

Lifespan

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you.” Jeremiah 1:5

2017 Second Quarter

Worldwide News... [Source: SPUC]

Argentina—If you ever needed proof that pro-abortion feminism is satanic, the images from International Women’s Day constitute proof. Feminists in pink masks pretended to commit an abortion on a woman dressed as the Virgin Mary outside a northern Argentina cathedral as part of an International Women’s Day protest last week. A photo of the protest shows what looks like blood and body parts gushing from between the Virgin Mary’s legs, facilitated by the pink mask-wearing feminists. The woman dressed as the Virgin Mary holds a fist in the air. She appears to be smiling and wearing a rosary around her neck.



Australia—In a move that has stunned the Australian pro-life community, the Supreme Court of Victoria ruled last week that showing a picture of a dead fetus in public is a crime. The Court's reasoning? The public display of dead unborn babies “may be so distressing as to be potentially harmful” and “disgusting, repulsive, repugnant, and offensive having regard to contemporary standards.” Apparently, it is a crime to show the ugliness of abortion, but not a crime to perform or procure the abortion.

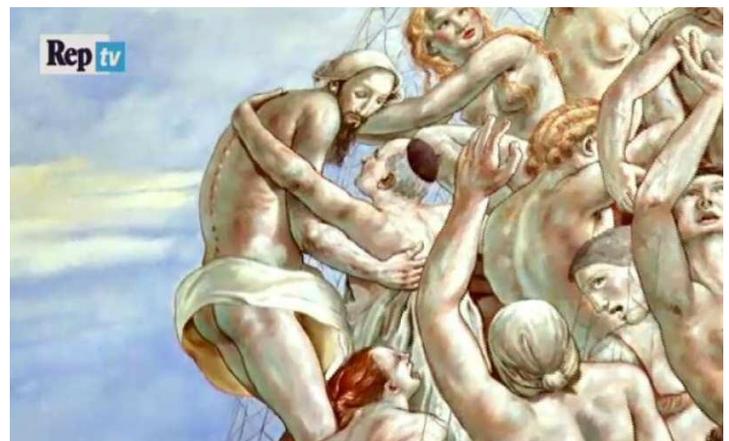
Canada (Quebec)—Marking the one year anniversary of legalized euthanasia, a statistical report demonstrates an alarming trend that will have grave repercussions for the vulnerable and disabled. According to the Protection of Conscience Project, a pro-life watch-dog group, the province’s euthanasia rate almost doubled in the latter half of 2016. In

one year, Quebec’s euthanasia rate surpassed that of Belgium’s after five years. Despite the fact that the vulnerable are being disposed of at an alarming rate, the Canadian Medical Association Journal published a study entitled “Cost Analysis of Medical Assistance in Dying in Canada.” Authors, doctors Aaron Trachtenberg and Braden Manns, produced a cost-benefit analysis that predicted that the province’s legalization of assisted suicide would save Canadian taxpayers as much as \$139 million per year, completely ignoring the fact that such a study would create societal pressure for the seriously ill or terminally ill to choose death as a matter of public duty, and the sooner the better. The brutal utilitarian analysis fails to recognize the value of human life and the complex bonds of family and community.

Canada (Ontario)—Eighty-three of Ontario’s 107 MPPs voted unanimously March 9 to send Bill 89 to the liberal-dominated Standing Committee on Justice Policy. Bill 89 repeals and replaces the existing Child and Family Services Act, which governs child protection services, and adoption and foster care services. It adds “gender identity” and “gender expression” as factors to be considered “in the best interests of the child.” At the same time, Bill 89 deletes the religious faith in which the parents are raising the child as a factor to be considered, and mandates that child protection services instead consider only the child’s own “creed.”

United Nations—The new UN expert on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) issues outlined a strategy for his three-year term before dozens of supportive UN bureaucrats, delegates, and activists in a meeting last week. Vitit Muntarbhorn, the newly appointed UN Independent Expert on sexual orientation and gender identity, spoke of the Sustainable Development Goals and the work of UN agencies to further the goals as a “good entry point for us.” The Thai law professor and homosexual activist also described health, education, and religion as “soft entry points” and cautioned that “sexual orientation and gender identity” are not closed categories, promising to ensure no group is overlooked.

