



PRIESTS FOR LIFE

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

10th Anniversary ❖ 1991 - 2001

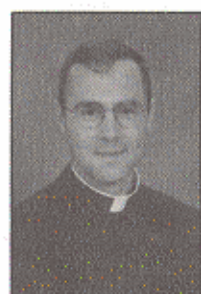
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PRIEST PROFILE: FR. PAUL SCALIA

By ANTHONY DeSTEFANO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Fr. Paul Scalia

In many ways, Fr. Paul Scalia is representative of the amazing crop of priests God has raised up during the pontificate of Pope John Paul II: young, fervent, energetic, brilliant, and orthodox.

Born in 1970, Fr. Scalia lived in Chicago and California for a time as a child, before his family moved to Northern Virginia. He attended Holy Cross College in Boston and Mount St. Mary seminary in Maryland. After studying for three years at North American College in Rome, he was ordained in 1996. Since then, he has served at St. Bernadette's in Springfield, VA and now, St. Patrick's in Fredericksburg.

Fr. Scalia's vocation became clear to him on the way home from making his Confirmation in 8th grade. Two years later, while a sophomore in high school, he became close friends with a priest at the local parish, and his own desire for the priesthood intensified. He considered joining the Jesuits, but after several years of discernment, concluded that what he wanted most was to serve the Church as a diocesan priest.

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PREACHING ON ABORTION IN LENT AND EASTER

The Holy Seasons of Lent and Easter provide a framework for preaching and teaching the pro-life message in the context of *repentance* and of the *victory of life*.

Repentance is a changing of the mind, and with it one's life, away from the path of sin and toward a life of holiness. It is not possible to repent of a sin which one does not recognize or admit is a sin. During Lent, we ask to be delivered from such blindness, and to be forgiven *even our hidden sins*. The application to the abortion problem is clear when we consider that the injustice of this act has been proclaimed as a "right" and a legitimate "choice." Because such respectable elements of society as the Supreme Court, many medical associations, and even some Christian denominations, continue to call abortion a "right," many find it hard to recognize it as a wrong. Part of the purification of Lent involves the *metanoia*, the "change of mind," so necessary in this area.

PREACHING continued on page 2

PRO-LIFE GIFT TO YOUR PEOPLE

Every two weeks, Fr. Frank Pavone issues a 500-word commentary on some aspect of the abortion issue and the pro-life movement. This commentary is available *free* via email or fax (see details below). Thousands of people enjoy this column regularly. It is rooted in the Catholic Faith and illumines many of the connections between doctrines of the Faith and the pro-life commitment. For example, these columns have dealt with the topic of "the Holy Spirit and abortion," showing how the Advocate makes *us* advocates for the weak and vulnerable. The Eucharistic and Marian dimensions of the pro-life commitment have also been topics of discussion.

At the same time, Fr. Frank's column is strongly ecumenical, since one of its frequent themes is that securing justice for the unborn, and helping their parents, provides one of the best practical arenas for collaboration among Christians. Scriptural references abound.

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This newsletter is available by email, along with a bi-weekly column written by Fr. Frank. Subscribe free of charge at subscribe@priestsforlife.org.

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

Easter celebrates the victory of life. Christians do not come to Church on Easter simply to congratulate Jesus for rising from the dead. They come in order to touch *their own victory* over death. In rising, Christ destroyed not only His own death, but ours! He overturned the entire kingdom of death. Death has no more power over Him; nor does it have ultimate power over those who live in Him. The influence of the Church on the world, therefore, is the influence of a community which already participates in victory over death. That influence moves the structures and choices of society away from death and destruction, and toward the affirmation, in word and deed, of the precious gift of life.

Following are two prayers that can be used in these seasons whenever liturgical rites allow prayers in the celebrant's own words:

Lenten Pro-life Prayer

Father of all mercy, we thank you for this season of grace and light. We know that sin has blinded us. Draw us ever closer to you, in prayer and penance. Since you, O God, are light itself, give all your people a clearer understanding of what is sin, and what is virtue. Grant in particular that we may see, as never before, the profound dignity of every human life, including the vulnerable unborn children. We pray through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Easter Pro-life Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, we praise your Resurrection! We celebrate your triumph over the Kingdom of death! May we, your Church, proclaim, celebrate, and serve the victory of life in our world. May we respond to the needs of those who are tempted to destroy the life within them by abortion, and may we help to build a world which rejects every form of violence. You live and reign forever and ever. Amen.

