



M I S S O U R I R I G H T T O L I F E

Transforming society to respect and protect all innocent human life.

December 2008

Pro-Life Leaders React to Obama's Election

“Our hope is in the Lord, and we cannot forget that. He doesn't make mistakes. He hasn't lost control of things. He understands our fatigue and maybe our disappointment.

“I want to admit that I am in the midst of a grieving process at this time. ... I'm not grieving over Barack Obama's victory, but over the loss of things that I've fought for, for 35 years.”

“...to be honest, I have to say that his win causes me enormous concern because he will be the most committed pro-abortion president in our history. He's in favor of much of the homosexual agenda, and he's going to appoint the most liberal justices to the Supreme Court, perhaps that we've ever had. So, there are many reasons why I'm struggling today over the likely path that the nation has taken.”

Dr. James Dobson, Focus on the Family

“The election of an African American president sends a powerful and historic message that what was previously unthinkable can become reality. The battle for equal rights has reached a major milestone, but Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s dream of full equality remains just a dream as long as unborn children continue to be treated no better than property.

“President-elect Obama has promised actions that will only increase the number of abortions. Pro-lifers, in turn, must promise to redouble our efforts to resist anti-life proposals, speak up for the babies, and, above all, pray. We must pray with persistence and love that, in God's time, what is now deemed unthinkable will become reality - that all our brothers and sisters, from conception to natural death, will be protected in law and welcomed in society. The elections are over. The pro-life battle begins anew.”

Dr. Alveda King, Pastoral Associate of Priests for Life and niece of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

“The recent election was principally decided out of concern for the economy, for the loss of jobs and homes and financial security for families, here and around the world. If the election is misinterpreted ideologically as a referendum on abortion, the unity desired by President-elect Obama and all Americans at this moment of crisis will be impossible to achieve. Abortion kills not only unborn children; it destroys constitutional order and the common good, which is assured only when the life of every human being is legally protected. Aggressively pro-abortion policies, legislation and executive orders will permanently alienate tens of millions of Americans, and would be seen by many as an attack on the free exercise of their religion.”

Cardinal Francis George, President
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

“Over the course of this historic campaign, President-elect Obama and his surrogates argued for a ‘common ground’ on abortion rights. At the same time, he promised Planned Parenthood that his first act as President will be to sign the Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA). In contrast to his moderate rhetoric, his support for FOCA -- which would eradicate every state and federal law regulating abortion -- is extreme. . . .

“We have long known that the work of advancing a culture of life is not a short-term project. Recall that William Wilberforce fought against the slave trade for 45 years before he ultimately prevailed in his defense of life.

“In 2008, it is clear that despite the challenges still remaining, the pro-life message is steadily gaining ground. Momentum in the states has enabled us to make significant gains in protecting women and unborn children. Young people today self-report as pro-life at a higher rate than their parents' generation.

“We will continue working in the days ahead to educate Americans about the threat to common sense that FOCA poses. And we will make common cause with defenders of life in both the Democrat and Republican parties, fully committed to the ultimate goal of seeing both parties dedicated to the defense of life.

“We continue to hold as self-evident the truth that all were endowed with the unalienable right to life, and that governments are instituted to secure this first right. We look forward to fully realizing this truth in our day.”

Dr. Charmaine Yoest, President
Americans United for Life



THOUGHT YOU'D LIKE TO KNOW . . .

Another 'champion of abortion' becomes defender of life:

The Spanish daily "La Razon" has published an article on the pro-life conversion of a former "champion of abortion." Stojan

Adasevic, who performed 48,000 abortions, sometimes up to 35 per day, is now the most important pro-life leader in Serbia, after 26 years as the most renowned abortion doctor in the country.

"The medical textbooks of the Communist regime said abortion was simply the removal of a blob of tissue," the newspaper reported. "Ultrasounds allowing the fetus to be seen did not arrive until the 80s, but they did not change his opinion. Nevertheless, he began to have nightmares."

In describing his conversion, Adasevic "dreamed about a beautiful field full of children and young people who were playing and laughing, from 4 to 24 years of age, but who ran away from him in fear. A man dressed in a black and white habit stared at him in silence. The dream was repeated each night and he would wake up in a cold sweat. One night he asked the man in black and white who he was. 'My name is Thomas Aquinas,' the man in his dream responded. Adasevic, educated in communist schools, had never heard of the Dominican genius saint. He didn't recognize the name."

