



LOVE SAVES LIVES

MARCH FOR LIFE

2018 THEME

From the Pastor's Desk

The annual March for Life in Washington, D.C., takes place this Friday. Literally hundreds thousands of people from all over the nation will march in D.C. They do this to mark the anniversary of the court cases that legalized abortion in the United States back in 1973, to lobby for their reversal, and to celebrate life.

All this brings to my mind a time I'll probably never forget, a time when a priest got very upset with me. Looking back, it must have been around 2004, during an election season, and when I was studying Catholicism but had not yet returned to the faith. America's political climate was divided and tense then, as it perennially is. Father and I somehow got to talking about abortion. I remember being tired of hearing about that topic in the news and of the endless debates about it. So, I said something to the effect of, "there are other important issues to consider, too!" Not that I was "pro-choice." Certainly not. But, in my mind, the issue wasn't that important. Suddenly, Father seemed quite upset with me, even angry. I was a little shaken by his response. There was a mixture of embarrassment and self-righteousness as I tried to feebly justify my position. Then, with great zeal, he tried to explain to me the sheer magnitude of the problem of abortion. I'm not sure I got it during that first discussion.

In the years since then, however, I've learned more about it. Now, I get it. This is the most important issue in our country today, without a

doubt. The numbers, if you can wrap your head around the magnitude of them, make this quite clear.

Since abortion was forced upon us by the Supreme Court in 1973, an estimated 58 to 60 *million* children have been killed. Some estimate the total, worldwide body count of World War II at less than that. In rough numbers, that's the entire state of North Dakota, 80 times over! Here in North Dakota, our lone abortion clinic, in Fargo, kills about 1,200 children a year. That's more than twice the population of the city of Berthold, killed, every year, right in our own state. But our state has one of the lowest rates of abortion in the country. As terrible as our rate is, I was more appalled to learn that in the District of Columbia, 38% of all pregnancies end in abortion. If you are conceived in the State of New York, there's a one in three chance you will not survive to birth. And, sadly, minorities are more likely to fall victim to abortion than others. They are targeted by the abortion industry.

Over and over again, people speak of a woman's "right to choose" and assert that women have a right to control their own bodies. But in saying this, we neglect to consider the life and body of the *unborn* women! We often focus so closely on the "right to choose," that what is *actually* being chosen in abortion is not really considered. A vast majority of abortions take place surgically, which involves using suction or surgical tools to tear the child apart and remove it from his or her mother's womb. The child's remains are often discarded as medical waste. Sometimes, it seems, the parts are even sold to researchers for profit (despite the fact this is illegal).

The horror of this reality often becomes crystal clear to the mothers *and the fathers* of these children, after the fact. Many people struggle with guilt and a form of PTSD that results. They cannot walk past the baby aisle

in a department store. They break down at what would have been special birthdays. And so on. This is not what so many people expect when exercising their right to “choose.”

How should we respond to this culture of death? First of all, we need to respond. We should not sit idly by as if nothing bad were going on. We should oppose abortion in how we vote, for sure. We should also pray and make sacrifices for an end to abortion. And, perhaps most powerfully of all, we should love mothers, fathers, and unborn children who are in difficult situations. We can help them with practical aid and guidance by supporting pro-life pregnancy centers such as the Dakota Hope Clinic in Minot (<http://dakotahope.org>) which provide free, non-judgmental, and confidential help for those in need. We can also help those considering abortion to not panic and to realize there are other options. And, finally, we can help others to understand that, no matter what has been done, God loves them. He provides a path back to grace and happiness, such as through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. As this year’s March for Life theme says, “Love Saves Lives.” Let us strive to love the mother, the father, *and* the unborn child, no matter how difficult the situation is!

-Fr. Jason Signalness

News & Events

Why We’re Catholic Book Groups meet on Sundays at noon in St. Ann Church and on Thursdays at 7:00 p.m. in Queen of the Most Holy Rosary Church. Join us!

Ecumenical Supper: Week of Christian Unity Soup and Sandwich Supper. January 21st at 6:00PM at St. Ann’s Catholic Church. Theme: *“Your Right Hand, O Lord, Glorious in Power.”*

Christian Mothers will meet at Queen of the Most Holy Rosary Church on Wednesday, January 21st at 8:00 p.m. Bring prayer books.

9 DAYS FOR LIFE

PRAYER • PENANCE • PILGRIMAGE

9 Days for Life: The U.S. bishops annual novena “9 Days for Life” takes place from Thursday, January 18 to Friday, January 26. Pray for the respect and protection of all human life with new intentions, brief reflections, and more each day. Download the novena online, or participate through Facebook, email, text message or an app. Join at www.9daysforlife.com!

First Communion Parent Meeting will take place on Sunday, February 11th, at Queen of the Most Holy Rosary Church, 5:00 p.m.

The Hannah’s Hope Mass is an opportunity for the community to pray for/with and support those suffering from infertility. It will be offered by Bishop Kagan at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit in Bismarck on Monday, Feb. 12 at 7 p.m. Questions can be directed to Christie Collins at 864-354-5046.

Stanley Women’s Retreat: Save the date for the annual Stanley Women’s Retreat, to be held on Saturday, March 3rd, at Queen of the Most Holy Rosary Church. This year’s speaker is Tim Mosser, a Catholic man who is joyfully married to his wife. He is an educator, nationally awarded and recognized champion college volleyball coach, motivational speaker, and host of the show “Catholic Coach” on Real Presence Radio. The retreat will begin at 8:30 a.m. and conclude at 4:00 p.m., and the cost is \$20. Watch for registration forms soon.