

Lifespan

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

2018 Second Quarter

Worldwide News... [Source: SPUC]

Austria—Using *Amoris Laetitia* as justification, the Diocese of Linz in Austria invited homosexual couples to participate in its traditional St. Valentine’s Day blessing. The decision to do so came after the recent debate over the German bishops’ initiative to bless homosexual unions, proving yet again that heresy and false teaching have a tendency to extrapolate rapidly in areas of the church already plagued by modern secularism.

Bermuda—The United Kingdom has decided not to attempt to block Bermuda’s recent decision to repeal same-sex marriage. After Governor Rankin approved the nation’s Domestic Partner Act on February 7th which replaced the May 2017 Supreme Court ruling that redefined marriage to include homosexuals, many feared that its colonial big brother, the UK, would nullify the nation’s new law. Thankfully, they have let Bermudians rule their own destiny and define their own culture.

Britain—Like the Charlie Gard case that garnered worldwide attention, another vulnerable child has been delivered a death sentence at the hands of an English judge. Justice Alistair MacDonald of the High Court decreed that it was not in the “best interests” of 11-month-old Isaiah Haastrup to continue living, despite his parents’ wishes that the hospital do everything necessary to keep their son alive. Isaiah lost oxygen to the brain at birth resulting in brain damage and breathing difficulties. The boy is not comatose and does react to his mother’s voice and touch.

Canada—Three justices of the Ontario Superior Court unanimously agreed Wednesday that the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO) policy requiring doctors to “effectively” refer patients for medical practices they conscientiously object to—notably euthanasia and abortion—does, in fact, violate their Charter right to religious freedom. The court ruled that in light of the goal of “ensuring access to health care,” the CPSO effective referral policy presents “reasonable limit on religious freedom, demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.” In other words, the rights of pro-lifers do not matter. In addition, Ontario instituted a new law with regards to pro-life pickets at abortion clinics that clearly is an infringement on free speech. It is now an offense, punishable by punitive fines and prison, to “attempt to advise or persuade” someone to refrain from having an abortion, or to “attempt to inform a person concerning issues related to abortion services,” or to “attempt to perform an act of disapproval [of abortion]” in any way, if the attempt is made within 50m (or up to 150m) of an abortion clinic. “Access zones” can also be created around hospitals and pharmacies by regulation, up to 150m in every direction.

Haiti—The deputy chief executive of Oxfam, the international, pro-abortion, pro-contraception charity has resigned after reports that the agency had hired earthquake victims as prostitutes. Oxfam then allegedly covered up and minimized how its officials had used earthquake victims, some of whom were possibly underage, for sex.

Hong Kong—Faithful Catholics continue to pray and hope that the Vatican will not capitulate to the Communist Chinese government’s push for control of the appointment of the Church’s bishops. At a recent prayer service of over 200 attendees, an anonymous priest spoke of the danger of division, a sentiment expressed by Hong Kong’s Cardinal Zen who has pleaded with the Pope not to allow the government to choose prelates as such appointments would be men who would never be faithful to the Church’s teachings and authentic Catholics. Zen has pointed out in plain language that such a move by the Vatican would be tantamount to a betrayal of the faithful underground Church that to this day is heavily persecuted by the Communist regime.

Ireland—As the battle to protect the pro-life constitution of this largely Catholic nation continues, the Save the 8th Campaign has launched a new platform to give a voice to those who have experienced firsthand the reality of legalized abortion. The #MyAbortionStory shares the stories of former abortion workers and nurses who have seen children who survived abortion and women hurt by abortion and will include billboards and social media videos. The group hopes to touch the hearts and mind of the public before the protections for the unborn in the Irish 8th Amendment are overturned.

Netherlands—A popular clothing manufacturer has stirred anger among many families in the Netherlands after choosing to run a sexually explicit advertising campaign for men’s suiting. The ads, which appear on posters and billboards, depict men in homoerotic poses. More than 5000 of these advertisements have been posted in Holland. In response, 10 men belonging to the Dutch pro-family organization Stichting Civitas Christiana held a demonstration in Nijmegen’s Keizer Karelplein Square on March 10th. They all wore suits. A counter-protest of approximately 150 LGBT activists, including members of Antifa, descended on the square and verbally and physically attacked the peaceful demonstrators, illustrating their complete lack of “tolerance.” Ironically, they were not wearing suits.

