



PRIESTS FOR LIFE

Assisting God's people to respond to the evils of abortion and euthanasia.

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ABORTION AND DRUG ABUSE: A DANGEROUS CYCLE

BY JENNIFER MORSON, OUTREACH DIRECTOR

In recent years, more information has been uncovered about the effects of abortion on women. Post Abortion Stress Syndrome, (PASS) is becoming more widely recognized by the medical profession.

Drug abuse is an increasing problem among post-abortive women. A study by the Elliot Institute (www.afterabortion.org) found that women who aborted their first pregnancy are nearly four times more likely to begin abusing drugs. Out of the women surveyed, the majority attributed their substance abuse to an attempt at coping with their abortion. From the statistics gathered in the study, it was concluded that 54,000 women begin to abuse drugs as a result of an abortion. Teenagers were found to be especially at risk for becoming drug abusers after aborting.

The abuse of drugs is widely known to be destructive, both physically and emotionally. An increase of promiscuity has been proven by several

DANGEROUS CYCLE continued on page 2

BULLETIN INSERTS

Priests for Life provides camera-ready sheets of bulletin inserts on various aspects of abortion and euthanasia. Write to us at PO Box 141172, Staten Island, NY 10314 to order them. Following are some of the newest ones:

• Sarah Smith is a young woman from California who survived an abortion after her twin brother was aborted. She now speaks publicly for the pro-life cause, and declares, "My mother's 'choice' was my death sentence." Sarah helps us put a face on the abortion issue. It's not about abstract concepts; it's about real people being destroyed.

• "For Catholics, public virtue is as important as private virtue in building up the common good. In the Catholic tradition, responsible citizenship is a virtue; participation in the political process is a moral obligation. Every believer is called to faithful citizenship, to become an informed, active, and responsible participant in the political process. As we said a year ago, 'We encourage *all citizens*, particularly Catholics, to embrace their citizenship not merely as a duty and privilege, but as an opportunity [more fully] to participate in building the culture of life. Every voice matters in the public forum. Every vote counts. Every act of responsible citizenship is an exercise of significant individual power'" (US Bishops: Faithful Citizenship — Civic Responsibility for a New Millennium, 1999).

PREACHING ON ABORTION IN THE EASTER SEASON

The Easter season provides rich opportunity for preaching on the subject of abortion. Following are some perspectives that can provide a launching point for the development of homilies:

* Easter is the season of the victory of life. When Christ rose from the dead, He did not simply conquer His own death; He conquered *ours*. "Dying you destroyed our death; rising you restored our life." Christ overturned the entire kingdom of death, and robbed it of its power. Because the kingdom of death includes abortion, the victory of Easter includes victory over abortion. It is the basis of our confident proclamation and service of the Gospel of Life.

* Baptismal vows are renewed at Easter, and the Baptismal water is a key symbol in the Easter season. These vows include the rejection of sin, with all its allurements and deceptions. The mentality behind abortion is one such deception. Renewing baptismal vows

PREACHING continued on page 3

IN THIS ISSUE:

Letter from the Apostolic Nuncio	2
Resources	2
Gabriel Project	3
A Former Pro-Choicer	3
Liturgy of the Hours	3
Priest Profile	4
More Bulletin Inserts	4

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"The Spirit God has given us is no cowardly spirit." (2 Tim 1:7)

studies, as well as an increase in Sexually Transmitted Diseases, particularly HIV/AIDS. Other serious effects of drug abuse can include depression, job-related difficulties, relationship problems, and severe health problems.

A related study of post-abortive women found that they are more likely to abuse drugs during subsequent pregnancies. Out of 137 pregnant drug abusers, each woman had an average of 1.5 abortions. A destructive pattern is formed: drug abuse results from a need to escape the pain of an abortion, and becoming pregnant again "replaces" the child lost to abortion. Drug abuse is extremely harmful to an unborn child, and the possibility then exists of miscarriage or severe birth defects. In addition, teen mothers who had prior abortions were nearly three times as likely to report being involved in physical fights and/or threatening situations.

Furthermore, studies have shown that the severity of drug abuse is increased with each repeat abortion. Since nearly half of all aborted women have repeat abortions, this represents a significant group. With each abortion comes an added amount of anxiety, depression, and quite possibly substance abuse.

In addition to drug rehabilitation programs, these women need post-abortion counseling. Otherwise, the root of their substance abuse may not be recovered.

RESOURCES: Contact our office for the following resources:

- "Life and Choice," a booklet containing two years' worth of the published columns of Fr. Frank Pavone. Great material for bulletins, homilies, adult education, students, or simply personal enrichment in relating the abortion problem with common sense and the Catholic Faith. You can also obtain our regular columns on our website, www.priestsforlife.org.

- "RU-486: A Chemical Time Bomb" — In this audio tape, learn how to cut through the myths and slogans about this abortion drug technique.

