



Pro-Life Times

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Pro Life Office—Catholic Diocese of Raleigh

Volume 1
Issue 1

“I came so that all might have life, and have it to the full!”

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The Office of Pro-Life proclaims and affirms the life and dignity of every human person through prayer, education, outreach, and public policy in order to defend and inspire a culture of life.

The Second Annual Love My Life Youth Rally—January 14, 2012



Over 600 youth piled into a heated tent in the Sacred Heart Cathedral parking lot for the second annual Love My Life Youth Rally on January 14. Russell Hoyt, youth minister at St. Luke parish, acted as emcee for the event. Fr. Antony DeCandia, Campus Minister at NC State University enlivened the crowd with the refrain, “God is good, All the time.” Bishop Burbidge greeted

the students and told them, “You can make a difference in the world. Your life has meaning.” Caryn Walsh, youth minister from St. Mark in Wilmington, brought everyone to their feet for a standing ovation when she shared her story about getting pregnant at 17 and now having the most awesome 20-year-old daughter ever. Christina Geradts, president of UNC-

chapel Hill students for Life inspired them with stories of her battles against the Culture of Death. The energy level was high, and youth were excited to join with other Pro-Life marchers at Nash Square after the Rally. Special thanks to the Knights of Columbus from St. Luke and St. Joseph parishes, who directed traffic and chaperoned the fellowship hall

area, youth from St. Thomas More Academy who helped hand out stickers, set up chairs and serve the pizza. Papa John’s Pizza provided 120 pizzas at a discounted rate.

Special thanks goes to Larry Henson, Karen Foote, and Nancy Gomez, and to Father Dan Oschwald and members of the Cathedral staff who hosted us.



Bishop Burbidge with some of the youth from St. Thomas More Academy, who helped in numerous ways.

Thanks, STMA Youth!



March for Life in Washington, DC

On Sunday, January 22, Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, Chair of the USCCB Committee on Pro-Life Activities, was principal celebrant and homilist at the televised Opening Mass in the Basilica of The Immaculate Conception.



Over 40 bishops (including four cardinals and the Apostolic Nuncio), around 350 priests, 70 deacons, and 650 seminarians took part in the Mass, with standing room only for 12,000 people.

Over 30 buses from the Raleigh Diocese made the trip to Washington, DC, on Sunday and Monday, January 22 and 23, representing nearly 2,000 faithful. Another thousand made the trip by car. We filled the main chapel at the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, where Bishop Burbidge told us to “rethink possible,” and gave us hope that we really can change the culture of death and bring an end to abortion. The mass was beautiful with many Diocesan priests from both the Raleigh and the Charlotte Dioceses concelebrating. Then, renewed with the Eucharist, we ran through the rain back to our buses and headed over to the March where we joined a sea of joyful people.

After we marched for about an hour, Senator Richard Burr and Congresswoman Renee Elmers warmly welcomed us to a reception where they lamented the roadblocks thrown up by the current administration regarding life issues but encouraged the pilgrims to keep coming to DC as long as it takes to overturn Roe v. Wade. Then it was back in the buses for the long trip home to North Carolina.

Annual Mass for Life

The Diocese of Raleigh Annual Mass for Life was celebrated by the Most Reverend Michael F. Burbidge on Saturday, January 14. The 8:00 a.m. Mass was held at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Raleigh, beginning a day-long schedule of pro-life activities. Among the concelebrants were Msgr. David D. Brockman, Vicar General of the Diocese, and Msgr. John Williams, pastor of St. Joseph Catholic Church. Prior to Mass, a prayer service was held for children who have been memorialized during Project Rachel retreats the past 16 years. The prayer service was conducted by Father Richard Rohrer, pastor of Sts. Cyril and Methodius Byzantine Church. Bishop Burbidge said, “We are pro-life because we are created in the image and likeness of God whose very Spirit lives and dwells within us.” Citing examples of those who may find that truth difficult to believe, the Bishop said, it is our mandate to “help others, especially the most vulnerable, to understand and believe they are of infinite worth; that all of life is sacred and every person is of equal dignity.”