Vatican—A large homoerotic mural commissioned by a leading Vatican prelate at his former Italian cathedral church is coming under strong criticism from Catholic leaders, including founding members of the Vatican’s Pontifical Academy for Life, a pro-family Catholic medical doctor, and a renowned Catholic artist and author.



Critics are saying the work commissioned by Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia is “blasphemous,” “disgusting,” and even “demonic.” “There is a need for reparation for this blasphemous work...it is blasphemy because of the effeminate depiction of Christ in a context that the artist himself said was meant to be ‘erotic,’” said Dr. Thomas Ward, president of the National Association of Catholic Families and former corresponding member of the Pontifical Academy for Life...“It is especially insulting that this image is in the presence of the tabernacle, in the presence of Our Blessed Lord.” Paglia, former bishop of the Italian diocese of Terni-Narni-Amelia where the mural hangs in the cathedral, has been elevated to influential levels of responsibility. Last year, Pope Francis appointed him to head the Pontifical Academy for Life and also made him Grand Chancellor of the St. John Paul II Pontifical Institute for Studies of Marriage and Family. Prior to, he served as head of the Pontifical Council for the Family and oversaw the development and launch of a sex-ed course for teens that was criticized as immoral and scandalous.

National News... [Source: SPUC]

California—The state of California charged pro-life investigators David Daleiden and Sandra Merritt of the Center for Medical Progress (CMP) with 15 crimes. CMP's undercover videos showing Planned Parenthood executives haggling over the prices of aborted baby body parts spurred a Congressional investigation and calls for the abortion company to be stripped of its federal tax dollars. Similar charges were filed against the investigators in Texas and were later thrown out. In addition, a California homosexual senator has introduced a pro-LGBTQ bill that would make it illegal for a long-term care facility to reassign an elderly resident who complains about being given a gender-confused (“transgender”) roommate. The bill, SB 219, the “Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Long-Term Care Facility Resident’s Bill of Rights,” would also force old folks’ homes to allow gender-confused residents to use opposite-sex restrooms. And it would require staff at elderly care facilities to use politically correct pronouns, such as referring to a severely gender-confused man as “she,” under penalty of California law. The bill is sponsored by State Sen. Scott Wiener, an openly homosexual Democrat who successfully sponsored similar legislation as a Supervisor in San Francisco in 2015. Last year, Wiener succeeded another homosexual activist, Sen. Mark Leno, in representing the “gay” Mecca in Sacramento.

Iowa—The Iowa Senate passed a bill to slash Medicaid funding to abortion and “family planning services” provided by Planned Parenthood and other clinics that perform abortions. The bill was approved by a vote of 30-20 along party lines, Republicans in favor, Democrats opposed with one independent—a former Republican—in favor.

Kentucky—Chili’s Grill & Bar Restaurants ended a promotion that saw their franchise owners in Indiana and Kentucky donating 15% of earmarked receipts to local Planned Parenthood operations. Pro-lifers threatened to boycott Chili’s outlets nationwide; afraid of the impact of the boycott, corporate headquarters pulled out of the deal. Boycotts work!

Maryland—Community outrage led to the cancellation of a teens-only sex-ed class that was to be held at the community’s public library. The class, “Straight Talk: Sex Ed for Teens,” for ages 12–17 was scheduled to be led by “sex educator” Bianca Palmisano. The promotional ads promised to provide an ask-anything, parent-free session in a “safe, teens-only space.” Concerned parents looked Palmisano’s background and were shocked to find that Palmisano is a lesbian pole dancer who encourages parents to enable their children’s transgender inclinations. Palmisano also advocates for the legalization of prostitution. The fact that the city officials thought this woman was fit to teach a class to young impressionable children only demonstrates the need for parents to be hyper-vigilant.

New Hampshire—The state House introduced legislation in January that would add “gender (self) identity” to the state’s anti-discrimination laws (HB-478). The bill took a significant step forward at a Health, Human Services and Elderly Affairs Committee public hearing where supporters packed the room with LGBTQ activists.