"I want to be a member of your fine organization. . . Your web page is great. So are your written products. Keep up the good work." — Deacon Gene Townsend

LETTER FROM THE APOSTOLIC NUNCIO

June 2, 1999

Dear Father Pavone and Mr. DeStefano:

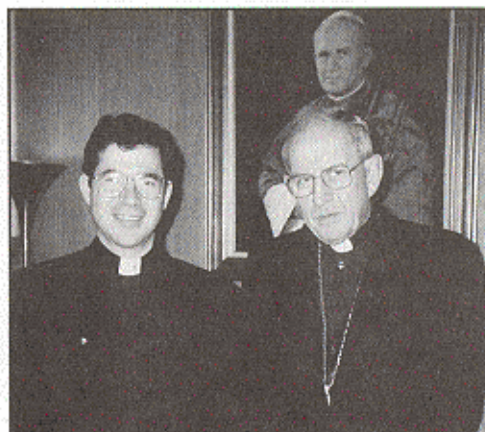
At the beginning of my mission here in the United States of America, it has been my pleasure to know of you and the good work of Priests for Life.

As the personal representative of His Holiness Pope John Paul II in this great country, I can assure you of the Holy Father's deep appreciation for your noble efforts and initiatives on behalf of the Gospel of Life.

Invoking the Lord's abundant blessings upon you and your dedicated collaborators, I remain, with cordial greetings,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Archbishop Gabriel Montalvo



Fr. Frank Pavone with Archbishop Montalvo

A Priests for Life Invitation

Priests for Life is an officially approved Catholic association of priests, deacons, and lay auxiliary members. Members make a special commitment to spread the Church's teachings on the sanctity of every human life from fertilization to natural death. Members benefit from contact with others throughout the country who have a similar commitment and much experience. Priests for Life works closely with diocesan respect life coordinators and in accordance with local diocesan policies. The Board of Directors serve the organization with the permission of their Ordinaries.

Enclosed is my donation of \$ _____

☐ I also hereby enroll as a member of Priests for Life.

Membership entitles one to receive the commitment pledge, regular newsletter, and special updates.

Email Subscription: If you would like to receive the newsletter and Fr. Frank's biweekly column by email, please let us know at pfl@priestsforlife.org

Please join by sending us the following information:

NAME _____

FAX _____

ADDRESS _____

E-MAIL _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

DIOCESE _____

PHONE _____

PARISH _____

PRIESTS FOR LIFE

SUGGESTED DONATION: \$15

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GABRIEL PROJECT

Priests for Life encourages the *Gabriel Project*, an effort by which the local parish becomes a herald of the good news that there are alternatives to abortion, and calls upon the generosity of its congregation to meet the needs of those who come forward. This effort does not *replace* local pregnancy assistance centers; it simply activates the Church to be an agent of practical charity. Following is one of many testimonies regarding this project. Contact us for more details at *Gabriel Info*, PO Box 141172, Staten Island, NY 10314.

Deacon Robert Whitaker is a permanent deacon of the Washington Archdiocese where he serves at St. Ann's Catholic Church. He was ordained in 1993, and is originally from Florida. His parish was the first in Washington, D.C., to introduce the Gabriel Project.

In 1997, Deacon Whitaker was approached by a single mother of his parish. This young woman relied on her father's financial support, and when she told him that she was again pregnant, he threatened to withdraw his help if she did not abort. Since the deacon had been trained in crisis center work, he knew the best thing to do was to ask her for some time to think about her dilemma. Deacon Whitaker started calling all of his pro-life contacts, and that is when he came across the Gabriel Project. After three days, he received a call from a complete stranger, offering to pay the rent of this young mother.



The Gabriel sign at St. Ann's Parish, with some of the Gabriel team — Mary Valle, Deacon Whitaker, Msgr. William Awalt (Pastor) and Catherine Garlett.

Prompted by this success story, St. Ann's then became a Gabriel Project Parish. Initially, St. Ann's parish had eighty volunteers sign up to offer their help. Since the official start of the Gabriel Project on Mother's Day, 1997, twenty-two babies have been born to mother's whom they have helped.

PREACHING continued from page 1

includes renewing our commitment to the sanctity of life. It requires the rejection of the "pro-choice" mentality, which is totally inconsistent with a resolve to be conformed to Christ.

- The Church proclaims that Christ rose in His human body. "Touch me and see! A ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have" (Luke 24:39). The resurrection of the bodies of the dead at the end of time is also a doctrine of the faith. The body is personal. A human being is not a spirit who uses a body, but rather a unity of body and soul. This has immense bearing on the abortion problem, because many deny the significance of the body and therefore the significance of the destruction of the body. "I'm giving the child back to God" is a statement heard fairly often from those about to have abortions. "I don't know when the child receives a soul" is a statement often heard from those who perform abortions. Both statements bypass entirely the importance of the body and what happens to it. The doctrine of bodily resurrection is a powerful antidote to such an attitude.

A FORMER PRO-CHOICER

The Priests for Life office recently received this email about Fr. Frank's *Defending Life* series:

"God bless you and all the people who are fighting for the lives of these innocent children. I have been deeply touched by your words. A couple of years ago I first saw you on EWTN, and I heard you speaking about the right to life. I... never fully understood or fully agreed with all of the positions of the Catholic Church. However, something (probably God) allowed me to be flipping through the channels, when you were on. Something you said grabbed my attention, and I stayed tuned.

