

Lifers

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The Pro-life Pyramid

I was sitting at the pro-life meeting last semester in the conference room in the basement of St. Maur’s Seminary Building full of doubts—full of doubts. “Why,” I asked myself, “why is this pro-life cause so important? Out of all the other things that I could be doing with my time and energy, why devote them to this?” I was questioning the cause. So, I thought I would prove why. I decided to show myself logically why this cause was worth my time. Surprisingly, I discovered more than I thought I would.

I created an example for myself. If I had all the rights in the world that a human person should have (personal liberty, personal property, etc.) but if I did not have the right to *life*, would the others be any good? No, of course not. What would be the benefit? None; it would be as useless as a screen door on a submarine. So, the right to life, I reasoned, must be the first and foundational right, because without it, all the other rights are meaningless and futile. Metaphorically, the right to life is like the cement foundation upon which the pyramid of rights is built.

It is the concrete base of a structure, the most important right. That was settled. Life is the most important right. Without it, the pyramid tumbles and falls.

“So,” I thought, “if the right to



life is the most important of all rights, then it must also logically follow that it is the most important right to safeguard and protect.” Am I right? It must be. Just look at ourselves: the things that are most precious to us in our lives are the things that we hold most dearly. We safeguard and protect those most. Therefore, we must protect what is *most* important. The foundation of the pyramid must stay intact. Right? But, you see, therein lays the issue.

The right to life is not being protected. It is being destroyed. The

jackhammer, abortion, is cracking the foundation of our pyramid. I had heard multiple times that millions of nascent lives are being killed every year through abortifacients and abortions. “Well,” I thought to

myself. “Isn’t this directly destroying the pyramid?”

Later, I looked up the legitimate statistics: in America alone, over 825 thousand fetuses were aborted in 2008! Wow. That is like the entire city of Indianapolis, Indiana dropping off the map. Good bye, Indianapolis! This happens every year, unfortunately, in America alone. The pyramid is tumbling and falling.

“So, let me get this straight,” I thought. “The

most important right for me to support is not being supported... Well, hello! Then, I should support it! Come on, let’s do it!” The pyramid needs builders to reform our structure of rights. “I can be this active builder,” I thought, “and the pro-life cause is the builders union.” But how do I do this? Well, I need to devote my time and energy to this cause.

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“Children too are a gift from the Lord, the fruit of the womb, a reward.” – Ps 127: 3

Scenes from the 39th Annual March For Life in Washington, D.C.

I have never been more proud of my diocesan family nor so moved by the Spirit of Life present across our country. From an 80-year old Monsignor to a new convert of 20-some years old; from a dad leading his daughter on the trip to a youth minister bringing along a few of her high school students; from an elderly but energetic mother superior to my very own bishop, we marched together in the cold rain of D.C. to represent the rest of our diocese and manifest our hope in a tomorrow more protective of the weakest and most despised people of our society. – Trevor Downey, Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph

I saw many young men and women marching and demonstrating to the government in disapproval of abortion. I never thought that, despite being a slight percentage of Catholics in America, many people moved to become a mountainous mass and motion; just as is in the Book of Revelation: "And I saw countless people who were with the lamb." I saw young people with the motivation of the same sentence Jesus said to his apostles: "Do not be afraid." This trip is worth fighting for life, Christ, and his Church. – Andres Moreno, Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph

I marched with 40 on-fire high school students from the Diocese of Wichita who were mostly first-time marchers. It was awesome to see them stand up for a cause and put their faith out there for all to see. The youth movement at the March is staggering. Of the estimated 450,000 people present, it is believed that well over half were under the age of 30. This shows me that this is a movement that is just getting started. We are the Pro-Life Generation!

– Clay Kimbro, Diocese of Wichita



I was especially impressed by the number of young people on the March – everywhere I looked there was another group from a college or high school. The youth rally was also very good. There were several great speakers and the homilist at Mass was excellent. Throughout the whole trip, people would tell inspiring stories about their pro-life experiences and why they were pro-life. They inspired me and many other people to do something and reach out to those who need us the most. – Sam Geringer, Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph

It doesn't matter what the race, class, social standing, intellect, or disability of a person may be; we all share the common human bond. People often focus so terribly much on beauty, when inside the confines of every person is where true beauty resides. It is the beauty of life, the beauty of the soul, the beauty that is the reflection of God in each one of us.