Norway—Terese and Leif Kristiansen are currently living through one of a parent’s worst nightmares: their 12-year-old son, Kai, was removed from the family home in As, Norway by force earlier this month. Kai attempted to run away from the police and social workers in order to stay with his family, and so the little boy was chased down, tackled in the snow, and dragged away. The boy has only been allowed to speak to his mother once since his state abduction, and his parents do not even know where their son is being kept. Insanely enough, the Kristiansens are not accused of any abusive behavior towards their son. Rather, the parents had grown increasingly concerned about the bullying their son faced at school and had made the decision to homeschool him. The Kristiansens had informed the school of their decision—homeschooling isn’t illegal in Norway—and had also informed Barnevernet, the “child protection

agency” that showed up to take their son away. The reason given for this government kidnapping was rife with painful irony: Apparently, social workers were concerned that if Kai were homeschooled, he would not be appropriately “socialized.” They didn’t comment on the trauma they had inflicted by removing a boy from a loving home by force and against his will.

Spain—The Spanish province of Andalucía has promulgated a law imposing LGBT indoctrination on families, schools, the media, and the medical profession, seeking the “prevention of LGBT-phobic attitudes, in the social sphere, or that of health, education, recreation and sports, the family, or in other areas.” The new law applies to the many Catholic schools that have a government charter. The Andalucía law prohibits anyone from “repeatedly using degrading expressions for reasons of sexual orientation, sexual identity, or gender expression” in any form of media, including Internet social media. It also requires the government to ensure that the media “adopts, by way of self-regulation, ethical codes that incorporate the respect of equality and the prohibition of discrimination for reasons of sexual orientation and gender identity, whether in informational content or the language used.” Unbelievably, it also establishes that children have a “right” to puberty-blocking drugs, so that they can “avoid the development of secondary sexual characteristics that are undesired.” And lastly, the law prevents those who suffer from homosexual attractions or gender confusion from obtaining psychological help, rendering illegal “aversive therapies or any other procedure that involves an attempt at conversion, elimination, or suppression of one’s self-perceived sexual orientation or gender identity.”

National News... [Source: SPUC]

Delaware—The state House is currently considering an assisted suicide bill that would allow the mentally incompetent to be killed. The Delaware End of Life Options Act (HB160), introduced by Paul Baumbach, D, contains language that targets the “intellectually disabled.”

Indiana—Planned Parenthood and the ACLU have joined together to fight the implementation of an Indiana law, signed by then-governor Mike Pence, that bans abortions based on race, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, or diagnosis of disability. The law also directs that the remains of aborted babies be cremated and not simply disposed as trash, which is the current procedure of many abortion clinics. One would think that the ACLU, which touts itself as the defender of rights and liberties, would want to protect the marginalized. Their participation in this battle at the federal appeals court level unmasks their real priority.

Iowa—On March 1st, the Iowa Senate passed landmark pro-life legislation known as the “Heartbeat Bill,” which, if put into law, would outlaw aborting babies with detectable heartbeats. A fetus’ heart begins to form around 21 days into pregnancy, and can be detected on ultrasounds at this time. The state’s Republican-controlled upper chamber approved the bill in a 30-20 vote along party lines. It now awaits a vote by the state’s lower chamber—also controlled by a Republican majority that would make it a felony for doctors to commit abortions after detecting a fetal heartbeat. The only exception would be for pregnancies that threaten a mother’s life.

Kansas—Fighting against the powerful LGBT transgender push, the state’s Republicans voted to oppose all efforts to validate transgender identity. The resolution adopted affirms “God’s design for gender as determined by biological sex and not by self-perception.” Bravo!

Kentucky—On March 12th, the state House voted 71-1 to ban dismemberment abortions. Euphemistically called a “Dilation and Evacuation (D&E)” by the abortion movement, this method of abortion is commonly used on babies in the second trimester of pregnancy.

