

Lent: Do Something Extra to Respect Human Life

40 Days for Lent 40DaysForLife.com

“Prayer, Fasting, And peaceful vigil.” That is how the 40-Days group describes its successes over the past eight years. **75 abortion mills closed their doors**; 141 abortion workers quit their posts; over 12,000 preborn children survived to see life outside the womb; and more young people came to the pro-life cause.

All over America the 40-Days campaign has been growing with each passing year. Its volunteers are just average people, now totaling about 725,000 in **675 U.S. cities** and 40 nations. Men, women and children join the movement to lend a helping hand to those mothers who are on the verge of destroying God’s greatest gift.

Last year, your editor and his wife joined the campaign by choosing to participate in front of our area’s Planned Parenthood clinic for **one hour** on Wednesdays & Fridays. We have met some really great, compassionate people and have joined them saying the rosary during our vigil hour. We highly recommend this Lenten effort to every Catholic. You can find the closest vigil location at the group’s website.

Our culture is a powerful narcotic. It has within it every good thing to shield us from suffering - from medication to entertainment. This can prove dangerous if we allow it to shield us from facing the deeper issues of life - faith, forgiveness, morality and mortality. It can keep us so entertained, so busy, so preoccupied, and so distracted that we lose focus on why we are here on this earth.

Father Ronald Rolheiser, Author

In Lent: Use Your Time, Talents, Treasury

If you are looking to do something extra, something special during Lent, why not aid a **crisis pregnancy center (CPC)** that counsels pregnant women against having an abortion. They generally provide peer counseling related to abortion, pregnancy, childbirth, and may also offer additional non-medical services such as financial assistance, child-rearing resources, and adoption referrals. CPCs that qualify as medical clinics may also provide pregnancy testing, **sonograms**, and other services.

Many but not all CPCs operate in affiliation with one of three non-profit organizations: Care Net, Heartbeat International, and Birthright International. There are about 2,500 CPCs in the United States. Hundreds more operate outside of the U.S. More than half of the U.S. states helped to fund crisis pregnancy centers either directly and/or through the sale of **Choose Life license plates**. Find one near you and ask what you can do to help.

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over 30,000 readers; to be put on mailing list, email the editor*

Reports from the Front Lines

■ Historic 2017 March for Life

For the first time in more than four decades of marching and gathering across the nation to protest the catastrophic *Roe v Wade* ruling, the sitting U.S. Vice President took part. Mike Pence electrified the estimated nearly **half-million** in attendance, which occurred just six days after the Women’s March that had numerous pro-abortion sponsors. Many priests, bishops, cardinals, religious members and seminarians, as well as tens of thousands of young people, were present at the March for Life. [*National Catholic Register, and Our Sunday Visitor*]

■ Conscience Protections

U.S. Bishops have urged Catholics to contact the President, urging him to sign an executive order to **respect religious freedom** including a) relief from the Affordable Care Act’s contraceptive mandate for religious hospitals and organizations, b) preservation of tax-exempt status for nonprofit groups that hold traditional views of marriage and human sexuality, and c) allowing Catholic agencies to provide adoption and foster care services that coincide with their religious beliefs. [Carol Zimmermann, Catholic News Service]

■ The Boycott List

Published by Life Decisions International, the list is designed to end corporate funding of Planned Parenthood (PP). When purchasing items, people are urged to stop doing business with boycott targets. Over the years, more than 300 corporations have stopped funding PP. The current boycott list is long, so only a few companies and nonprofits who still support PP are included here: Merck, Microsoft, Starbucks, Susan G. Komen, Wells Fargo. More information may be found at www.fightpp.org

■ Students for Life of America

This college organization works on campuses across the nation to change the culture by training and cultivating new pro-life leaders, and to save preborn lives and women through its pregnant-on-campus initiative. Catholic college students are encouraged to inquire about the group on their campus. Contact <http://studentsforlife.org>

■ State and Federal Limits on Abortion

Though abortions more than five months into pregnancy are rare in the U.S., the best estimate is around 16,000 a year, more than, for example, the total annual number of gun homicides nationwide. Several states already prohibit abortions past 20 weeks of gestation, and Congress is considering similar legislation.

