has some of the characteristics if the beatitude. How soon can you name the player?

4. The Second Baseman Hungry for Justice. During the struggle for civil rights, this former second baseman wrote to President Eisenhower: "17 million Negroes cannot do as you suggest and wait for the hearts of men to change. We want to enjoy now the rights we feel we are entitled to as Americans. This we cannot do unless we pursue aggressively goals which all other Americans achieved over 150 years ago." Until his death, he was a leader in the civil rights movement, as he implored others: "It is up to us in the north to provide

Annual 5K Run/Walk: This year the race will be on August 24th. 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 6, 2002. 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 2003, on or near the 30th 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 2003. The rally will feature special music and prayer along with reports on local Pro Life efforts.

(continued on page 2)

aid and support to those who are actually bearing the brunt of the fight for equality down south." Even when his fame and fortune were assured, he reflected, "I won't 'have it made' until the most underprivileged Negro in Mississippi can live in equal dignity with anyone else in America." These quotes most accurately reflect the continuous life-long hunger and thirst for justice of the first black major league baseball player, Jackie Robinson.

People hunger for what they need and do not have. When we are oppressed, we naturally hunger for justice for ourselves. The key to this beatitude, however, is how we should hunger and thirst for justice for others. What separates us from animals is this hunger that we feel for others. Considering the three relationships discussed above, when we hunger and thirst for justice, we long to live where the protection of God's law abounds. We labor to lengthen the reach of justice to others, especially our least brothers and sisters whose suffering we feel as our own. Justice follows when we love to lavish gratitude on God for all the gifts He has bestowed on us. In our relationship with God, we know that He does not owe us anything because he has given us everything.

The prochoice position inherently opposes hunger for justice and is complacent toward injustice. It rejects God's law when it supports the violent destruction of the defenseless unborn. It withholds the protection of God's law from the least among us, the unborn. Rather than showing gratitude toward God for His gifts bestowed, this position finds no fault with ungratefully destroying the gift of life itself, even when it is someone else's gift.

Prochoice persons claim justice, however, by support for other causes, many of which in themselves are just. In the words of one, "there are other issues" to consider when deciding which stands to take, which efforts to work for, and which candidates to elect. The solace they find from support for other causes is, however, no substitution for giving to each person what is rightfully owed. This false comfort is, in fact, the antithesis of justice. One cannot hunger and thirst for justice much when one is willing to accept monstrous life destroying injustices to the most dependent class of human beings among us.

Our hunger and thirst for justice concerning abortion begins when we long to live in a society where God's law protecting human life is followed. Abortions do not occur there. We must feel the oppression of abortion as if our own lives were in jeopardy. To paraphrase Jackie Robinson, "It is up to us who are born to provide aid and support to those who are actually bearing the brunt of the fight for life for the unborn." We must adopt, in spirit, the unborn whose lives are threatened, fight to save them and grieve for them when they die. When tempted to put "other issues" first, we must remember that for the unborn, there are no other issues. For every breath we take, we must be grateful to God and we must act to preserve for others their gift of life from God.

5. The Merciful Third Baseman. One of my best friends was in an automobile accident when he was in high school. He was unconscious or semiconscious for months afterwards. A sportscaster who knew of his condition contacted this baseball player to ask him to visit my friend where he lay in the hospital. Without fanfare or any publicity, this star third baseman, who had just completed his most impressive season and won the league's Most Valuable Player Award, not only visited my friend, but he also brought my friend an autographed baseball signed by all of his league's All Stars at the All Star Game that summer. My friend's spirits were rejuvenated when he learned afterwards of this extraordinary visit and extraordinary gift to him. You may know of this extraordinary baseball player as the manager of the world champion New York Yankees, Joe Torre.

Our relationship with Christ is at the center of the fifth beatitude, mercy. First, He forgives us when we are repentant. Second, He teaches us to be merciful to others, especially the least of our brothers and sisters, just as He would do. Third, he also expects us to teach others of God's law and forgiveness so that they can benefit too.

The prochoice position approaches mercy from a different perspective. It seeks no forgiveness from Christ although one of the choices it promotes takes the life of one of His least children. Its concept of mercy toward others does not include them, as if it expects God to stand aside when they are killed. Finally, it expects prolife persons to refrain from teaching others of God's law. That law is contrary to one of the choices that the prochoice position finds acceptable.