Bishop Burbidge will help kick off the next 40 Days for Life campaign, at Planned Parenthood, 1765 Dobbins Drive in Chapel Hill (just off 15-501 highway) **at 8:00 a.m. on Thursday, February 23.** The campaign begins on Ash

Wednesday, February 22, and extends through April 1. The focused pro-life effort consists of 40 days of prayer and fasting, 40 days of peaceful vigil and 40 days of community outreach. The most visible component is the peaceful prayer vigil outside the local abortion facility. Please consider having your parish or group adopt a day. Visit <http://www.40daysforlife.com/chapelhill> for information, or contact Susanne Wolf, coordinator, at 40dayschapelhill@gmail.com.

Retreat on Prayerful Presence at Abortion Clinics

The Pro-Life Office has invited Msgr. Philip Reilly of the Archdiocese of New York to lead a holy and prayerful retreat on March 2, 2012, which will introduce the faithful to the effective and meaningful practice of praying at abortion clinics. **We are particularly encouraging Respect Life Coordinators and Pro-Life Leaders to attend the evening session on Friday, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., to experience the spirituality of this important ministry.**



“When you stand at Golgotha, outside these places of death, you see there the victim, indeed the victims, for there are two people who are victims, the child who will have no tomorrows, and woman who will find out that the abortion will not bring back yesterday, but will destroy her peace, tomorrow.”

Msgr. Reilly

Those who would like to participate more fully through mass and attendance at an abortion facility are invited to return on Saturday, March 3 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

For more information about Msgr. Reilly and a complete schedule of events, download our flyer at http://www.dioceseofraleigh.org/docs/respect_life/prayerfulpresence-flyer.pdf

Imago Dei (In the Image of God) Training March 31, 2012, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

In 1958 a survey of principals identified the top problems in high school as: late homework, chewing gum, tardiness, running in halls. Thirty years later in 1988, principals described the primary problems as: drugs, sexual diseases, violence and abortion. Adults and teenagers today are influenced by an unhealthy cultural message that values self centeredness, immediate gratification and casual sex. Intrusive advertising messages and inappropriate television programming influence participation in what has come to be an oversexualized culture. Pornography and promiscuity are not just adult problems. In a study about the exposure to internet pornography in 2009; 93% of boys and 62% of girls reported have spent time looking at online pornography before the age of 18. Within the nature of the human being is a desire to master loneliness; and naturally pursue relationships for the purpose of satisfying their need for unconditional love. Sadly, a problem with our modern culture is that people have often confused love with lust. Lust is self centered and involves using others for personal pleasure, whereas true loving is selfless and desires the best for the other person. When lust is disguised as love, the human person is wounded. The consequences include addictions, sexual diseases and a disordered heart.



How does one build healthy and loving relationships when the world is pointing us in the wrong direction?

The Office of Pro-Life is promoting Pope John Paul II's great and timely teaching about the human person and the gift of loving. As we learn in Genesis, the human person was created because the author of life (God the Father) loves us. We are created to desire love and relationship (giving and receiving love) from others. Without authentic loving relationships we are incomplete and lonely.

The Pro-Life Office is offering a training opportunity in March for a program entitled Imago Dei. This one-day training program (Saturday, March 31 at St. Francis of Assisi in Raleigh) is being taught by a professor from JPPI Institute in Washington DC and addresses the questions "Who am I?" and "What does it mean to be a human person?" It also seeks to answer the question each human person desires to know: "What will make me happy?" This great teaching is foundational to defining and building the Culture of Life.