Young Couples Alert: No Easy Answers for Human Embryos

"As a priest and ethicist at the National Catholic Bioethics Center, I have seen an increasing number of Catholics who regret having engendered human life by *in vitro* fertilization (IVF), and regret that they ignored or weren't informed about the teachings of the Church on IVF and infertility. They are perplexed and even tormented about what to do with these 'spare' human embryos who really are their cryogenic children." (Fr. Tadeusz. Pacholczyk)

Fr. Tadeusz advises couples that human embryos can never be thawed and discarded. Options include keeping embryos frozen at a modest annual cost, setting up a trust fund to provide for their maintenance, or having the embryos be adopted by another woman who implants, gestates, and raises them as her own. This unusual form of adoption is still morally debated, and *Dignitas Personae*, the most recent Church document addressing the matter, raises serious concerns about the idea, as have a number of bioethicists including Fr. Tadeusz.

"The humanitarian tragedy of hundreds of thousands of embryonic human beings frozen and abandoned in fertility clinics has come to light – 'orphans in ice' arising from the decades-long practice of IVF." [Fr. T. Pacholczyk, "Orphans in Liquid Nitrogen," catholicbeacon@patersondiocese.org]

Supreme Court to Decide if States Can Force Pregnancy Centers to Promote Abortions

A California law, upheld by the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in October, forces about 150 pregnancy help non-profits, including the 74 state-licensed free ultrasound facilities, to give clients a disclaimer that includes the phone number of a county social services office where a client could obtain an abortion covered by taxpayer-funded Medi-Cal.

Tom Glessner, president and CEO of the National Institute of Family and Life Advocates, said: "In essence, the law mandates that pro-life centers become abortion referral agencies, totally against their convictions, against their foundational beliefs, compelling speech. The **government cannot compel you** or me or a church to present a message that it wants you to present and you disagree with. It just can't do that. That is an absolute violation of your First Amendment rights."

Glessner said they expect to argue their case in the fall, if the Supreme Court decides to take it. The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals is one of the most overturned appeals courts in

the country because of the left-wing positions that it often takes on issues such as abortion.

Pacific Justice Institute represents three of the affected medical clinics throughout the state in a lawsuit, while the American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ) represents three more, and the Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) represents two clinics. [www.lifenews.com, 3/1/17]

Powerful Talk on Columbia's Campus

On Feb 1, the Human Life Review's EXPECT initiative joined with Columbia University's Right to Life student group to bring a powerful pro-life speaker on campus. Ryan Bomberger of the **Radiance Foundation** spoke to a standing-room-only crowd on "How the Abortion Industry Targets the Black Community." Bomberger's personal story – he was conceived in rape, and adopted – is as riveting as his razor-sharp takedown of the abortion business. Many in the audience didn't realize that New York City is the place where more black babies are aborted than born alive. "This is not reproductive justice," he went on. "It's population control. It's **systemic racism**. ... A corrupt taxpayer-funded industry that profits from killing millions of human lives, disproportionately black." All present at the Columbia event were invited to subscribe to the HLR, part of its "Informed for Life" campaign. [www.humanlifereview.com]

Roe v. Wade Plaintiff Dies

On Feb. 18, prolife heroine Norma McCorvey died. In 1969, she was 21 and pregnant with her third child. She visited a law office to get help obtaining an abortion and was referred to two attorneys seeking a precedent-setting case to legalize abortion. Her name was changed to Jane Roe and the resulting decision has ended the lives of nearly 60 million innocent human beings to date. **McCorvey never had an abortion**; instead she placed her daughter for adoption. Later in her life, she converted to Catholicism and deeply regretted her participation in the lawsuit.

In 2008, she appeared in a prolife commercial, saying: "I think it's safe to say that the entire abortion industry is based on a lie. I am dedicated to spending the rest of my life undoing the law that bears my name." Having interviewed her several years ago, Alexandra Snyder, Executive Director of the Life Legal Defense Foundation, said: "Decades after *Roe v. Wade*, Norma continued to express genuine sorrow for allowing herself to be exploited by the abortion industry. Although her name is associated with the infamous Supreme Court decision, she found redemption in **her fight to end abortion**." May she rest in peace. [Life Legal Defense Foundation, www.lldf.org]

In 1970, the U.S. fertility rate was 2.50. To maintain our population, 2.08 is needed. Currently, the rate is 1.84. In 2014, abortions totaled 926,000. Numbers don't lie.