Michigan—A black market body parts dealer will stand trial after evidence gathered from a raid of the businessman’s warehouse exposed the operation. Arthur Rathburn and his wife stand accused of selling and renting deceased human cadavers. Among the bodies discovered in the raid were four intact bodies of human fetuses in their second trimester, submerged in a liquid that included brain tissue. An examination of the fetuses indicated that they were born alive during botched abortions. Ironically, in the same month, a judge sentenced five pro-life activists to probation, community service (determined by the judge) and fines and restricted them from going within 500 feet of any abortion facility in the US. The crime in question? The five entered an abortion facility and distributed red roses to the women inside, peacefully asking them to choose life.

Mississippi—In a victory for religious freedom, the United States Supreme Court let stand a Mississippi law protecting Christians and other religious people from punishment by the government when they decline to provide services for same-sex “wedding” ceremonies. The nation’s highest court declined to hear an appeal of Mississippi’s “Protecting Freedom of Conscience from Government Discrimination Act,” signed into law by pro-life Governor Phil Bryant in April 2016, but blocked ever since. The pattern of obstruction of legally enacted laws by over-reaching courts continues, however. A federal judge has temporarily blocked Mississippi’s new ban on abortions at 15 weeks, less than 24 hours after it was signed into law. The Associated Press reports that U.S. District Judge Carlton Reeves has granted a temporary restraining order against the enforcement of HB 1510, the law Mississippi Gov. Phil Bryant signed prohibiting abortions from being performed beyond fifteen weeks for any reason other than physical medical emergencies or severe fetal abnormalities.

New Mexico—The New Mexico Attorney General won’t investigate his state’s flagship university and a late-term abortion facility for selling baby body parts, despite an ongoing FBI inquiry, the urging of a Congressional committee, and the suspension of a university researcher for her involvement in the “transfer” of body parts. New Mexico Attorney General Hector Balderas, a Democrat, informed the U.S. House Select Investigative Panel on Infant Lives that he wasn’t interested in pursuing the case via a letter on January 4, 2018. The New Mexico Medical Board, however, has chosen to launch an investigation into a notorious late-term abortion facility run by Curtis Boyd after a 23-year-old patient died following an abortion. Keisha Marie Atkins had a late-term abortion on January 31st. Three days later she returned to the clinic with labored breathing and signs of sepsis, a life threatening infection. She was not transported by emergency ambulance and when she did arrive at the

hospital, it was determined that a D&E abortion was necessary. Atkins suffered a cardiac arrest and died. Interestingly, it is Boyd's clinic that is the largest source of body parts for the above-mentioned university.

New York—What was once a Catholic celebration of a beloved patron saint has become a mockery of all things Catholic. The newly elected gay Prime Minister of Ireland marched at the head of New York City's 257th St. Patrick's Day Parade. Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar was wedged between his homosexual partner, Matt Barrett, and pro-LGBT Democrat Governor of New York, Andrew Cuomo, as they paraded up 5th Avenue. The Prime Minister also attended Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral where Cardinal Dolan greeted him.

Ohio—In a case that should shock and alarm anyone who cherishes a free America, a Juvenile Court judge forced parents to give up legal custody of their daughter after the mother and father said they opposed the girl's decision to identify as a "boy" and transition to being male. Hamilton County Juvenile Court Judge Sylvia Sieve Hendon awarded full custody to the girl's maternal grandparents in a case that raises grave concerns about parental rights in the era of self-proclaimed "gender identity." The judge awarded custody to the maternal grandparents on the basis that they were more open-minded to the sex change procedure. The teen in question expressed her desire to become male and threatened to kill herself. The parents, wisely realizing transition was not in the best interest of a confused and troubled teen, sought out Christian counseling instead.

Oregon—The state Senate passed House Bill 4135 in February by a vote of 17-12. Touted as an update to Oregon's Advance Directive Form, critics say the bill paves the way for healthcare givers to remove access to food and water for vulnerable Oregonians with illnesses such as dementia and Alzheimer's.

Utah—The Utah House passed a bill outlawing abortion of babies with Down syndrome. The bill now awaits final approval from Utah's Senate. House Bill 205, dubbed the Down syndrome Nondiscrimination Abortion Act, passed the state House February 5 by an overwhelming margin (54-17). The bill prohibits abortionists from intentionally performing an abortion due to Down syndrome. It also specifies, among other things, that doctors must provide information to women carrying a child diagnosed with Down Syndrome.