This workshop is designed for those who would be willing to go forth and begin a study group within their parish or ministry. These study groups are designed to explore and understand the beautiful theology written and taught by the Pope so participants can more fully understand and can strive to cultivate healthy and loving relationships. The study group lasts for six weeks with the option of continuing for another season of going deeper if so desired by those in the group. For more information or to receive the flyer email Jackie.Bonk@raldioc.org or call the Pro-Life office at 645-4438.

Respect Life Grants Available Now!

March 1 is the deadline to submit your grant request for a project to be used to support and uphold the sacredness of human life of all persons from conception to natural death.

Funds are derived from a grant provided by the Diocese of Raleigh generated by funds from the Bishop's Annual Appeal. The total amount available for 2012 is \$10,000.

The Respect Life Grant was established in 2000 to meet the demand for Respect Life initiatives.

Grants are awarded in amounts from **\$500 to \$2,000**

Grants funds are awarded in April. All applications must be typewritten and five copies submitted.

For more information or to download the form, visit <http://www.dioceseofraleigh.org/how/stewardship/grants/index.aspx>

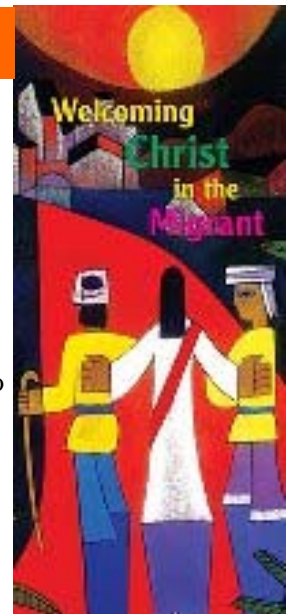
National Migration Week Celebrated

The Diocese of Raleigh celebrated National Migration Week January 8 through 14. As Catholic social teaching on migration developed, three fundamental principles on human dignity came to inform Church teaching on this issue:

- 1) People have the right to migrate to sustain their lives and the lives of their families.**
- 2) A country has the right to regulate its borders and to control migration.**
- 3) A country must regulate its borders with justice and mercy.**

People of faith must seek a way of balancing their valid security needs while at the same time striving to meet the basic human needs of others, including those who are foreign born. When war, natural disaster, famine, or crushing poverty causes mass migration, the lands that receive these displaced people may feel threatened, with fears that newcomers will take scarce jobs, land, and resources. While recognizing these fears, the Church teaches that people have the right to migrate to sustain their lives. Pope Benedict XVI observed that "those who have to leave everything, sometimes even their family, to escape from grave problems and dangers . . . [should find] the Church as a homeland where no one is a stranger" (*Angelus*, June 19, 2005).

For more information, go to: www.justiceformigrants.org and <http://uscgb.org/about/migration-and-refugee-services/national-migration-week/>



Diocesan Resources on End of Life

Bishop Burbidge and the office of Pro-Life have developed a comprehensive resource on church teaching on end of life issues, *Comfort and Compassion: A Catholic Declaration on Life and Death*.

The office of Pro-Life has made a limited printing of these booklets, but would like to make this document more widely available to parishes. Unfortunately, a large printing is cost-prohibitive to our limited budget. Consequently, we have made arrangements with ADS Printing to act as a clearinghouse for parishes who wish to order the booklets. They will take your order (\$1.67 per booklet) ship your booklets to you, and invoice you for your booklets. Please contact Travis at ADSPRN@aol.com to make your order.

This booklet contains invaluable information about topics such as medically assisted nutrition and hydration, pain management and palliative care, advanced directives, the MOST form and the DNR (do not resuscitate) form, organ donation, and cremation.

We encourage your Respect Life Committee to sponsor an education night on these issues to inform the faithful of these lesser-known church teachings. Perhaps it could be led by a pastor or one of the knowledgeable Diocesan speakers on Bioethics. The Pro-Life office can help connect you with speakers.