"Why don't you ask me who these children are?" St. Thomas asked Adasevic in his dream.

"They are the ones you killed with your abortions,' St. Thomas told him.

"Adasevic awoke in amazement and decided not to perform any

more abortions," the article stated.

"That same day, a cousin came to the hospital with his four months-pregnant girlfriend, who wanted to get her ninth abortion—something quite frequent in the countries of the Soviet bloc. The doctor agreed. Instead of removing the fetus piece by piece, he decided to chop it up and remove it as a mass. However, the baby's heart came out still beating. Adasevic realized then that he had killed a human being."

After this experience, Adasevic "told the hospital he would no longer perform abortions. Never before had a doctor in Communist Yugoslavia refused to do so. They cut his salary in half, fired his daughter from her job, and did not allow his son to enter the university."

After years of pressure and on the verge of giving up, he had another dream about St. Thomas.

"You are my good friend, keep going,' the man in black and white told him. Adasevic became involved in the pro-life movement and was able to get Yugoslav television to air the film "The Silent Scream," by Doctor Bernard Nathanson, two times."

Adasevic has told his story in magazines and newspapers throughout Eastern Europe. He has returned to the Orthodox faith of his childhood and has studied the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas.

"Influenced by Aristotle, Thomas wrote that human life begins forty days after fertilization," Adasevic wrote in one article. La Razon commented that Adasevic "suggests that perhaps the saint wanted to make amends for that error." Today the Serbian doctor continues to fight for the lives of the unborn.

Catholic News Agency Nov. 12, 2008

Montana District Court Legalizes Assisted Suicide:

A Montana district court has decreed that Montana residents deemed competent and terminally ill have the right to commit suicide, making Montana the third state in which assisted suicide is legal, following Washington and Oregon.

"The Montana constitutional rights of individual privacy and human dignity, taken together, encompass the right of a competent terminally [ill] patient to die with dignity," wrote Judge Dorothy McCarter in the opinion for Montana's First Judicial District Court.

The conclusion goes on to specify that this includes the patient's option to "obtain a prescription for a lethal dose of medication that the patient may take on his own if and when he decides to terminate his life."

Robert Baxter, a 75-year-old retired truck driver suffering from terminal lymphocytic leukemia, filed the lawsuit in November 2007, along with four physicians, seeking legal sanction for physician assisted patient suicide. The assisted suicide advocacy group Compassion & Choices, formerly known as the Hemlock Society, assisted their case.

The case is likely to be appealed, as Attorney General Mike McGrath asserted that the "right to die" is "a major constitutional issue and the Supreme Court should rule on it." McGrath is to be sworn in as Chief Justice of Montana's Supreme Court in January.

Against the objection that such a ruling violates the State's interest in preserving life, the Court stated that "it is difficult to imagine a compelling interest in preserving the life of an individual who is suffering pain and the indignity of his disease, whose life is going to end within a relatively short period of time, and for whom palliative care is inadequate to satisfy his personal desire to die with dignity."

The State, represented by McGrath, also objected that the court did not have the authority to decide the issue apart from the legislative process. In response, the ruling stated that the right to assisted suicide "is a constitutional question to be decided by the courts." It argued that, because the Court would eventually consider the validity of any assisted suicide law passed in the legislature, the current action makes the Court "simply the first in line to deal with the issue, followed by the legislature to implement that right."

The court did not address whether doctors have the right to refuse such a request, saying that such concerns could be addressed by the state.

Bioethicist Wesley Smith called the ruling "radically broad and hubristic."

"Why limit the right to people diagnosed with a terminal illness?" asked Smith. "If I want to die because John McCain lost the election and I can't stand the idea of an Obama Presidency, that's my business and nobody has a right to interfere." Smith also contended that the ruling opens the door to active euthanasia, as it concedes that a person has a right to be assisted in dying.

"What is really happening is a coup d' culture," Smith lamented, referring to a trend of what he calls the "mystery of life" jurisprudence, which allows individuals' worldviews to override public policy considerations.

"It is a toppling of the current social order that is based in Judeo/Christian moral philosophy - in part through court rulings based on autonomy - with the eventual legal implementation of a dramatically different value system founded in utilitarianism [and] hedonism," he said. "Once that process is complete, judicial rulings will inform us that 'choice' has definite limits."