New Mexico—A self-described “faithful” Catholic has introduced legislation forcing Christian healthcare workers to refer for abortions and Christian hospitals to perform them. State Senator Gerald Ortiz y Pino introduced Senate Bill 282, which would repeal religious exemptions for participating in abortions. SB-282 states, “A hospital shall not refuse to provide a reproductive health service if withholding the reproductive health service would result in or prolong a serious risk to the patient’s life or health; and, where a failure to provide the reproductive health service would violate the medical standard of care owed the patient. The legislation defines “reproductive health service” as including “termination of pregnancy.”

Ohio—The Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act went into effect in Ohio recently, protecting pre-born children from 20 weeks’ gestation. The new state law was passed last year and signed by Ohio Governor John Kasich in December. It restricts abortions at 20 weeks or greater or when the unborn child can feel pain. Physicians could face fourth-degree felony charges and up to 18 months in prison for violating the law. Women and the fathers of unborn babies also could sue doctors for performing illegal abortions.

DC—The high court refused to hear a “transgender” case brought by Gavin Grimm, a gender-confused Virginia teenager who identifies as “male” and wants to use boys’ restrooms at her high school. The Supreme Court vacated and remanded *Gloucester County School Board v. Gavin Grimm* back to the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals “for further consideration.” The directive was issued “in light of the guidance document” from the Trump administration reversing one from Obama that pushed schools to let “transgender” students use opposite-sex restrooms and locker rooms.

Local News...

Pennsylvania—Planned Parenthood has closed two additional clinics in the first quarter of 2017 after shutting down three at the end of last year throughout the state. Clinics in Easton and Bristol, both located on the far eastern side of the state, closed

on March 30th. Neither clinic performed surgical abortions, but both referred for abortion and the Easton clinic did perform chemical abortions. In December 2016, Planned Parenthood shut down clinics in Chambersburg, Gettysburg and Scranton.

In other news, a high school student and his parents sued their school district in federal court after he was exposed unwillingly to an undressed female classmate while changing in a locker room.

An official from the Boyertown Area School District told the male student to “tolerate” having a girl in the boys’ locker room in response to his request for help in protecting his privacy, according to Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF). The official also told the boy twice to make changing with students of the opposite sex as “natural” as he can.

Did You Know...

- **Did you know that** a new report and video from the PA Family Institute showed each Planned Parenthood affiliate in Pennsylvania does not provide prenatal services, even though they listed “prenatal” online? Planned Parenthood has since removed “prenatal” from their booking appointments website.
- **Did you know that** a well-known Satanic organization in the United States held a national “hugs and kisses” Valentine’s Day event as part of a pro-abortion fundraiser? The Satanic Temple, a liberal group known for its run-ins with Christian groups across the country, sponsored the event asking its supporters give others hugs and kisses in exchange for a donation.
- **Did you know that** *Teen Vogue* published an article that urged teens to buy an angry uterus heating pad, feminist poetry, and pro-abortion needlepoint for friends who have just had an abortion? The article, originally titled *11 Thoughtful Gifts Your Friend Who Just Had an Abortion Would Appreciate*, is now *What to Get a Friend Post-Abortion*. In this past year alone, *Teen Vogue* has published at least 63 articles promoting abortion, most of which appeared under the “wellness section.” Girls, drop your subscription!
- **Did you know that** 67–85% of pregnancies with a diagnosis of Down Syndrome were aborted from 1995–2011 in the U.S.? The results were published in the medical journal *Prenatal Diagnosis* in 2012.
- **Did you know that** leading population control activist Paul Ehrlich spoke at a Vatican conference on “how to save the natural world” despite the outcry of many faithful Catholics? Ehrlich supports forced abortion and mass sterilization and has compared human babies to garbage. He has also said the Catholic Church’s moral teachings are “just as unethical” as a “terrorist act,” and suggested sex-selective abortion might be a better fate for girls than being born.
- **Did you know that** the world’s first “transgender doll” will go on sale this summer, based on the life of 16-year-old male-to-female “transgender” activist and cable TV star Jazz Jennings? A prototype of the “transgender doll” debuted at the New York Toy Fair in February.