For a preview of the booklet, visit the Pro-Life homepage and scroll to the News and Announcements section, or click on this link: http://www.dioceseofraleigh.org/docs/respect_life/EndofLifeBooklet.pdf

Be Not Afraid Testimony

There is nothing extraordinary about my story. Most accounts of parents receiving a poor prenatal diagnosis sound something like... “The ultrasound technician became very quiet as she intently studied the screen. She then abruptly rose from her seat and hurried from the room. She returned with the doctor. As he looked at the images, he used phrases such as ‘anomaly’, ‘heart defect’ and ‘Trisomy’. We were then ushered into the Genetics Counselor’s office where we were introduced to the terms ‘incompatible with life’ and ‘interruption of pregnancy’”. While the stories are similar, it’s different when it’s *your* baby. I was 20 weeks pregnant and expecting a happy ultrasound and some pictures for the refrigerator.



Much of that week was a blur but so many moments remain crystal clear to me even now. I always trusted my medical providers, but now they were telling me to kill my son and becoming obviously frustrated by my refusal to do so. They are the experts. I am a naïve, hormonal woman who just doesn’t get it.

I remember thinking, “Now what?” My baby was still kicking. I had no information; no one to talk to who had experienced this before; no What to Expect When You’re Expecting a Baby with a Lethal Diagnosis guidebook. No hope. My husband and I were devastated and we struggled with how to handle it.

If we told people, what would we say? Most people don’t know what to say so they either avoid you or say something inadvertently hurtful. We thought it best to limit our news to family and close friends.

Looking back, I regret that in our effort to protect others from the sadness of our news, we missed the opportunity to celebrate his life. We were so shocked and numb, it never occurred to us that this was our only chance to capture meaningful memories of him as a member of our family. We muddled through the next eight weeks in fear and sadness.

Casey Joseph was born on Memorial Day. I labored through the night, trying to be strong but the whole time silently praying and hoping that this was all a big mistake and he would be OK. In my mind, I can still hear the silence of his arrival and it still makes me cry to recall it.

Ten years later with a better perspective, I recognize what was missing from my own experience. Now, with my *Be Not Afraid* co-founder and a team of peer ministers and volunteers, I can provide the response that parents need when the news is fresh and the grief is raw. We journey with parents and provide practical guidance as they seek to parent their child to the best of their ability.

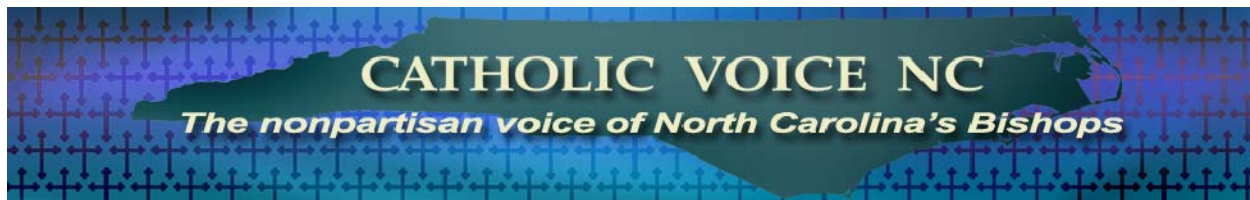
Although the majority of poor prenatal diagnosis stories may begin very similarly, the more distressing fact is that 80% of women who receive this sad news will terminate. Pro-life women are having abortions, not at the clinic, but in the hospital. The pressure is intense and the language is confusing. Pro-life women are having abortions because no one is offering them an alternative. . . . Whereas 80% terminate with the news of a prenatal diagnosis, when offered a service of comprehensive care and support like that offered by *Be Not Afraid*, 80% will in fact choose to carry to term.

As we stand up and march for life, we must not forget these babies. We need a different approach to save them. We need to create a loving community of friendship around their parents and journey with them offering the assurance that they are not on their own.

Sandy Buck, co-founder, Be Not Afraid, Charlotte, N.C.