LifeSiteNews.com Dec. 8, 2008

Called To Be Faithful

Pam Fichter

"For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope." — Jeremiah 29:11

Pro-Life Missourians fought the good fight and turned out in record numbers on November 4. We were successful in winning the victory for John McCain in Missouri, yet the country chose Barack Obama, the most anti-life candidate to ever run for President.

President-elect Obama has promised to advocate for taxpayer funding of abortions, make detrimental Supreme Court appointments and promote "The Freedom of Choice Act," which would overturn pro-life laws nationwide. It is likely that President Obama will also quickly overturn the "Mexico City Policy," which prevents taxpayer funding of groups that engage in performing or promoting abortions in other nations.

The bad news continues with the defeat of pro-life efforts across the country. South Dakota failed in efforts to ban most abortions; Colorado defeated the "personhood" amendment; Washington voters approved assisted suicide; Michigan approved an embryonic stem cell measure; and California rejected parental notification.

While this is all grim news for the pro-life movement, and most tragically for unborn babies and their mothers, we have been in similar situations before. As in the past, we will pull together, strengthen our resolve and work to ensure that the Obama administration is not successful in these endeavors. We call upon everyone who believes in the sanctity of human life to join us in this effort.

While it's extremely difficult to find a silver lining on this dark cloud, we should take some comfort in the failure of anti-life candidates to win a veto-proof majority in the U.S. Senate. That is our best hope of preventing passage of the devastating legislation supported by President-elect Obama.

We are pleased that over 70% of our endorsed candidates were victorious. We are particularly pleased that Blaine Luetkemeyer won his race to replace Kenny Hulshof in the Ninth Congressional District and will join other pro-life Missourians like Todd Akin and Sam Graves in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Many pro-life stalwarts in the Missouri legislature were also victorious. Their leadership and courage will certainly be tested in the coming years, as they work with Governor Nixon, who supports abortion on demand, human cloning, embryonic stem cell research, and taxpayer funding of abortions through family planning appropriations. We look forward to working with and for all pro-life legislators in any way we can.

In the midst of all this bad news, we need to remember that the most recent polls show that the majority of Americans oppose abortion on demand. While there is little evidence of that from the election results, we must remember that there were many factors influencing voters this year. We must persevere and dedicate ourselves to be the voice of the most vulnerable in society. Your continued support of the work of Missouri Right to Life will be even more critical.

Let's pray for our country and our new President as we remember the words of Mother Teresa who said that we are not called to be victorious; we are called to be faithful. God has called on us to push this rock, and in His time and by His power, He alone will move it.



*Missouri Right to Life wishes you a Joyful Christmas
and God's many blessings in the New Year!*



Thank You, President Bush!

"The promises of our Declaration of Independence are not just for the strong, the independent, or the healthy. They are for everyone -- including unborn children. We are a society with enough compassion and wealth and love to care for both mothers and their children, to see the promise and potential of every human life."

President George W. Bush

■ President Bush appointed two justices to the U.S. Supreme Court, Chief Justice John Roberts and Justice Samuel Alito. In 2007 both justices voted to uphold the federal Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act.

■ In 2003, President Bush signed into law the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act. When legal challenges were filed to the law, his Administration successfully defended the law and it was upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court.

■ President Bush also signed into law several other crucial pro-life measures, including the Unborn Victims of Violence Act, which recognizes unborn children as victims of violent federal crimes, the Born-Alive Infants Protection Act which affords babies who survive abortions the same legal protections as babies who are spontaneously born prematurely, and legislation to prevent health care providers from being penalized by the federal, state, or local governments for not providing abortions.

■ In 2007, President Bush sent congressional Democratic leaders letters in which he said that he would veto any bill that weakened any existing pro-life policy. This strong stance prevented successful attacks on the Hyde Amendment and many other pro-life laws.

■ In 2001, President Bush declared that federal funds could not be used for the type of stem cell research that requires the destruction of human embryos. He used his veto twice to prevent enactment of bills that would have overturned this pro-life policy. The types of adult stem cell research that the President promoted, which do not require the killing of human embryos, realized major breakthroughs during his administration.

■ The Bush Administration played a key role in the United Nations: in adoption by the UN General Assembly of the historic UN declaration calling on member nations to ban all forms of human cloning (2005) and in including language in the Convention (Treaty) on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which protects persons with disabilities from being denied food, water and medical care (2006).

■ President Bush strongly advocated a complete ban on human cloning, and helped defeat "clone and kill" legislation.

