



# Lifelines

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.  
[www.stfrancisparish.org/respectlife.htm](http://www.stfrancisparish.org/respectlife.htm)

St. Francis of Assisi  
Respect Life Committee

November 2009

## 40 Days for Life Milestones and Miracles

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40 Days for Life 1-2

All Saints' Day marked the final day of the most recent 40 Days for Life campaign. Here in our own area, prayer vigils each day outside Planned Parenthood in Charlottesville were the focus of the local campaign, drawing volunteers from up and down the Valley.

Yet people ignored the wind and rain as they stood and prayed outside the abortion center.

A young woman from outside the Bakersfield area soon arrived at the clinic for an abortion appointment. She

the staff said she lived too far away to return to the clinic if any complications developed.

When she learned that, she became even angrier at the people praying out on the sidewalk -- she even went back out to yell at them several times. Finally, after



At cities throughout the country, stories were pouring in throughout the 40 Days of lives forever changed through the peaceful presence of Christians praying for an end to abortion.

Over 400 babies were saved during the campaign and a milestone was reached -- over 2000 babies saved through the combined efforts of the past 6 campaigns since they began in 2004. These numbers, however, do not begin to convey the miraculous nature of the answers to prayer that have emerged from across the country. Just a few examples from the 40 Days for Life Office:

### Bakersfield, CA

It was a stormy day at the 40 Days for Life vigil in Bakersfield.

was already stressed out; the drive across the mountains and through the storm left her in no mood to listen to the Christians on the sidewalk.

She looked at the group, shouted profanities, and told the vigil participants to leave her alone. One of the people on the sidewalk told her that if she thought the sky was dark, it was nothing compared to the darkness abortion could bring into her life. She ignored the words and walked in.

But the "simple procedure" she had come for turned out not to be so simple -- and she might not be able to have the abortion that day. She had come for the abortion pill, but

she realized there would be no abortion, she gave up and left the clinic.

But on her way out, the prayer supporters on the sidewalk offered to pray with her. As they did, the sun suddenly broke through the clouds and the sky instantly became bright. It was like a new day.

The vigil participants explained the situation to Terri, one of the counselors, who helped arrange an appointment for an ultrasound at the pro-life pregnancy help center.

Terri could tell that the ultrasound had a significant impact on the young woman. "I knew that it was a good sign when I

### St. Gerard's Column

Congratulations to Katie Julian Overby and Analia Anniballi who delivered their babies!

Please pray for these expectant moms:

**Noreen Brennan**

**Maria (Fornadel) Beck**  
(due Nov)

**Samantha A.**  
(due Dec)

**Shelley Haug**  
(due in Jan)

**Amanda D.**  
(due in Jan)

**Anna Ridenour**  
(due Apr)

Please pray for all moms who recently have experienced the loss of their unborn child.

Please pray for the intentions of women who desire the gift of motherhood but who are experiencing the pain of infertility including:

**Gertrude\***  
**Mary Street Moore**

Contact Monica Wirth at 886-6644 to add someone to the St. Gerard prayer list.  
*\*pseudonym used for privacy*

heard her talking to her baby," she said.

After the ultrasound, Terri and the woman hurried back to the vigil site. Bursting with joy, the woman showed the prayer supporters the ultrasound picture of the baby she had intended to abort, exclaiming "your Jesus heard your prayers!"

#### **Pensacola, FL**

For at least 25 years, there's been an abortion facility at 6700 North 9th Avenue in Pensacola, Florida. But on Day 38 of the campaign -- as people prayed outside, the clinic CLOSED ITS DOORS and shut down -- for good!

#### **Dallas, TX**

A woman entered the clinic -- and left 30 minutes later, telling people on the sidewalk she was scared, and that the conditions in the clinic were troublesome. She was invited to go instead to the very clean clinic across the street -- the pro-life pregnancy resource center. She found that help was indeed available, and chose life for her child.

A short time later, a couple walked into the clinic but left about 40 minutes later. The woman held her head down and appeared quite troubled. She, too, told the people at the vigil she was scared. But as she kept watching the people praying on the sidewalk, she found the courage to reject abortion as a "solution" to her problems.

#### **Manassas, VA**

One Saturday, abortion advocates got a permit to conduct a demonstration against 40 Days for Life at the place the vigil usually takes place.