The essence of the prochoice position is not connected in relationships to God, His law, or others. While it speaks with compassion toward pregnant mothers in the rare cases where rape or incest caused the pregnancy or where a handicapped child results, it cannot undo the rape, the incest, or the handicapped child. At best, it

“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.

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.

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 years event, including students from local 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. This years sale was a great success and a full truck load of items was donated to Good Will following the sale.

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

Many thanks for all your years of faithful service from the board and members of CIRTL are due to departing board members Lori Ramirez and Mark Lang. Lori was in charge of the Outreach Committee for several years in the 90's and Mark has been the CIRTL Treasurer. Both Lori and Mark will be missed. We Love You - CIRTL

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.

can only stand by, in professed neutrality as to whether the child is killed or not. More frequently, the heart of the prochoice
(continued on page 5)

position is a professed compassion for the more common predicament of the pregnant mother in crisis: seemingly living on the edge of her financial capacity to make ends meet and lacking emotional support from the child's father, who is all too often abusive to her. What distinguishes the prochoice position is that the lifeline thrown out to the mother in crisis is simply an invitation to cast away her unborn child, thereby destroying one of life's most natural relationships.

Afterwards, when the aborted mother is overwhelmed that she has taken the life of her own child, the prochoice position cannot assuage her grief. What rips women apart emotionally after abortion is their just sense of the magnitude of what they did to their own children. What these mothers need is not a god who stands silent afterwards. That god is one whose heart is stone cold, no less an idol than those to which ancient civilizations sacrificed their unwanted, unplanned children. What these mothers need is the God who wraps His arms around those children and whose arms are big enough to enfold them too. Only the true Savior of the world can have mercy for abortion victims, their parents and even the abortionists.

Mercy in the prolife cause requires us to acknowledge that Jesus is the Savior of the aborted mother and the abortionist as well as the aborted child and us. Such a God can and does forgive each of us whenever we repent for transgressing His law. Abortion is not an unforgivable sin. Our actions are to be the image of Christ's mercy. We are to be merciful in our actions toward aborted mothers and abortionists even while we come to the aid of the mothers who give birth to their children. Finally, we cannot stand silent while pregnant mothers consider abortion or aborted mothers experience emotional trauma afterwards. We must plead the cause of the children with conviction and we must help the aborted mothers come to Christ for healing.

6. The Pure-Hearted Shortstop. This shortstop won back-to-back National League Most Valuable Player Awards when his team finished no higher than fifth place. Though he slugged over 20 home runs 13 times and finished his career with 512 home runs, he never played in the World Series. Through thick and thin, he always focused on what was good. His most famous, oft-repeated saying is, "What a great day for baseball. Let's play two!" He is known, loved and respected as Mr. Cub, Ernie Banks.

The Spirit abides in the pure in heart. When the Spirit abides in us, we are overflowing with a love of His law which directs our inner thoughts as well as our external actions toward others, but most especially the least among us. The pure in heart see life in the Spirit as a wonderful feast of the most delicious dishes prepared by the most skilled chef. Though others may choose less desirable meals, some downright poisonously filled with rat poison, the pure in heart keep focused on what is good and direct all their attention to that good.

The prochoice position sees life from a different perspective. It rejoices not in the delicious banquet, but in the fact that people can choose the rat poison instead, if not for themselves, then at least for their smallest offspring. It sees that decision as a private matter, which no one should dare to deprive anyone of. It claims too that all such private choices are to be respected equally. Privacy instead of purity is the principle the prochoice position guards.

In the prolife cause, we should strive to be pure in heart. We must recognize that the root cause of abortion is an inner spiritual struggle where the participants must first deny the unborn the dignity of being considered fully human. If the Spirit is to abide in our hearts, however, there is no room there for us to deny anyone that dignity. There is no room for sex outside of marriage, which deprives people of purity in their own bodies. There is no room for pornography, which denies respect for the other persons used. There is no room for sexism and racism, which deny dignity to whole classes of people. Our inner thoughts as well as our external actions must keep

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Visit our Web Site

focused on what is good. Let us taste this most wonderful feast of life in the Spirit prepared for us and help others to do so likewise. When they are tempted to sample the rat poison let us be the ones to say, "No, have a taste of this good delicacy instead. In fact, let's have two."

To be continued ...

When you visit <http://www.cirtl.org> you will find 150 pages of Pro Life news and perspective and announcements of coming Pro Life events. Most 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. Original, unedited letters to the editor of local newspapers make for

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.

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