I was always pro-choice, and I had "dug my heels in deeper" every time a clinic was bombed. I thought "What kind of pro life is this, anyway, is it only for certain circumstances?"

Well, in the few minutes I heard you speak, something moved me to look inward and reevaluate my position, and over time I gradually changed my position: now I can say that I am against abortion.

I feel that the main reason I was able to change is that God worked through you to reach me, and I have such gratitude for that. You are gifted with eloquence and a commanding presence. You seem to have so much passion and enthusiasm for your work, it really moved me."

WE INVITE YOU TO REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING INTENTIONS AS YOU PRAY THE LITURGY OF THE HOURS:

MARCH INTENTION: That adequate training in pain management options be given to medical professionals.

APRIL INTENTION: That Lenten penance and Easter joy will strengthen the pro-life commitment of God's people.

PRIEST PROFILE-FR. DENNIS C. DAY



Fr. Dennis Day

By ANTHONY DEStEFANO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The son of a gold miner, Fr. Dennis C. Day, Treasurer of the National Right to Life Committee and pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Sandpoint, Idaho, knows well the value of hard, back-breaking labor. Indeed, his whole life has been characterized by a devotion to the most difficult work possible — the defense of the unborn.

Born in Boise, Idaho, in 1950, of "pioneer stock," Fr. Day wanted to become a priest from as far back as he can remember. "I had an absolutely wonderful childhood," he says. "My parents instilled in me a great love for the Church and a tremendous work ethic. I went into Mt. Angel Seminary in Oregon right after 8th grade." Following two years at St. Meinrad College in Indiana, and four at Catholic University in Washington, D.C., Fr. Day was ordained to the priesthood in 1976. He then served in parish assignments in Boise, Emmett and Eagle, Idaho, plus a two-year term as President of Bishop Kelly High School in Boise. He was named pastor of St. Joseph's in 1996 and remains in that position today.

Fr. Day's involvement in the pro-life movement began in 1974, when he attended the very first March For Life in Washington D.C. Feeling a great call to pro-life work, he started organizing events and activities in the Boise area and, in so doing, became the "unofficial" pro-life coordinator of the diocese. In 1978, Bishop Sylvester Treinen, recognizing his outstanding work, named Fr. Day the official diocesan Pro-life Director, a position he held till 1995.

In 1980, Fr. Day attended a National Right to Life Convention and says, "something clicked" in his mind. "Seeing all the diverse, inter and non-denominational, groups of people at the conference, many of whom disagreed with each other strongly on a whole range of other issues, I realized that the pro-life struggle could be a great force for unity in this country. After all, *this* was something we could agree on, *this* was an issue that we could work together on."

He became the Director of Ohio NRLC in 1982, and was named to the National Executive Committee in 1986. In 1995, the Board of NRLC elected him Treasurer. "The key to winning this struggle," Fr. Day believes, "is *persistence*. We must be 'stubborn on behalf of Life,' and that means that we have to keep up our efforts throughout both the victories and defeats, the triumphs and disasters. One of the best ways we can do that is to make sure the troops on the front lines have the resources they need to do their work. In the pro-life movement today, there is no shortage of ideas, and no shortage of energy. What's always been missing is the resources. Wouldn't it be great if every single priest and every single pro-lifer gave \$100 a month to their local NRLC Chapter? They may not have the time to attend all the meetings, but if they at least supported us, financially, we'd finally have the resources we need to get the job done."

Why is Fr. Day so devoted to pro-life work? "Well," he answers, laughing, "I keep picturing myself on Judgement Day, and when I stand before God, I'm counting on the fact that there will be a host of little ones on my side. I guess I'm hoping that they'll be able to get me in on one of the lower rungs."

Fr. Day can be reached at St. Joseph Parish, P.O. Box 279, Sandpoint, Idaho, 83864, phone: (208) 263-3720, or at the office of the National Right to Life Committee, Inc., 419 7th St. N.W., Washington, D.C., 20004, phone: (202)626-8800, fax: (202) 737-9189.

MORE BULLETIN INSERTS

• Every human person is created in the image and likeness of God. The conviction that human life is sacred and that each person has inherent dignity that must be respected in society lies at the heart of Catholic social teaching. Calls to advance human rights are illusions if the right to life itself is subject to attack. We believe that every human life is sacred from conception to natural death; that people are more important than things; and that the measure of every institution is whether or not it enhances the life and dignity of the human person. (US Bishops: Faithful Citizenship - Civic Responsibility for a New Millennium, 1999).

• "It is above all in raising children that the family fulfils its mission to proclaim the Gospel of life. . . . The family celebrates the Gospel of life through daily prayer, both individual prayer and family prayer. The family prays in order to glorify and give thanks to God for the gift of life, and implores his light and strength in order to face times of difficulty and suffering without losing hope. But the celebration which gives meaning to every other form of prayer and worship is found in the family's actual daily life together, if it is a life of love and self-giving" (Pope John Paul II: *The Gospel of Life*, n.92-93).

FOR YOUR BULLETIN: Most priests have indicated their willingness to place a phone number for alternatives to abortion on the cover of their parish bulletin. Would you do the same? Contact us for details.

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