But when the day came, there were 197 pro-life people praying at the clinic -- and only THREE abortion demonstrators. Demoralized, they didn't stay long.

While all those people were out there praying, a woman walked towards the clinic for an abortion appointment. After people on the sidewalk spoke to her, she entered

the nearby pro-life pregnancy center instead.

"The lady who was about to have the abortion told the counselor she started to shiver when she saw so many people praying," said Ken Groves of the Manassas 40 Days for Life campaign. "At that moment she said she felt God wanted her to have her baby. A precious baby was saved! It was an amazing Saturday in Manassas."

#### **Houston, TX**

A nurse walked out of the Planned Parenthood location where the 40 Days for Life vigil was being held. One of the vigil participants wished her a cheerful "Good morning!" and asked how she was doing.

The answer was quick and unexpected. "I need a new job now," she said. "I went in one of the rooms," the nurse said, "and this is not for me."

Planned Parenthood, of course, bills itself as a health care organization. What this nurse found there was certainly NOT health care.

Vigil participants suggested a few leads for finding a REAL health care position, and asked if there was anything else she needed.

"Not really," the nurse responded. "I'm going home to hug my children."

This nurse became the EIGHTH employee to leave an abortion industry job during this 40 Days for Life campaign. Praise God!

The story of the Ninth employee was the most dramatic and perhaps the most miraculous --

#### **Bryan, TX**

Abby Johnson had worked at Planned Parenthood for eight years. She was there when the first ever 40 Days for Life campaign was conducted outside of her workplace in the Bryan/College Station community in 2004.

She was there for the next 40 Days for Life effort as well -- the

one that helped to launch the first nationally coordinated 40 Days for Life campaign in the fall of 2007.

And she was there for the one after that, and the one after that, and the one after that -- and the one after that!

In fact, Abby was able to look out the window of Planned Parenthood and see 40 Days for Life campaigns on six different occasions -- as well as the regular year round prayer presence organized by the local Coalition for Life.

For all those years, people outside the clinic prayed for Abby.

And with all those prayers, Abby finally had a change of heart. She said, "Over the past few months I had seen a change in motivation regarding the financial impact of abortions," she said, "and I reached my breaking point after witnessing a particular kind of abortion on an ultrasound."

She quit her job and went across the street to the headquarters of the Coalition for Life. Since that day, she still can be found at the Planned Parenthood where she used to work -- this time praying with other volunteers for an end to abortion. She has been sharing her conversion story on national news venues across the country.

Fox News reported on Abby's conversion, stating:

Abby Johnson, 29, used to escort women from their cars to the clinic in the eight years she volunteered and worked for Planned Parenthood in Bryan, Texas. But she says she knew it was time to leave after she watched a fetus "crumple" as it was vacuumed out of a patient's uterus in September.

"When I was working at Planned Parenthood I was extremely pro-choice," Johnson told Fox News.com. But after seeing the internal workings of the procedure for the first time on an ultrasound monitor, "I would say there was a definite conversion in my heart ... a spiritual conversion."

Johnson said she became disillusioned with her job after her bosses pressured her for months to increase profits by performing more and more abortions, which cost patients between \$505 and \$695.

"Every meeting that we had was, 'We don't have enough money, we don't have enough money -- we've got to keep these abortions coming,'" Johnson told FoxNews.com. "It's a very lucrative business and that's why they want to increase numbers." Abby finally saw the truth. The truth which Planned Parenthood often tries to hide -- even from its very own management staff.

She left on good terms, and says that Planned Parenthood tried to offer her more money to stay. "But this was not about money or me being angry," she said. "It was about my change of heart on abortion."

Planned Parenthood has responded by going to court to seek a restraining order against both Abby and the Coalition for Life. The requested court action warns against disclosing any "confidential information."

Abby's amazing conversion demonstrates the importance of a constant, persistent, peaceful prayer presence in front of abortion facilities.

From that first campaign in 2004, 40 Days for Life volunteers have prayed for Abby -- and for all abortion workers -- that they would come to see what abortion really is, and that they would leave the deadly business. In this case, those prayers have been answered.

God can and will do amazing things -- if only we ask! We must continue to pray and fast for more conversions just like Abby's.