■ During his first week in office, President Bush restored the "Mexico City Policy," which prevents tax funds from being given to organizations that perform or promote abortion overseas. The President's veto threats blocked congressional attempts to overturn this policy. The Administration also cut off funding for the United Nations Population Fund, due to that agency's involvement in China's compulsory-abortion program.

Information from:



national RIGHT TO LIFE

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It Is What It Is

Dave Plemmons, Director
Political Action Committee

Okay. Everyone take a deep breath. While the words, “President Barack Obama” and “Governor Jay Nixon” are not what most pro-lifers envision as steps forward, they are reality come January. But with new challenges come new opportunities for our movement. We must search our souls and analyze our strategies for ways to advance the pro-life cause in Missouri and beyond in the face of governmental opposition that will almost certainly come.

The elections of 2008 differed from those in recent years for many reasons, not the least of which was the noted lack of attention on Life issues. The economy was of course the overriding factor to the electorate, followed by the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. For many, an unpopular president fueled passions for “change”. The tide was a strong one. Did we work hard enough? Did we pray long enough? Did we choose candidates who were bold enough? It’s easy to answer “no” to all of these questions. But what does this new environment mean for pro-lifers?

We must do what we have done before and soldier on. We must adapt. We must recommit ourselves to what we know is true --- God has given us the capacity to see the truth, that abortion is still an act of violence that kills a human baby—on purpose. The truth is a just and civil society must never allow human life to be bought and sold as a commodity, as in human embryonic trafficking and research. The truth is women deserve better than lawmakers looking the other way while boyfriends, husbands, lovers, rapists, or molesters coerce women and girls into killing their children. The truth is Planned Parenthood and other abortionists make substantial revenues from the promiscuity they promote, often with taxpayers footing the bill. We must keep fighting.

Missouri Right to Life will face new challenges in 2009 and beyond, even from those that have been our allies before. Our valued membership and other concerned Missourians should pay close attention to what will occur during the next session of the Missouri General Assembly. Both parties will have stark choices to make, and pro-life members of the Legislature will have their own soul-searching to do. Loyalties will be tested.

Will the Republican leadership allow vigorous debate on embryonic research as it pertains to Amendment 2 (2006) and its crippling effects on the appropriations process? Or will the Danforth wing and the money from the cloning PAC’s dictate the direction? Will the Democrats under a Nixon administration find ways to fund Planned Parenthood again, or will their pro-life caucus stand firm for the protection of innocent human life? Time will tell.

Remember this: There are many who claim to be pro-life in our capitol. Missouri Right to Life has been attacked for telling you the truth. Some governmental leaders want to hide what they do from you. We will not play games with Life issues.

What can you do? Missouri Right to Life members are needed to start and strengthen new and existing chapters and regions. We especially need pastors and lay leaders to join our efforts by networking together with us to challenge our communities to affirm life. We need your ideas, input, and creativity. We need your prayers most of all. MRL believes our best days are ahead. Won’t you join us? The cause of Life is winning, despite the election results. Every unborn child and every mother need us to keep fighting.

Our very special thanks to the many, many volunteers who helped with the distribution of PAC endorsement information on the weekends before the election -- sometimes despite difficult conditions. Your tireless efforts are priceless and so appreciated.

“Is This What You Mean?”

Priests for Life has launched a special project which aims to:

- 1) Reveal the nature of the abortion procedure to the public, and
- 2) Challenge public officials, candidates, and others who support the legality of abortion to admit what abortion is.

The project makes use of the words of the abortionists themselves. Quoting these words, we simply ask abortion supporters, “When you say the word ‘abortion,’ is this what you mean?”

What the abortion supporter says in response does not matter. The goal is accomplished: what that person stands for has been revealed, both to that person and to all who listen.

Those who engage in this project are not being asked to debate the morality or legality of abortion, nor to refute any slogans or arguments. Rather, this project seeks to establish the starting point. “What are we talking about when we say abortion?”

The whole effort is as simple as reading an abortionist’s quote and asking, “Is this what you mean?”

Let’s get involved with this project! Here’s this month’s question for pro-abortion advocates that you encounter:

When you say the word abortion, is this what you mean?

First Trimester Suction Abortion

“Question: Can the heart of a fetus or embryo still be beating during a suction curettage abortion as the fetus or embryo comes down the cannula?”

Answer: For a few seconds to a minute, yes.”

(Sworn testimony given in US District Court for the Western District of Wisconsin (Madison, WI, May 27, 1999, Case No. 98-C-0305-S), by Dr. Harlan Raymond Giles, an abortionist. He describes legal activity.)