- **Did you know that** *Lifetime TV* has aired a new program, *Mary Kills People*, that portrays single mother Mary Harris, as “an ER doctor by day, but by night, she and her partner, a former plastic surgeon, moonlight as underground angels of death and help terminally ill patients slip away on their own terms”? The TV drama is a disturbing reflection of the growing attitude in today’s culture that those who are in need of relief from suffering should be “put down” like the family pet.
- **Did you know that** the United Kingdom’s Human Fertilization and Embryo Authority has granted Newcastle University permission to begin creating human embryos who have three parents? The UK first approved three-parent embryos in 2015. This will be the first time scientists will carry out the procedure, which involves killing human embryos to manufacture another. The embryo, which will have DNA from two mothers and one father, was created in this way so as to modify the genetic code to avoid certain genetic diseases. Bioethicists say this technique involves a multitude of ethical and moral problems.
- **Did you know that** a UK mother watched her premature baby die before her eyes as the hospital staff refused care as the child was born one week before the 24-week abortion cutoff? Ashley Glass’s son Dylan was born at just 23 weeks gestation, and although children born this prematurely have an 18 percent greater chance of survival with medical intervention, Dylan did not receive any. Instead, he fought to breathe for four minutes after birth until he died. His mother is now fighting the law she believes led to his death.
- **Did you know that** Vimeo.com, the largest platform for high-end videos on the Internet, recently removed all of the videos from the Christian network of ministries to homosexuals, Restored Hope Network—an outstanding ministry that helps those who come to them for healing from wounds that have led to sexual brokenness? Homosexuals have proven and significant levels of brokenness, such as histories of childhood sexual abuse, depression, suicidal ideation, substance abuse, domestic violence, etc. Research abounds at CDC and APA websites. Entire books have been written on the brokenness, not only by ministries like this, but by secular and gay authors as well. But the “thought police” at Vimeo don’t want it known that homosexuals have sexual brokenness. They have declared that such an idea is “demeaning.” They also consider the idea that Jesus Christ can bring healing to sexual brokenness both offensive and demeaning. Recently, Vimeo removed all 850 of their award-winning videos—videos that feature many of the world’s top experts in helping sexually broken people, as well as testimonies of individuals whose lives have been rescued from destruction as a direct result of the help found in the videos. In the past few years, Vimeo.com began dictating new “political correctness” rules for the many nonprofits, churches, ministries and corporate entities, some of whom had spent tens of thousands of dollars establishing their presence during almost a decade on the site. Vimeo’s new rules imposed restrictions on what they could post on their own well-

established pages. One would expect such rules to revolve around eliminating pro-pedophile videos or rape videos or pornographic videos, or videos about terrorism, jihad or other violent acts. No—those were okay. Put “jihad” in Vimeo’s search bar and you get 2,233 selections. Put “lust” + Vimeo in a Google search and one option is a porn filmmaker site, among 288 other sites containing 2,872 videos. Search on Google for “rape” + Vimeo and you get 2,817 videos. Google “teen rape” + Vimeo and you get at least one rape video. Vimeo offers “sugar daddy” dating sites for the enrichment of children and teens everywhere who are looking for some extra cash, plus all kinds of gay porn videos. You can even watch some of Allen Ginsberg’s speech glorifying NAMBLA (a society that promotes the molestation of children) on Vimeo.

Political Action Corner...

1. Parents, do not take your children to see the Disney movie remake of *Beauty and the Beast*. This version falls far from the beloved animated classic. The cinematic remake features a gay subplot, according to the film’s director, thought to be a first in the film company’s history. Belle’s suitor Gaston, played by actor Luke Evans, has a male admirer via the new characterization of his manservant LeFou (Josh Gad). Sadly, this is not Disney’s first time as a cheerleader for the gay/lesbian agenda and it is aimed directly at young, impressionable children. Several same-sex couples were shown kissing in the latest episode of *Star vs. the Forces of Evil*, a cartoon geared toward children and adolescents that airs on Disney XD, the company’s digital cable and satellite television channel. In an interview, Michael Eisner, CEO of Disney, claimed that over 40% of the company’s employees were gay. If he is correct in his assertion, it is no surprise that the company has pushed so hard to normalize homosexuality. Several other nations have taken issue with the film as well. The Russian government opted to give an age 16+ rating to *Beauty and the Beast* amid calls for a ban. The Malaysian government approved a version of the film for release after the pro-gay scene was removed. Disney then cancelled its release in the nation without explanation. Apparently, their gay agenda was far more important to Disney than the profits from its release in Malaysia.