For more insights on pro-life preaching throughout the liturgical year, and for our booklet, "Preaching on Abortion," visit our website, www.priestsforlife.org, or call our orders department, 888-PFL-3448, ext. 237.

These columns draw on Fr. Frank's vast experience with pro-life people around the world. They contain many anecdotes from those who have converted to the pro-life cause — including abortionists and people like his friend, Norma McCorvey (*former Jane Roe of Roe vs. Wade*) — and provide insight into the thinking of abortion supporters, with whom Fr. Frank has constant dialogue.

We invite the clergy and other pro-life groups to offer to their people the opportunity to receive this column by announcing that they need only request it at:

subscribe@priestsforlife.org.

(Those who wish to receive it by fax may request it by faxing (253) 830 9773.) Again, it is totally free of charge, and may be quoted in whole or in part for use in homilies, letters to the editor, or other publications. The past issues of this column have been gathered into the booklet "Life and Choice," available from Priests for Life.

PRAYER INTENTIONS

You are encouraged to remember the following intentions as you pray the Liturgy of the Hours:

MARCH INTENTION: For pro-life organizations which are just starting.

APRIL INTENTION: That homilies on life issues will inspire listeners to effective action.

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 subscribe@priestsforlife.org

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One of the most significant factors in Fr. Scalia's developing vocation was the work he did as a publisher and editor of his college newspaper, *The Fenwick Review*. This periodical not only frequently acted to defend the Catholic Faith, but also served as a strong pro-life voice on campus. Indeed, as a college student Fr. Scalia regularly attended monthly protests at an abortion clinic in Worcester, Mass. As he points out, "Pro-life is one of the touchstones of any vocation, isn't it? You can't really discern a vocation to the priesthood without committing yourself to be unequivocally pro-life. After all, in the Gospel, Christ identifies Himself as "Life" and says He has come so that we may have life, and have it to the full. That's the mission of a priest. Without it, what are we?"

Two of Fr. Scalia's main passions are teaching—"to anyone who will listen"—and helping to build up family life within the parish. Both of these, he says, are connected: "The teaching mission of the Church is crippled without the family."

Fr. Scalia feels very strongly that priests today need to heed the Holy Father's advice *not to be afraid*. "As priests, we shouldn't be afraid to preach about abortion. Yes, we may take a few lumps; and yes, some parishioners might get mad at us and write nasty letters. But you *never* know who is going to be affected by what you say. If we don't preach about this, how is that woman sitting in the pews who is considering having an abortion going to hear the message?"

Fr. Scalia credits Bishop Paul Loverde of the Arlington diocese with providing an excellent example of the kind of pro-life courage priests need to have. The Bishop regularly leads prayer services in front of local abortion clinics and hospitals that perform abortions. "He has been a real shot in the arm to us," says Fr. Scalia. "His actions have demonstrated that this kind of peaceful protest is not only well within our rights, but also something that we *all* should be doing."

Fr. Scalia can be reached at St. Patrick's Church, 12023 Tee Side Drive, Fredericksburg VA, 22407.

THE ANNUNCIATION: AN IMPORTANT PRO-LIFE FEAST

The Magisterium's most comprehensive statement on the sanctity of life, the encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*, was issued on March 25, 1995, the Solemnity of the Annunciation. This feast (observed this year on Monday, March 26) marks the moment at which the Incarnation took place. At Mary's "Fiat," God begins existing in a human nature—a human nature at the earliest stages of its development within Mary's body.

The Annunciation illumines the pro-life message in several ways.

1. *"The Annunciation to Mary inaugurates 'the fullness of time,' the time of the fulfillment of God's promises and preparations. Mary was invited to conceive him in whom the 'whole fullness of deity' would dwell 'bodily' (Catechism of the Catholic Church, n. 484).*

This solemnity marks the moment when God Himself began redeeming the unborn child—and all of us who once were unborn children—by becoming one Himself. Never can the unborn be considered too small to be significant or to possess rights, for God Himself was that small.

WISHFUL THINKING: A REFLECTION ON RU-486

FR. FRANK PAVONE

National Director,
Priests for Life

If you want some good examples of wishful thinking, ask abortion-rights advocates what they think chemical abortion methods like RU-486 will do to the abortion debate. They will use such expressions as "the triumph of medicine over politics" and "the removal of the abortion issue from public demonstrations." They go so far as to claim that the consequent privatization of the procedure will mean that the pro-life movement will not be able to oppose it.

My response to them is "Dream on..."