An MRL Year in Review



Above, Jerry Roth from Shell Knob manned the Missouri Right to Life booth at the Ozark Empire Fair which was held July 27 thru August 3. The MRL presence at the fair was coordinated by Carl Schimek, MRL SW Region Treasurer.



Above, the MRL-Eastern Region board gathered for a Christmas party in early December.



Above, Pam Fichter, MRL President, and Dave Plemmons, MRL-Southwest Region Director, met with Springfield-Cape Girardeau Bishop James Johnston to officially introduce MRL to the new bishop. Don Emge, Springfield-Cape Girardeau Diocese Social Ministry Director, was also present.



At the Missouri Baptist Convention, Peggy Bull (left), Mid-State Region, and Beth Sykora, Western Region, served their hours at the MRL booth.

Dave Plemmons, Southwest Region Director, talked with those who attended the MRL Springfield Town Hall meeting in June.



At left, Donna Anderson snapped this picture of volunteer Pat Fornkohl working at the SEMODistrictFair in Cape Girardeau. The fair was held from September 6th thru 13th.



Above, members and volunteers paused for a picture at the MRL-East Central Chapter Rummage Sale held in April.



Cathy Kelsey, MRL-Sedalia Chapter, volunteered at the MRL booth at the Missouri State Fair in August. The Sedalia Chapter has served faithfully since 1975 coordinating MRL's State Fair booth.

**Thanks
to all our
dedicated
volunteers!**



Pam Fichter, Missouri Right to Life President, addressed a Town Hall gathering held in Springfield, MO in June. She discussed the mission and history of MO Right to Life, reviewed the 2008 legislative session, the elections, and the initiative petition.

Pro-Life Action Day

Tuesday, March 10, 2009

10:00 am – 2:00 pm

**Missouri State Capitol
3rd Floor Rotunda Jefferson City, MO**

FEATURED SPEAKER

Jill Stanek

12:00 Noon

**Selinger Center at St. Peter's Catholic Church
(across from the Capitol)**

***Jill has taken a stand for Life in the national spotlight
to defend women and babies.***

We need you to come and stand with her.

Stand unified against the Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA)

**LET YOUR REPRESENTATIVES SEE AND HEAR FROM YOU
ON THESE IMPORTANT LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES:**

*Mandatory ultrasounds before abortions
Inform mother that a baby feels pain during an abortion
Protect women from coerced abortions
Promote a complete ban on all human cloning in Missouri
Resolution opposing Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA)*

MRL representatives will be in the 3rd floor rotunda all day with information, help and answers.

Sponsored by ***Missouri Right to Life***

For more information call 573-635-5110 or visit www.missourilife.org
Watch our website for a contact list for transportation information.

Wear Red for Life!

Update on Efforts to Ban Human Cloning

Efforts to pass a constitutional amendment banning all human cloning are moving forward. The coalition of pro-life organizations, which includes Missouri Right to Life, has finalized language to be submitted to the Secretary of State. This is the first step in the Initiative Petition process to place the issue on the ballot in 2010. The previous effort, which began after the passage of Amendment 2 in 2006, was stymied by Robin Carnahan's unfair ballot summary of the submitted language. The necessary judicial appeals left no time to gather the required signatures to place the issue on the November 2008 ballot.

The coalition plans to build on the organization of thousands of volunteers who have trained to be signature gatherers in this process. Filing now will allow close to two full years to complete the process and get the issue on the 2010 ballot.

The coalition will also consider supporting a Joint Resolution of the Missouri House and Senate. This approach requires a majority vote of both houses to place the approved proposal on the next statewide ballot. The Joint Resolution allows the legislature to determine the ballot language and would bypass the Governor, the Secretary of State, and the courts. However, the legislature has shown little support for such an effort in the past.

Currently the Missouri Constitution allows the right to clone and kill human embryos and to do so with taxpayer money. Polling of Missouri voters consistently shows that they oppose human cloning and taxpayer funding of life-destroying research. The coalition's efforts will give Missouri voters an opportunity to pass a constitutional amendment that would close the loopholes and completely ban all human cloning in Missouri.

Back To Jeff City

Jerry Nieters, Legislative Director
Susan Klein, Legislative Liaison

On January 7, the 95th General Assembly will convene in Jefferson City. Pre-filing of legislation for the 2009 legislative session began on December 1, 2008. MRL is hard at work on language for pro-life legislation; we are working with legislators to file legislation addressing multiple pro-life issues.