Action Steps:

Please take the time to send a message to Disney to stop polluting the hearts and minds of our children. Sign the petition: <https://lifepetitions.com/petition/disney-includes-exclusively-gay-moment-in-beauty-and-the-beast-sign-the-boycott>.

2. Transgender activist and PA Physician General, Dr. “Rachel” Levine, is not pleased that President Trump has rescinded Obama’s bathroom edict that demanded public schools open their bathrooms and locker and shower rooms to the opposite sex. In fact, he took part in an “emergency” roundtable discussion to discuss the dilemma. The American Family Association of PA warned Governor Wolf that if nominated, Levine would use that position to further the transgender agenda. Ignoring the warnings, the Senate unanimously confirmed Levine saying there was no reason to oppose the nomination because “she” was qualified.

Action Steps:

Contact Governor Tom Wolf and let him know your thoughts on PA’s Physician General using that position as a bully pulpit to further the transgender agenda and not to fulfill the duties of advising the governor on medical and public health issues.

3. *The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told* will soon show at Out Front Theatre Company in Atlanta, Georgia, and this blasphemous play is a vile insult to the Mother of God!—because she is insulted as a lesbian!

Press reports say *The Most Fabulous Story Ever Told* portrays Our Lady as a lesbian. It presents a homosexual version of the Old Testament, with scenes of “Adam and Steve” in full frontal nudity in the original script. According to *The New York Times*, the playwright himself is a homosexual, and this is how he describes his play:

“I wanted the Garden of Eden in Central Park, and Mary as a lesbian mother, which would certainly help me comprehend immaculate conception.”

Action steps: *Send your e-protest message to:*

<https://americanneedsfatima.org/forms/E17066A.html>

100 Days of Trump: The pro-life sea change underway

As pro-lifers, we are used to being the underdogs and used to a tidal wave of opposition and defeat from a world that is increasingly rejecting God and His laws. However, that does not mean that we cannot take a moment to celebrate the departure of Obama and the hopeful presidency of Donald Trump, who has promised to be a pro-life leader. In his first 100 days, Trump has:

- Nominated pro-life SCOTUS (Supreme Court Justice of the U.S.)
- Initiated a repeal of Obama Care and its HHS mandate and penalties against religious institutions and Christian businesses
- Moved to restore religious liberty protections against the LGBT agenda
- Appointed Betsy DeVos, an education secretary who supports school choice
- Moved to repeal the Johnson amendments that tie the hands of religious institutions from engaging in political speech
- Has continued to appoint pro-life supporters and supports defunding of PP
- Restored and enhanced the Mexico City Policy to ban federal abortion funding support for foreign organizations and acted on extending the Hyde Amendment
- Vice President Pence personally addressed marchers at the March for Life 2017
- Remove LBGT content from official White House websites
- After eight long years of practical godlessness of the Obama years, God has thankfully been brought back into the federal government by the Trump administration. Trump’s inauguration included a record six invocations by varied religious leaders

Must See...

1. The entire 2017 March for Life can be seen in a time-lapse video taken from the vantage point of a high roof top. The video shows the march from beginning to end. Literally hundreds of thousands of marchers can be seen walking along the route in the 88 second video. It's absolutely fascinating. <https://www.lifesitenews.com/pulse/time-lapse-rooftop-video-reveals-gigantic-numbers-at-2017-march-for-life>
2. Just like the satanic-inspired Woman's Day demonstrations in Argentina, evil shows its true colors at the International Woman's Day in Ireland. In the clip listed below, you will see women who identify themselves as witches, Satanists, transgendered, and gay all calling for the right to kill a defenseless child, some up until the day before birth, without apology.
Watch the video:
<https://www.facebook.com/FlipsideIreland/videos/673822969483538/>

RIP...