Washington—Legislation passed by the State Senate effectively legalizes commercial surrogacy in the state of Washington, a move that will encourage the rental of wombs and the sale of children as commodities, further eroding the sanctity of human life. SB6037 is an extremely bad and dangerous piece of legislation. As the bill does not require any of the parties involved be residents of Washington—not the donors, nor the surrogate, nor those purchasing the child—Washington will become a global destination for the trafficking of children. Additionally, the "intended parents" need not be genetically connected to the child. In other words, it means that children born of reproductive technologies are subject—by law—to a completely fabricated family tree. Further, "intended parents" can be any combination of adults. They can be any gender, married or not, and the best part: living *or* deceased. That's

right. It means a dead, non-biologically related person can be named in birth records. Neither does this bill limit the number of "intended parents" to two. Section 513 permits the adjudication of "more than two parents" for a child. So there is a very real possibility that five men, for example, could create a child through surrogacy and all have the power of the state enforcing their parental rights. The final decision on the bill rests with the House of Representatives, who will hopefully have the fortitude to reject this legislation.

Nationwide...

1. The U.S. House of Representatives just passed landmark tax reform legislation that includes a key provision affirming the humanity of children from the moment of conception. "The bill allows unborn children to qualify for education savings accounts, called '529 Plans,'" said Andrew Guernsey, senior legislative assistant at the Family Research Council (FRC). This is "a big pro-life win," he continued, "It gets the unborn recognized in the tax code." "This is the same tax code that actually subsidizes abortion—that incentivises healthcare coverage that includes abortion—so it's about time we start to turn the tide on the tax code from its pro-abortion bias, to finally start giving some recognition that unborn children are people too."
2. The U.S. House voted 237 to 189 to pass the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act, banning most abortions after 20 weeks, the point at which science has proven that the pre-born baby can feel pain. Current research even suggests that babies at that age feel pain more acutely than adults and can survive for a time after its limbs are torn off.
3. The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) is finally officially investigating Planned Parenthood for selling baby body parts, more than two years after the release of the Center for Medical Progress (CMP) videos.
4. President Trump is pulling the United States out of a UN agency that advocates for abortion, homosexuality, and radical sex education for young children. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has for years pushed for pro-abortion and pro-LGBT topics to be taught to children. The U.S.'s withdrawal from the controversial UN agency took effect on December 31, 2017. In April 2017, Trump withdrew U.S. support from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) over its participation in China's forced abortion regime.
5. President Donald Trump's Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) established a new division within HHS's civil rights office to enforce conscience protection and religious freedom for healthcare workers. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced the creation of the Conscience and Religious Freedom Division of the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) that will enforce "laws and regulations that protect conscience and prohibit coercion on issues such as abortion and assisted suicide" and others in HHS-funded or conducted programs. It will also enforce statutes protecting "the free exercise of religion and prohibit discrimination" in HHS programs.
6. The Trump Administration's Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is ending the Teen Pregnancy Pre-

vention Program (TPP) two years early. Planned Parenthood—America’s largest abortion vendor—and several other TPP grant recipients are suing over losing grant money. TPP began under the Obama administration.

7. The US Senate voted against the late term abortion ban known as the Pain Capable Unborn Child Protection Act despite enormous support for the measure around the nation. The 14 Catholic senators who voted against the ban are:

Maria Cantwell—Washington
Susan Collins—Maine
Dick Durbin—Illinois
Kirsten Gillibrand—New York
Heidi Heitkamp—North Dakota
Tim Kaine—Virginia
Patrick Leahy—Vermont
Ed Markey—Massachusetts
Catherine Cortez Masto—Nevada
Claire McCaskill—Missouri
Bob Menendez—New Jersey
Lisa Murkowski—Alaska
Patty Murray—Washington
Jack Reed—Rhode Island

Did You Know...