Be Not Afraid Training

Tracy Winsor, co-founder of the Be Not Afraid ministry in the Charlotte Diocese will come to the Raleigh Diocese this Spring to train counselors to work with parents who receive a poor prenatal diagnosis and wish to carry their baby to term. If you feel called to be a counselor for a mother (and father) who experience a poor prenatal diagnosis and to walk with them through their pregnancy, please contact our office at Marybeth.phillips@raldioc.org for information..



Parishes are holding Catholic Voice NC Membership Drives

Respect Life Committees in many parishes are leading membership drives for the Catholic Voice NC, the North Carolina Bishops' advocacy group for legislative issues, during the month of January. Bishops Burbidge and Jugis keep apprised of legislative matters before the General Assembly and the U.S. Congress. When the situation warrants, the Bishops inform Catholic Voice NC registered participants via email alert of an important matter. Participants are often asked to contact their elected representatives to ensure that a Catholic viewpoint is taken into consideration through the use of a simple automated internet form. The bishops have identified five areas of focus: respect life, stem cell research, immigration, end of life and family life, all of which are Pro-Life issues in the continuum from conception to natural death.

Currently there are only about 5,000 people signed up across the state of North Carolina to receive alerts. We believe that this effort had an impact on the legislative votes for the Woman's Right to Know Act in August, and the Choose Life License Plates in June. With an estimated 214,000 registered parishioners in the Diocese of Raleigh alone, there is a great untapped potential to help shape the culture regarding these issues.

For information on how you can conduct a membership drive in your parish, please contact our office at Marybeth.phillips@raldioc.org. We have guidelines, flyers and materials for you to use in signing up the faithful to participate in this important work, which has the potential to protect the values that we as Catholics hold dear, and to change our culture into a culture of life. Some recent campaigns are outlined below:

Act to Repeal the Racial Justice Act

A legislative bill, entitled "No Discriminatory Purpose in the Death Penalty," was passed by the NC Senate in November. On November 30, the Bishops of North Carolina requested a veto from Gov. Bev Perdue, and after her veto, sent another letter to the faithful on December 19, asking us to write our legislators asking them to let the veto stand. The bill removes language about race being a "significant factor" in the death penalty decision, and adds a requirement of a finding that the state acted "with discriminatory purpose," reflecting a bill the North Carolina House passed this summer.

Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA)

The U.S. Health and Human Services Dept. mandated on Friday, Jan. 20, that that virtually all private health care plans must cover sterilization, abortifacients, and contraception. The proposed rule allowed only a very narrow exemption for a "religious employer." In September and December of 2011, CatholicVoiceNC.org issued action alerts on this matter at a time when Health and Human Services was seeking comment on the proposed rules. The January 20 announcement makes the proposed rule final.

To correct the threats to religious liberty and rights of conscience posed by PPACA, the Respect for Rights of Conscience Act has been introduced in Congress (H.R. 1179, S. 1467). This measure will ensure that those who participate in the health care system "retain the right to provide, purchase, or enroll in health coverage that is consistent with their religious beliefs and moral convictions." We are asked to contact our legislators in support of this new Act.

Vote FOR Marriage NC - May 8, 2012

Catholic Voice NC is advocating FOR the Marriage Amendment to the North Carolina Constitution. In print and video formats, the bishops will provide the faithful in both dioceses with information on Church teaching regarding the sacrament of Marriage, clearly showing that marriage is a relationship created by God, designed for one man and one woman, based on natural law which cannot be reformed. The bishops will each provide two videos over the next three months. The first by Bishop Jugis is now available on the Catholic Voice NC website: www.Catholicvoicenc.org.

Two Dedicated Pro-Life Faithful Receive Papal Honors

Betty Rogosich has saved babies for 30 Years

(See story on Page 4 about Dr. Jacques Mistrot)

Benemerenti Medals awarded for dedication to the church

If you ask Betty Rogosich about her work at Birthchoice over the past 30 years, her response would be, “I just answer the phone.”