Norma McCorvey

(1947-2017)

Norma McCorvey was both villain and hero; her name recognized by millions as the woman at the center of the case that legalized abortion in the U.S. in 1973. The truth is that Norma was, in 1973, a useful pawn of powerful forces that wanted our nation to embrace the unthinkable—the killing of inconvenient lives, sex without responsibility. Norma later regretted her role in *Roe v. Wade*, found Christ, became a Catholic and a strong pro-life voice. May she rest in peace.

For the rest of us, here are some things you may not have realized about this woman:

1. **She never had an abortion.**
2. **She asked her doctor to put her in touch with an adoptive/foster attorney. That attorney put her in touch with pro-aborts.** (Those two women were Sarah Weddington [the attorney] and Linda Coffee) .
3. **She agreed to be the leading plaintiff for “free pizza & beer.”**
4. **She never stepped foot in a courtroom.**
5. **She read about the legalization of abortion in the newspaper. She was never contacted after signing.**
6. **In 1995, Norma McCorvey declared herself pro-life.**
7. **She had attempted to have the case reopened and overturned.**

Norma dedicated herself to pro-life work, founded her own ministry, “Roe No More,” in 1997, and spoke out against abortion and for life. In 2003, Norma went to court in an attempt to overturn *Roe v. Wade*. The Fifth Circuit appeals court dismissed her case; the U.S. Supreme Court subsequently denied a review. In 1998 and 2005, she testified before Congress about the injustices of abortion and the deceit underlying *Roe v. Wade*.

Reflections...

So This is Where We Have Come

By: Anne Marie DiCarlo

The other day, I saw a headline in the news that joyfully celebrated the journey of a father and son in their “transition” to mother and daughter and I almost cried. The article lauded the courage of the pair in discovering their true identities and overcoming the many barriers to achieve their dream.

According to the article, Eric Maison, 39, began socially transitioning to become female in the fall of 2015, after his son Corey, 15, started his hormone treatment to become female. Eric Maison's medical transition began in 2016. Corey, then 14, was born with the same name but was assigned male sex at birth. According to Maison, Corey has been identifying as female since he was 2 years old. Corey said “she” was inspired by transgender activist Jazz Jennings and saw a therapist who helped “her” transition from a boy to a girl. Jennings, who was assigned male sex at birth, stars in the TLC reality TV series “I Am Jazz,” which documents “her” life as a transgender youth.

Rather than heaping praise on a tragically confused and mentally disordered father and son, we should, as a society, be helping them to find the right treatment to understand the root of their sexual confusion and hatred of their own sexual identity. As Christians, we should know that God does not make mistakes; our sexual identity is a gift to each of us, just as our very existence is. We're are male or female as God designed from the moment of conception and to reject that basic component of our humanity is to reject God's Divine Plan.

It is interesting to note that the news article used the terminology “assigned sex at birth” as if the reality of being a man or woman was completely arbitrary and without basis in objective physical reality. The presence of male or female genitalia is completely disregarded.

The frightening thing about this denial of physical reality is that it creates an environment in which there is no reality, no tangible truth. It is relativism run amok. We can look back at the homosexual movement's success to see where this will take us. Those who wanted deviancy to be redefined propagated the lie that a person is “born gay,” that sexual preference is not a choice but a state of being. If that is true, then the next logical step is to redefine the homosexual act as normal and good, something to be encouraged. Fast forward to today, we now have “gay marriage” and the persecution of Christians who dare to speak out against it.

Just as “born gay” was a lie, so is “born the wrong sex.” If we do not stand against the tide of moral relativism engulfing society, we will be a culture without any boundaries, where any act, no matter how deviant or evil, will be defended and celebrated.

A Portrait of Courage for Our Time...

(Excerpted from: Lifesite News, March 23, 2017 by Michael Cook)

On Saturday, March 18, another hero of conscience was beatified in Bolzano by the Catholic Church, Josef Mayr-Nusser.

Mayr-Nusser was actually an Italian citizen from the South Tyrol, a German-speaking enclave in northern Italy. Born in 1910, the fourth of seven children, he worked as a cashier in a company in Bolzano.

He was a member of Catholic Action and St. Vincent de Paul and spent much of his spare time visiting and caring for the poor. He also became passionately interested in St. Thomas More, especially in his letters from prison, and the challenge of taking a stand based on conscience.