- **Did you know that** a designer behind an “LGBT luxury brand” is defending the use of a 9-year-old drag queen to advertise a sequined onesie alongside a “BDSM Bondage Leather Star and Chain Dress,” bondage-themed nipple pasties, and glittery anatomy-highlighting men’s underwear? House of Mann, run by Brandon Hilton, is a Charlotte, North Carolina-based online shop that sells clothing and lingerie for drag queens and gay men. It uses “vegan leather,” sequins, and various bondage and sex motifs to make its products.
- **Did you know that** high rates of drug abuse, sexual abuse and risky sexual behavior are common among the gender confused? HIV rates are extremely high for gay and bisexual young men aged 13 to 24. Nearly 40 percent of homeless youth identify as LGBT.
- **Did you know that** Georgetown University announced this week that it would offer LGBT-only campus housing? Strange move for a university that claims to be Catholic and based on Jesuit values. Stranger still that the same university presented Dick Durbin, D-IL, with a special award for exemplary public service. I suppose they are referring to his unwavering support of abortion, particularly late-term abortion.
- **Did you know that** Disney is considering making the character Elsa from the popular children’s animation gay? The sequel, *Frozen 2*, is to be released next year.
- **Did you know that** a 38-year-old man accused of sexually assaulting three girls eight and under said in his defense that he is really a “9-year-old trapped in an adult’s body?” Accused pedophile Joseph Roman told the Chicago police this fiction when confessing to the crimes.
- **Did you know that** the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Washington, D.C., passed a resolution last week to stop using masculine pronouns for God in future updates to its

Book of Common Prayer? I guess God is no longer male according to the politically correct.

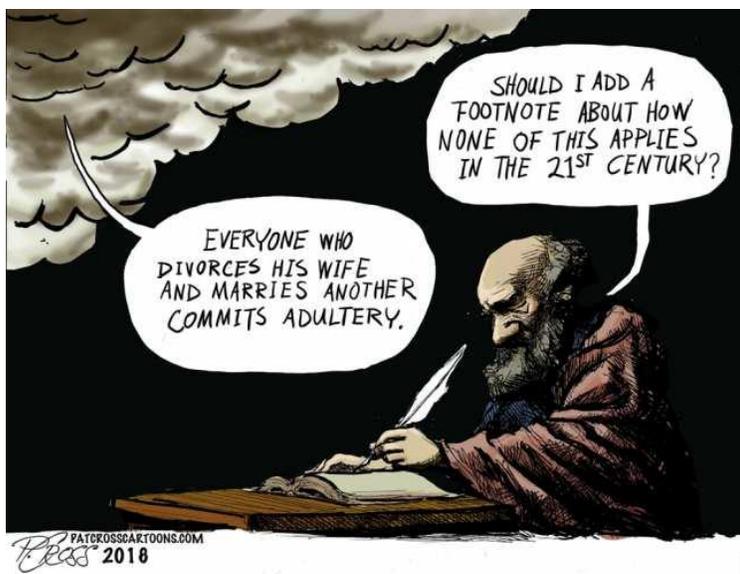
- **Did you know that** a local children’s book aimed at preschoolers shows two homosexual men in bed? The preschool series **Tinyville Town**’s fourth book, *I’m a Librarian*, shows two homosexual men in bed. Although there have been other books featuring “gay couples,” this is the first to portray them in bed together.
- **Did you know that** a Washington state school district has paused a sex education course after an instructor told a 12-year-old girl her enjoyment of fishing and basketball meant she was transgendered? Seattle Fox affiliate Q13 reports that Jason Peterson, single father of five in the Sequim School District, says his daughter came home crying after a November class where she was told the sports she liked “were boy things,” which meant that “she was a boy inside and that she was gay.”
- **Did you know that** a newly developed contraceptive pill for men, now in trials, works by reducing the presence of testosterone in adult males to levels typically found only in prepubescent boys and girls? One of the side effects among some of the test subjects is decreased libido, also a common side effect of female contraceptives.
- **Did you know that** a rewrite of the beloved *Little Women* classic by Louisa May Alcott features a gay Jo? The modern version of *Little Women* will be called *Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy*, and—you guessed it—Jo March is a lesbian. “In this modernized retelling,” *EW* explains, “the March family is blended, multiracial and LGBTQ inclusive, with updates making it resonant to an even wider swath of today’s young readers.”
- **Did you know that** a stunning new book about the impact of euthanasia in Belgium reveals that nurses are choosing to quit their jobs rather than kill people? In “Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide: Lessons from Belgium”, Professor Benoit Beuselink, a cancer doctor, reported that personnel are leaving palliative care departments, saying the wards are at risk of becoming “houses of euthanasia.”
- **Did you know that** a shocking 1,029 people were euthanized in Ontario in the first 18 months after Canada legalized the practice, according to the provincial coroner’s report? The data was uncovered by Patricia Maloney and published on her blog *Run With Life*.
- **Did you know that** Google, Twitter and Facebook all work to censor conservative news and religious views? Facebook and Google employ liberal fact checkers like the Southern Poverty Law Center, a biased left wing advocacy group, and Twitter uses a technique known as “shadow banning.”
- **Did you know that** the latest iPhone update has deliberately removed Good Friday and Easter Sunday from users’ calendars? The default setting on iOS devices is for U.S. holidays, which include Thanksgiving, Christmas and Independence Day. The Alternate Calendars option includes Chinese, Hebrew and Islamic holy days, but Christian holy days are absent from the list on iOS 11.2.5. After receiving a large number of complaints, the Christian holy days suddenly reappeared without comment from Apple.