– Henry Yeagle, Diocese of Jefferson City

On our return trip, I was reminded of what it means to offer things up with purpose. We decided to share what each of us received from the experience. One was only a seventh grader, but she taught a lot of us humility when she spoke. She said that she had to make a lot of sacrifices, just like the rest of us, but when she was standing in the freezing rain on the streets of D.C., the only thing she could think about was all those babies in danger of being killed. She offered every moment of her discomfort for those innocent souls. What a witness!

– Andrew Reinkemeyer, Diocese of Jefferson City

I never imagined being in Washington, D.C. for a good cause to save many unborn children. It was my first pro-life march. I feel happy because there are many people who defend life, but at the same time I feel sad because abortion is one of the greatest problems in the U.S. and in my country. It is not important to travel 44 hours round trip from Jefferson City to Washington, D.C. The most important thing is that together as a Church we celebrate Life. I think a mother should protect her child and not kill her son.

– Cesar Anicama, Pisco, Peru, studying for the Diocese of Jefferson City



Catholic Corner:

Everyday Pro-Life

During World War II, there was a journalist by the name of Dorothy Thompson. She was one of very few women news commentators at the time and was the first American journalist to be kicked out of Germany for her criticism of Hitler. When she returned to America, she continued to be very outspoken about the war. She is famously quoted as saying, “Peace is not the absence of conflict.” To Thompson, simply having the conflict of World War II end would not be the fulfillment of what she was trying to expose in the Nazis.

Today we could apply Thompson’s statement to the pro-life movement. A culture of life is not simply the absence of abortion, euthanasia, or the unnecessary use of the death penalty. No, a *true* culture of life would be much more than the simple absence of these unjust and selfish actions. The most integral expression of the culture of life would be much more expansive and begins with the decisions we make daily.

Our pro-life work starts with a genuine gift of ourselves. It is only through emptying ourselves of preference and comfort by reaching out to others in need that a greater respect for all life can truly emerge. If we desire for abortion, euthanasia, and the death penalty to be not only illegal but unthinkable, then we must take action in our everyday interactions. Only when we respect the life before us that is in need of loving attention will our culture ever begin to shun the evils it currently embraces.

This readiness to love the life of another with all its baggage, all its burdens, and all its inconvenient circumstances is the call of priesthood: giving of self as mediator, advocate, and father to those who are in need of love. If we desire a culture of life, let it be built right now in the lives we meet every day. For, how can we truly have a culture of life unless instead of focusing on what is convenient and comfortable for us, we “lay down our lives for another”? Abortion, euthanasia, and the unnecessary use of the death penalty did not happen overnight. No, we let them creep in, starting with how we approach those who are inconvenient, needy, and defenseless in our everyday lives.

-Jerome Krug, Archdiocese of Oklahoma City

Remember to contact your congressional representatives concerning the recent HHS mandate. Visit usccb.org/conscience for more information.

(Continuation of The Pro-life Pyramid)

It is *the* most important cause of our day. When choosing between this cause and other important causes, I must choose to devote time and energy to this cause. In some certain ways, I must significantly and *actively* support the pro-life cause. To be more specific, how can I do this? Here are the ways: voting pro-life as the top concern always, praying often and habitually for the success of the pro-life cause, offering up ascetic sacrifices for the cause, defending the cause with others in my words, peacefully picketing for the cause—all of these are prime examples of ways to support the pro-life cause significantly and actively. If I care about the pyramid, I must be an *active* builder.

Later, I thought to myself, “You know who I think sums up this issue better than I ever could? Jesus!” This is what he said: “Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and buffeted the house. But it did not collapse; it had been set solidly on rock. And everyone who listens to these words of mine but does not act on them will be like a fool who built his house on sand. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and buffeted the house. And it collapsed and was completely ruined” (Mt 7:24-27). Let us build our pyramid of rights on rock. Be a builder. Hold a cement trowel in your hand, not a jackhammer. We must build. There’s the logic. Let’s do it.

-Cody Saunders, Diocese of Wichita, KS