



Lifelines

St. Francis of Assisi
Respect Life Committee

January 2009

The Respect Life Committee at St. Francis is an Apostolate that is totally committed to defending the sanctity of human life from conception to natural death.

Reasons to Hope: Successes of the Pro-Life Movement

"Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

St. Paul (Romans 15:13)

When we look at the reality of abortion in America today, we can be tempted to despair. As Christians, we need to be encouraged to resist that temptation. Here is some encouragement:

In the year 2000, the abortion rate in the United States was 21.3 abortions per 1,000 women of child-bearing age. In 2005, the rate had gone down to 19.4 abortions per 1,000 women. So too, the number of abortion providers in the United States has gone down. In real numbers, by 2005 there were 32 fewer abortion providers in the U.S. than there were in 2000. In the Commonwealth of Virginia in 2000, there were 18.1 abortions per 1,000 women of childbearing age. In 2005, the rate had dropped to 16.5. There are currently 46 abortion providers in Vir-

ginia. However, these abortion providers are operating in only 14% of the counties in the Commonwealth. Three metropolitan areas have no abortion provider: Danville, Harrisonburg, and Bristol.

What are the explanations for the drop in abortions and abortion providers? One is that it is becoming more and more difficult to interest doctors, especially those just coming out of medical school, in doing abortions. According to a recent article in the Washington Post Magazine, it is difficult for a medical student to get any training in abortion, because it is considered too controversial for schools to offer. Some have speculated that with all of the technological advances in fetal medicine since Roe v. Wade, doctors are finding it more and

more difficult to abort babies whose lives they would otherwise be able to save.

Another explanation is the impact of prayer and action on the local level.

There has been a growing paradigm shift in the pro-life movement. Local, rather than national, efforts are coming to be seen as more important, and more progress is being made in these areas.

An example of this shift in focus is the 40 Days for Life Project. What began as a local campaign in Texas with just five people has grown in less than five years to a national movement with 175,000 participants.

Cont. on pg. 2

Inside this issue:

Reasons to Hope 1-2

Respect Life Garden 1

Radical Abortion 2
Legislation: FOCA



March for Life
www.marchforlife.org

- Thursday Jan. 22
- A powerful, prayerful and peaceful way to speak up for the God-given right to life.
- Ride the bus: enjoy the comradery and fellowship! Sign-up sheets are at the back of the church.

**Our Lady of
Guadalupe
Respect Life
Garden Fundraiser**

16.5K
14K
12K
10K
8K
6K
4K
2K



Make donations to:
St. Francis of Assisi
c/o Respect Life Garden

Respect Life Garden fundraiser underway

St. Francis is taking what is now a barren piece of earth in front of the ministry center and resurrecting it into a life-giving garden: a place of peace and beauty proclaiming the message that Jesus has won the war over death and Life is Victorious! Will you join us in the mission of cultivating the Culture of Life? Your most generous gift will help us raise the \$16,500 needed to prepare the site and install the stone grotto with a magnificent hand-painted tile image

of Our Lady of Guadalupe. With a gift of \$1,000 or more, you will be remembered with your name engraved on a stone on the grotto itself. Gifts of \$500 will be remembered by a plaque on one of the resting benches and gifts of \$100 will be remembered by an engraved stone beside the foot path. Of course a gift of any amount is greatly appreciated and will help us realize the dream of this beautiful garden in our midst.



Fr. Burt blesses the ground for the Respect Life garden.



Fr. Euteneuer from Human Life International leads a prayer vigil of St. Francis and St. Thomas parishioners outside Planned Parenthood in Charlottesville.

"The ultimate reason we have to hope is Jesus. He has defeated death, and is interceding for us at the right hand of the Father."

Reasons to Hope continued from pg. 1

The idea of 40 Days for Life is simple: provide 40 days of 24-hour prayer coverage at the local abortion clinic(s). Campaigns were held in Fall 2007, Spring 2008 and Fall 2008. The results should give us all hope:

*175,000 people in 49 states participating

*1,128 babies who were scheduled to be aborted are alive today

*13 workers at clinics coming out and quitting their jobs

*3 abortion clinics closing their doors for good

*many post-abortive women seeking healing

Planned Parenthood sees this new prayer movement as their biggest threat, and it is easy to see why. This November, 40 Days for Life surveyed its participants. 35% of respondents said that it was the first time they had participated in a pro-life activity. 35% of 175,000 people means that over 61,000 new people joined in

pro-life activity for the first time.

Despite the turning tide on the political scene, it is still true that not a single abortion is performed in the Supreme Court, the White House, or the halls or committee rooms of Congress. Children lose lives and women are wounded in abortion clinics in our communities. That is where we as individuals and as a parish family can have the most impact.

The ultimate reason we have to hope is Jesus. He has defeated death, and is fighting for us, interceding for us at the right hand of the Father. He is the foundation of our hope and the power behind all our prayers. It is He who saves babies' lives, helps mothers, reaches out to fathers and heals the wounded. Of course He wants to use us in this work, but when we get to work, He takes our five loaves and two fish and feeds thousands. St. Paul said in his letter to the Ephesians, "For we do not

wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age..."

Our greatest weapon to fight the evil of abortion is prayer, fueled by the Holy Spirit. Please consider joining St. Francis' Respect Life Committee in our regular commitment to pray. As we pray, the Lord gives us hope -- and that hope inspires us to persevere in the pro-life work in our community. Look for many opportunities in 2009 to join in this work, both in the parish and in the community. To God be the Glory!

The author, Karen Adams, is the mother of 5 and a recent convert to the Catholic faith.



Fight FOCA



The Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA) Endangers Women and Silences the Voices of Everyday Americans

Sign the Petition at FightFOCA.com

A Project of **AUL** action

The "Freedom of Choice Act" (FOCA):

Most Radical Abortion Legislation in U.S. History

Pro-abortion groups and their allies in Congress are promoting a radical bill called the "Freedom of Choice Act." If this extreme measure is enacted, widely supported and constitutionally sound abortion regulations will be knocked down nationwide. If passed into law, FOCA will impose upon the entire country an abortion regime far worse than anything brought

on by *Roe v. Wade* and the current level of 1.1 million abortions a year will go up, not down:

- FOCA Eliminates regulations that protect women from unsafe abortion clinics
- FOCA forces taxpayers to fund abortions
- FOCA requires all states to

allow "partial birth" and other late-term abortions

- FOCA subjects women to abortions by nonphysicians
- FOCA violates the conscience rights of nurses, doctors, and hospitals
- FOCA strips parents of their right to be involved in their minor daughters' abortion decision