When Mussolini joined the Fascist Axis in 1939, most of the German-speaking citizens of South Tyrol moved across the border into Germany. Mayr-Nusser, however, was disgusted by the Fascists and Nazis and stayed in Italy. In 1942 he married and a year later a son, Albert, was born.

In 1943 Italy switched sides and German troops occupied northern Italy. German-speakers were forced to join the Wehrmacht.

In September 1944 Josef was conscripted into the SS and taken with other recruits to Könitz in western Prussia for three weeks of training. From there he wrote to his wife: "Pray for me that in the hour of testing I may act without fear and hesitation according to the dictates of God and of my conscience."

On October 4, his unit was to take the oath of loyalty to Adolf Hitler. But he refused. "I cannot take an oath to Hitler in the name of God," he declared. "I cannot do it because my faith and conscience do not allow it." He was adamant, even though his comrades tried to persuade him to take the "meaningless" oath. "If no one ever finds the courage to tell them that they don't agree with their Nazi ideology nothing will ever change," he told them.

He was arrested, imprisoned and transferred to Danzig for trial. Condemned in January 1945 for undermining military morale, he was sentenced to death. On the way to Dachau in a cattle car, weakened by starvation and feverish with dysentery, he died at Erlangen on February 24.

The explanation for his courageous act of resistance can be found in an observation he had once made about the Fascist cult of leadership: "To give witness today is our only and our most effective weapon."

Notable Quotables...

"I wanted to express my perplexity that arose from some parts of the teaching of Francis, especially after Amoris Laetitia. To sum them up: on the one hand, I see a certain superficiality, on the other hand an ambiguity.

"I especially see superficiality in three distinct arguments: the unity of Christians, the acceptance of migrants, and the dialogue with Islam. With regards to the unity of Christians, when the Pope asks to leave out some theological aspects in order to concentrate on things that Christians of different confessions have in common, he seems to me to be risking wanting to di-

vide by zero. The Church is not a welfare office, or at least that is not her first role. If everything is reduced to social work, without awareness of theological fundamentals, then there is risk to dilute the faith and to cut away the basis of everything. Furthermore, without theological depth the dialogue also remains generic 'benevolence.'

"We should never lose sight of the fundamental question of truth.

"In regard to migrants, it seems to me that the Pope is too generic when he says to open the doors without thinking about the problem of the defense of the Christian identity and the European identity especially. It is true that Europe is composed of different cultures, but it is also true that there would be no Europe—as we know it today—were it not for Christianity, and also today's Europe has known moments in history during which it had to defend itself against Islam. Concerning dialogue with Islam, I think that the Pope is superficial when he affirms that extremists exist in all religions. This is surely true, but it is equally true that Islam has a particular problem with violence and the origins of the problem are within the Koran. It is a given fact that we cannot ignore and the best way of helping our Muslim brothers is to make them realize it.

"The ambiguity lies mostly with Francis' teaching of mercy. God is without doubt a merciful father, but it is not possible to separate mercy from justice. If we do so, then we risk transforming mercy into God's duty and the obtainment of mercy into man's right. It is not like that. Mercy is a gift offered for those who are open to conversion, to penance, and to recognition of their sin. Furthermore, mercy is not the soft slap of a father who forgets all. If it were like that, then the principle of personal responsibility would be defeated and liberty would be self-abased. We have to ask ourselves in the end: a generic psychological-physical well-being or the salvation of the soul? If we do not ask for salvation, then we risk putting man in the center, not God."

Aldo Maria Valli, Vatican journalist for the Italian TV station TG1 and author of *266 Jorge Maria Bergoglio, Franciscus*

Prayer for the Unborn:

Heavenly Father, in Your love for us, protect against the wickedness of the devil, those helpless little ones to whom You have given the gift of life.

Touch with pity the hearts of those women pregnant in our world today who are not thinking of motherhood.

Help them to see that the child they carry is made in Your image—as well as theirs—made for eternal life.

Dispel their fear and selfishness and give them true womanly hearts to love their babies and give them birth and all the needed care that a mother can give.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, Your Son, Our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and Holy Spirit, One God, forever and ever. Amen.

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