- **Did you know what** an abortionist's answer was to the question as to whether or not unborn babies scream during an abortion? Pre-born babies don't scream as they're aborted, because "I transect the cord first so there's really no opportunity," according to Leah Torres, an abortionist with a big Twitter presence. She tweeted that if the babies she kills are developed enough to have larynxes, she snips "the cord" so they don't scream. Torres later deleted the tweet.
- **Did you know that** a newly-released Pew Research survey indicates that American Catholics' Mass attendance has dropped during the Francis pontificate, and that roughly three-quarters of U.S. Catholics think Pope Francis has made the Church more accepting of homosexuality? Seven in ten American Catholics said they thought Pope Francis has made the Church more accepting of divorce and remarriage. The year before the pontificate of Pope Francis began—during Pope Benedict XVI's papacy—41 percent of Catholics in the U.S. attended Mass weekly. Now, only 38 percent of respondents said they attend Mass every week.

Catholic Watch...

Clarity on Catholic Teaching

1. Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, who later became Pope Benedict XVI, explained the moral difference between abortion and capital punishment in his 2004 letter "Worthiness to Receive Holy Communion: General Principles": *"Not all moral issues have the same moral weight as abortion and euthanasia. For example, if a Catholic were to be at odds with the Holy Father on the application of capital punishment or on the decision to wage war, he would not for that reason be considered unworthy to present himself to receive Holy Communion. While the Church exhorts civil authorities to seek peace, not war, and to exercise discretion and mercy in imposing punishment on criminals, it may still be permissible to take up arms to repel an aggressor or to have recourse to capital punishment. There may be a legitimate diversity of opinion even among Catholics about waging war and applying the death penalty, but not however with regard to abortion and euthanasia."*



2. St. Pope John Paul left us with thoughts to guide us through the current crisis of confusion in the Church. His words, excerpted from his address to participants in a study meeting on responsible procreation in June of 1987 are perhaps more relevant today than ever before:

"...The difficulties you encounter vary in nature. The first, and in a certain sense the most serious, is that also in the Christian community, voices have been heard and are heard that call into question the truth of the Church's teaching. This teaching was expressed forcefully by Vatican II, by the encyclical Humanae Vitae, by the apostolic exhortation Familiaris Consortio, and by the recent instruction "The gift of life." In this regard, a serious responsibility emerges: those who place themselves in open contrast with the law of God, authentically taught by the Church, guide spouses on a wrong path. What the Church teaches about contraception is not a matter of free discussion among theologians. Teaching the contrary is tantamount to inducing the moral conscience of the spouses into error.

The second difficulty is constituted by the fact that many think that the Christian teaching, although true, is nonetheless unfeasible, at least in some circumstances. As the Tradition of the Church has constantly taught, God does not command the impossible but every commandment also entails a gift of grace, which helps human freedom to fulfill it. Yet constant prayer, frequent recourse to the sacraments and the exercise of conjugal chastity are needed. Your commitment, then, must not be limited to teaching only a method for controlling human fertility. This information should be inserted into the context of a complete educational plan, which addresses the person of the spouses, considered in their integrity. Without this anthropological context, what you propose would risk being misunderstood. You are clearly convinced of this, for you have always put a correct anthropological and ethical reflection at the foundation of your courses.