Her statement is true, but it is an understatement to her dedication. A telephone interview about her recent Papal honor was interrupted several times because of calls by pregnant mothers.



“When they call, we offer them a free pregnancy test and free ultrasound. We tell them that the ultrasound will show if the pregnancy is in the uterus, if the baby is alive, how old the baby is, and we will give her information on the different types of abortions and the risks of abortion, and alternatives.”

Last year, 608 young ladies walked through the doors of the clinic at Birthchoice. Of those 608, 149 came in with the idea that they definitely wanted to abort. Upon seeing the baby on ultrasound, 75 of those changed their minds and decided to have the baby.

One of the most important things that Birthchoice does is refer these clients to the help they need, usually through the Gabriel Project. “When we have a girl come in that changes her mind about an abortion, we make sure we offer her all the help she needs,” Rogosich said. “And we always pray for the ones who leave and get abortions.”

Betty’s typical day at Birthchoice consists of “ensuring that we are staffed properly and the clients are served well and training new staff. Our goal of our morning prayer is asking God that we see Christ in each girl who walks through the door, and striving that the girls would see Christ in each volunteer.”

It seems to be working. There have been many young women who came to Birthchoice but still chose to have an abortion, but later became pregnant again. “They come back to us because they know we are compassionate and helpful, and they don’t want to go through another abortion,” Betty said.

Betty began volunteering at Birthchoice about 30 years ago, after seeing a notice in the church bulletin at Our Lady of Lourdes. “I had some time on my hands; my children were in school, and I figured I could stuff envelopes or something.” When she went to the training session, she was trained as a consultant to volunteer on the phone from home, which as we have already seen, was a good fit.

At that time the Birthchoice office was on the property of St. Joseph in a trailer with no running water. From there they moved to Cary, to a real estate office in a house near the mall. From there, Birthchoice moved to Cameron Village, sharing an office with Catholic Social Ministries, and finally to its present location on Merton Drive.

When she first started volunteering, her interest was in saving the babies. “Now, after working at Birthchoice for a while, I am still interested in saving the babies, but I am very concerned about saving the mothers and fathers who suffer because of the abortion. After seeing the sadness and the lifelong regret, I have learned that this is just as important.”

Another service that Birthchoice offers is a sexual integrity program to help them re-evaluate their lifestyles, to see what God’s plan for their sexuality is. “Many of the girls tell us, ‘No one ever told me this before.’ “ Many have given favorable comments about the sexual integrity program in surveys they fill out after their experience at Birthchoice.

Betty said with a smile that she plans to continue with Birthchoice for at least another 30 years. “Birthchoice will always be something I do,” she said.

Two Dedicated Pro-Life Faithful Receive Papal Honors (continued)

Benemerenti Medal awarded for dedication to the church

Dr. Jacques Mistrot's calling to Pro-Life work came in the last years of his career as a cardiothoracic surgeon working on the pastoral advisory committee at Wake Medical Center with critically ill patients.

"As I started speaking to people, I realized how much need there was for people to understand about end of life situations. I saw how helpless they were in terms of making their decisions. They needed good pastoral and medical counseling to help navigate through these difficult waters." Dr. Mistrot found himself spending a great deal of his time in a chapel right next to the Intensive Care unit, ministering to families and praying with them.



Upon his retirement, he began working on a Bioethics course for the Diocese of Raleigh. The series of courses on life issues begins with an understanding of the dignity of the human person, proper formation of conscience, the understanding of moral decision making, talks on abortion, stem cell research, in vitro fertilization, infertility, and theology of the body, which gives an overview of sexuality. It finishes up with talks on immunizations, end of life medical issues and legal issues, and organ donation and transplantation. "It takes a person through the whole course of life, undergirded by a proper understanding of the moral process and formation of conscience," he explained.