First of all, chemical abortion can never fully or even mostly replace surgical abortion. Chemical abortion kills babies only in the earliest weeks of pregnancy, and the very ambivalence that surrounds pregnancy and abortion in the minds and emotions of so many girls accounts for the delay that leads to abortions later in pregnancy.

Another factor, reflected in statistics from countries that have offered RU-486 for years, is that most who have abortions prefer surgical methods because they do not want powerful synthetic steroids, with their largely unknown long-term effects, messing up their bodies.

The provision of the chemical technique, furthermore, with its multiple visits to abortion centers, hardly privatizes it.

But let's get more to the heart of the matter. Even if abortion were totally privatized by chemical methods, the mission—and opportunity—of the pro-life

2. "The one who accepted "Life" in the name of all and for the sake of all was Mary, the Virgin Mother; she is thus most closely and personally associated with the Gospel of life. Mary's consent at the Annunciation and her motherhood stand at the very beginning of the mystery of life which Christ came to bestow on humanity (cf. Jn 10:10). Through her acceptance and loving care for the life of the Incarnate Word, human life has been rescued from condemnation to final and eternal death" (*Evangelium Vitae*, 102).

The Annunciation ushers in the kingdom of life in which we find ultimate victory over the forces of death in ourselves and in our world.

3. "The "yes" spoken on the day of the Annunciation reaches full maturity on the day of the Cross, when the time comes for Mary to receive and beget as her children all those who become disciples" (*Evangelium Vitae*, 103).

This feast teaches us the fruitfulness of self-giving. Mary says "yes" to something that is difficult, and continues that "yes" even when the embrace of suffering is extreme. This is precisely the opposite of the behavior which avoids responsibility — a behavior which finds its culmination in abortion.

4. "The angel's Annunciation to Mary is framed by these reassuring words: "Do not be afraid, Mary" and "with God nothing will be impossible" (Lk 1:30, 37). The whole of the Virgin Mother's life is in fact pervaded by the certainty that God is near to her and that he accompanies her with his providential care." (*Evangelium Vitae*, 105).

What happened at the Annunciation overcomes the fear and despair that lead to violence. It has been said that the false god transforms suffering into violence, while the true God transforms violence into suffering. Mary, in her "yes," gives courage to all mothers who know that being a mother will involve some suffering. She assures them that they are not alone. The Christian community, following Mary's example, accompany these mothers with their prayers and their active charity, providing alternatives to abortion.

We suggest special observances on the Feast of the Annunciation, highlighting the powerful message it brings to bear on the abortion issue. Following is a prayer that can be incorporated where appropriate:

Father of Life, your only Son became an unborn child at the courageous assent of the Virgin Mary. May Christ's sharing in our humanity, give new hope to your people, as they see your image in every unborn child. May Mary's embrace of the vocation of motherhood, give new strength to all mothers, and new determination to your Church to assist them in their "yes" to life. We ask this through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

SEX HAS A PRICE TAG

If you want to see a powerful video on the devastating consequences of sexual activity outside of marriage, "Sex Has a Price Tag" is one of them. In this video, Pam Stenzel, a dynamic young woman, brings out clearly some of the tremendous physical, emotional, social and spiritual costs of premarital sexual activity. Pam believes in young people's ability and willingness to make good choices! For information on ordering this educational and motivational tool, call 800-488-1888, ext. 210.

movement would not change in the least. If those who are pregnant can find out who administers chemical abortions, then so can the pro-life movement, and the pro-life movement will be there to protest the providers and provide alternatives for the mothers. Just as doctors who destroy babies and their mothers by surgical methods are increasingly brought to court to account for their malpractice, so will doctors who destroy babies and their mothers by chemical methods.

Why does the abortion-rights movement think that by changing their methods of injustice, we will stop crying out for justice? What makes them imagine that by coming up with new ways to kill children, they can make us stop loving those children and working to save them?

No matter the method of abortion, fundamental questions will still cry out for answers: *Who are the unborn? Are they equal in dignity to the born? Who is responsible for them? Will they be protected and welcomed in a land which declares that all are created equal? Why should the rightful advancement of women — which we support — depend on providing them with license to kill their children?*

Instead of devising new ways to kill, why don't those who support abortion join hands with those who oppose abortion in order to devise new ways to provide for mothers, fathers, and children, especially in difficult circumstances?

To those, then, who prematurely claim victory as they herald chemical abortion methods, *you are dreaming*. And to those who work to advance the right to life, *stay the course, and carry on with joy your mission, which can never grow old!*