Today more than yesterday, man is again beginning to feel the need for truth and right reason in his daily experience. Always be ready to say, without ambiguity, the truth about the good and evil regarding man and the family."

Notable Quotables...

"Hope has two beautiful daughters: their names are anger and courage. Anger that things are the way they are. Courage to make them the way they ought to be."

— Saint Augustine

Reflections...

Thoughts on the 2018 March For Life

By: Anne Marie DiCarlo

I can say with some degree of certainty that back in 1973, the year abortion was legalized in the US, that no participant in that very first March For Life thought that he or she would still be marching when their great grandchildren were born.

It is a sad realization that the hardness of heart that has blinded people to the truth that life begins at conception has not melted away after so many years, so many advances in science and medicine, and so many lost lives.

This year's theme, "Love Saves Lives" was well chosen. The pro-life movement has slowly chipped away at the pro-choice position, one woman, one heart at a time. There were many stories shared at the Rally that were moving and meaningful, but the one that touched me the most was the story told by Sr. Bethany Madonna of Sisters of Life. Sister Bethany and her fellow sisters work with women in crisis pregnancy by providing housing, counseling, and care, both practical and spiritual. Sister Bethany shared the story of Raquel, a scared pregnant girl who needed the help of the sisters to have her baby. Although Raquel believed abortion was wrong, she felt that she could never tell another woman not to have an abortion. That thinking, shared by so many people today, would change for Raquel. As her pregnancy progressed, the sisters arranged for Raquel to have the necessary pre-natal care she required at the nearby hospital. While in the elevator on the way to the doctor's office, another pregnant woman got on. Raquel, visibly pregnant at this time, struck up a conversation with the young woman, telling her that her son was going to be strong and blessed, taking the woman's hand to feel the kicks of her unborn baby. The other woman asked Raquel why her son was going to be "blessed." Raquel answered, "Because he's here." It was then that the other woman shared with Raquel that she was planning to have an abortion.

Raquel's reply was truly inspired by the Holy Spirit. She said, "You're not going to have an abortion, you're going to have a baby girl...and you're going to name her Raquel, after me...my name is Raquel Jasmine and don't you forget!"

Two years later, Raquel met that same woman again, at the doctor's office. She was pushing a stroller with twins inside. The woman instantly recognized Raquel and with tears in her eyes, told Raquel that because of her words that day in the elevator, her beautiful girls were alive. Their names? Well, you could have guessed: Raquel and Jasmine.

Sister Bethany finished her story with a beautiful truth: "It was such a small thing, this loving exchange, and the impact reaches in to eternity...You may not see the impact of your love, but God sees it. The love in your hearts is totally unique to you...and your love saves lives."

Our love does save lives and souls as well. We need to have the courage to speak and not hide behind the platitude of "I can't tell someone else what to do."

We need to be courageous and persevering, even when mocked and ridiculed by those who claim to be so much more enlightened than we. Worry not. If you fear that you will not find the words, ask the Holy Spirit and He will speak through you.

Remember, the battle is His to win; we just need to carry on and love boldly!



Reflections...

And The Devil Smiled

By: Todd Starnes, Fox News Contributor, 2/15/18

Another American high school has been turned into a killing field. And the nation wonders why. What has happened to our country? Well, I'm going to answer that question for you. And the answer may leave you a bit unsettled because the answer is politically incorrect.

You see—I believe there is a God—but I also believe there is a Devil. And I see his hand at work in our country. And I have no doubt that he is smiling at the chaos and the carnage that has scarred the land of the free. We've raised a generation to believe that truth is relative—that there is no right or wrong.

And the Devil smiled.

They kicked God out of the public marketplace, banned Bibles and prayer in school.

And the Devil smiled.

Tens of millions of unborn babies have been slaughtered in the name of choice.

And the Devil smiled.

The traditional family has been redefined, broken homes raising broken kids.

And the Devil smiled.

We've taught a generation there are no consequences for bad behavior—no personal responsibility.

And the Devil smiled.

Our movies and music and games glorify violence and gore. Relationships have been poisoned by pornography.

And the Devil smiled.

What's happening across America is about wickedness—a war with the forces of darkness—good versus evil.

The politicians and pundits would have you believe this is not about God—it's about politics and mental illness and gun control.

And the Devil smiled.

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