The bishop approved the course in 2006, and Mistrot and several others are available to teach it, preferably as a complete series, but also in parts. So far, they have taught the complete series at St. Anthony of Padua, St. Luke the Evangelist, Our Lady of Lourdes, and for the Permanent Diaconate program. As he was building the course, during 2005, he took a year-long certification course with the National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia and is now nationally certified in Health Care Ethics. He has become the bishop's unofficial advisor on bioethical issues.

Mistrot also helped the Bishop and the office of Pro-Life finish up a booklet that was begun in the early 2000s on End of Life issues, which was recently published in 2011. He has given several talks on End of Life, and is available to do so in conjunction with the new booklet. (See related article on page 2.)

He has just finished a five-year term on the Birthchoice board of directors, serving as president last year. His wife, Joan, volunteered as an ultrasound nurse for several of those years. In fact, she was one of the first three nurses who were trained on the new ultrasound machine.

He also served for two years on the board for the National Catholic Partnership on Disabilities with Cardinal DiNardo, the bishop in charge of all Pro-life activities in the U.S. He became involved with that organization after testifying in 2005 against stem cell funding before the NC Legislature with Dr. Marie Hilliard, one of the staff at the National Catholic Bioethics Center where he was studying. She then invited him to serve on the national board.

As a faithful Catholic, he participates weekly in the 40 Days for Life campaign. He also serves on the Advisory Committee for the Diocesan Pro-Life office.

In addition to his pro-life work, he served on the Board of Trustees at Cardinal Gibbons during the fundraising campaign for the new school, and on capital campaigns for St. Raphael's church and Our Lady of Lourdes school. Since he retired, he has done about 20 medical mission trips to Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, St. Lucia and Haiti and helped build a school for an orphanage in Guatemala which will open in February.

In his spare time, he visits prisoners, serves the homebound through meals on wheels and is a pilot for Angel Flight, an organization which flies children free of charge to hospitals for medical care. He and Joan have raised six children, five boys and a girl, and are expecting their first grandchild in May.

We are sharing an article about our office from the Diocesan Communications Office:

Steering Committee Creates Strategic Plan for Diocesan Pro-Life Office

In August 2010, the Most Reverend Michael F. Burbidge established the Diocesan Pro-Life Office, appointing Mrs. Jackie Bonk to the position of Director. Mrs. Bonk's responsibilities included developing, designing and facilitating the implementation of pastoral pro-life activities in the Diocese, as well as the education and invitation of the faithful to participate in protecting the sanctity of all human life.

In January 2011, a Steering Committee was formed to assist the Pro-Life Office in creating a strategic plan to guide the initiatives and structure for the newly created office. Bishop Burbidge appointed twelve members to the committee with Mrs. Bonk serving as chairperson. The Committee, which comprised Priests, Diocesan staff and laity, held monthly meetings during 2011, fashioning mission and vision statements and establishing the main priorities of the Pro-Life Office. They include abortion, embryonic stem cell research, euthanasia, death penalty, immigration, homelessness, hunger and poverty.

"The members have incredible gifts that brought a valuable diversity to the committee," said Mrs. Bonk. "Their depth of knowledge and commitment on the dignity of life from the moment of conception to the end of life is why we were able to address such a wide range of Pro-Life issues."

To clearly address those issues, the Steering Committee established three sub-groups: the Education Subcommittee, the Public Policy Subcommittee and the Outreach and Pastoral Care Subcommittee. It also proposed the promotion and teaching of Blessed John Paul II's "Theology of the Body"; the formation of parish level Respect Life Committees; and collaboration with Knights of Columbus to encourage education, outreach and advocacy with regard to life and human dignity issues.

Mrs. Carrie Griffith, a member of the Steering Committee said, "I feel one of the most significant initiatives being undertaken by the Pro-Life Office is its effort to promote a deeper understanding of God's plan for life and love to young people, their parents and their teachers. Our children are the future," Mrs. Griffith said. "They will create the culture of tomorrow. The Church's teaching on human sexuality, so beautifully elucidated by Pope John Paul II's Theology of the Body, offers a compelling antidote to an anti-life culture."

As part of its function, the office will begin assisting parishioners to better understand Catholic teaching on life issues. "The Pro-Life office is in the process of launching a registration drive for Catholic Voice NC," said Larry Henson, Steering Committee member. "This campaign alone will do a lot to help us become informed on these issues and to give us the opportunity to contact our political leaders when critical legislative activity is taking place."

"All of the issues are important, from conception to end of life," said Jackie Tucci, Director of the Pro-Life Advocate Ministry at St. Peter Catholic Church in Greenville. "We are planning lectures at our parish to support and explain the Catholic position on life issues."

Fetal Development of Maria

The fetal development of Jacob has come to a close. Thank you to everyone who helped educate the people of their parish about his development. On March 25, the Feast of the Annunciation, the Pro-Life Office will again spiritually adopt a baby and send out bulletin announcements about the baby's development. We encourage you

to spiritually adopt this baby in your parish and include the bulletin announcements outlining the development. Following is the first announcement, to give you an idea of what they are like:



The Miracle of Life.

At conception the gender of the child is determined by the father's sperm. We are going to name this tiny new human being Maria. Maria has not implanted into the wall of the uterus yet so no one but God knows of her existence. God has known us and loved us from all eternity.

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you," Jer. 1: 5



Respect Life Coordinators Page

We would love to hear from you with upcoming events in your parishes, or initiatives that can be shared. Please email your news to MaryBeth.Phillips@raldioc.org.

Following are some initiatives that we are aware of in the Raleigh Deanery, and some upcoming events. We are also sharing some tips on How to Have a Vibrant Respect Life Committee.

- At St. Catherine of Siena school, during the week of January 23, the students brought in pictures of themselves before they were one and made a collage for each grade. They identified with a brief sentence what was going on in their beautiful life at that time. The school also sent off a huge life size Rosary made with XXL yellow balloons with the word life on them. Each balloon represented a bead. The children, parents and Father Tighe walked the life size Rosary to the field where they prayed and sent it off. Everyone watched in awe as the rosary went up to the heavens with our intentions.
- St. Bernadette in Fuquay-Varina began its 9-month spiritual adoption program on January 15. They distributed prayer cards and asked people to pick a name for the baby they are praying for. The names are added to the prayer intentions book at the parish, and each month information about the developmental stage of the baby is included in the bulletin. At the end of the nine months, on September 16, 2012, a big birthday celebration will be held.
- St. Michael the Archangel in Cary hosted Patti Zordich, psychologist and author of *Gotcha: Bringing your Adopted Child Home* on January 17, along with a panel of parents who have adopted domestically, internationally and through the foster care system.

Upcoming Events

- In Wilmington on February 12, Gods Intimacy for Teens will take place from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Wilmington Convention Center (10 Convention Center Drive) to educate local teens on the dangers of having premarital sex. The guest speaker is Pam Stenzel, who will be doing a faith based teaching on purity and abstinence. There is free seating. For more information call Pamela Ward at 910-620-2804.
- The Respect Life Coordinator and Pro-Life Leader Workshop will be held this year on September 15, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Raleigh. We will celebrate mass with Bishop Burbidge and receive training and updates on life issues.

Developing a Vibrant Respect Life Committee

The ultimate goal of your Respect Life Committee is to create a culture of Life!

To accomplish this we must involve as many parishioners as we can to weave the pro-life, pro family ethic into the modern world.

We suggest you meet as a committee at least once a month. Always have an agenda

and a timekeeper to ensure you stay on schedule and use your time efficiently. Following is a sample committee meeting agenda:

- * Opening Prayer
- * Guest Speaker or Educational Video
- * Update on Public Policy and Past Events
- * Planning for Outreach Events
- * Committee Reports
- * Closing Prayer
- * Social Time