Some of the issues we are looking at include: mandatory ultrasounds before an abortion; informing a mother that her baby may feel pain during an abortion; protecting women from coerced abortions; abortion statistic reporting; resolution opposing FOCA; promoting a complete ban on all human cloning in Missouri. These are just a few of the issues. We will also be working to oppose any legislation, as stand-alone bills or funding via appropriation budget bills, that would legalize, fund, or subsidize the taking of innocent human lives by abortion, embryonic stem cell research, human cloning or end-of-life decisions.

We encourage you to plan ahead and be in Jefferson City on Tuesday, March 10, 2009, for Missouri Right to Life's "Pro-Life Action Day" which begins at 10:00 a.m. on the 3rd Floor Rotunda in the Missouri State Capitol. We need huge crowds of people to show their support for life and their opposition to "The Freedom of Choice Act" (FOCA). The guest speaker will be Jill Stanek who has stood vocally against the inhumanities she has seen done to babies that survive an abortion only to be killed by being left to die. The "Freedom of Choice Act" will only further the killing of innocent babies.

Come and stand united for the protection of innocent babies! See you in Jefferson City on Tuesday, March 10th!

MRL APPLAUDS OUTGOING STATE LEGISLATIVE CHAIRMAN, WELCOMES NEW CHAIRMAN

Following the 2008 legislative session, Jim Cole made the decision to step down as State Legislative Chairman, a volunteer post that he has held since 1994. With this decision came much reflection on the outstanding job that Jim has done in dealing with pro-life legislation in Missouri. From writing legislation, testifying at hearings, lobbying, and working countless hours in an attempt to do everything possible to restore the right to life, Jim did yeoman work in overseeing this important endeavor. He will continue to serve as MRL's General Counsel.

Everyone knew that replacing Jim would be difficult, but God has a way of taking care of His own.

Jerry Nieters, a member of the Eastern Region Board and the State Board, has volunteered his time as the new State Legislative Director. He will be working with Legislative Liaison Susan Klein to continue a strong pro-life presence by Missouri Right to Life at the state capitol.

Jerry has been active with Missouri Right to Life for several

years. Additionally, he has been active with Lawyers for Life, the National Lawyers Association, Missourians Against Human Cloning, and is a member of National Right to Life.

Jerry received his undergraduate degree from the University of Missouri - St. Louis. He then received his Juris Doctorate from St. Louis University in 1987 in addition to a Master of Business Administration.



Jerry Nieters

As a member of Immaculate Conception Parish in Dardenne, he serves on their Pro-Life Committee.

Welcome, Jerry, to your new assignment. We are grateful!

We Shall Not Weary, We Shall Not Rest

By Father Richard John Neuhaus

Editor's note: This is the closing address from the National Right to Life Convention, July 2008.

Once again this year, the National Right to Life convention is partly a reunion of veterans from battles past and partly a youth rally of those recruited for the battles to come. And that is just what it should be. The pro-life movement that began in the 20th century laid the foundation for the pro-life movement of the 21st century. We have been at this a long time, and we are just getting started. All that has been and all that will be is prelude to, and anticipation of, an indomitable hope. All that has been and all that will be is premised upon the promise of Our Lord's return in glory when, as we read in the Book of Revelation, "he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be sorrow nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away." And all things will be new.

That is the horizon of hope that, from generation to generation, sustains the great human rights cause of our time and all times—the cause of life. We contend, and we contend relentlessly, for the dignity of the human person, of every human person, created in the image and likeness of God, destined from eternity for eternity—every human person, no matter how weak or how strong, no matter how young or how old, no matter how productive or how burdensome, no matter how welcome or how inconvenient. Nobody is a nobody; nobody is unwanted. All are wanted by God, and therefore to be respected, protected, and cherished by us.

We shall not weary, we shall not rest, until every unborn child is protected in law and welcomed in life. We shall not weary, we shall not rest, until all the elderly who have run life's course are protected against despair and abandonment, protected by the rule of law and the bonds of love. We shall not weary, we shall not rest, until every young woman is given the help she needs to recognize the problem of pregnancy as the gift of life. We shall not weary, we shall not rest, as we stand guard at the entrance gates and the exit gates of life, and at every step along the way of life, bearing witness in word and deed to the dignity of the human person—of every human person.

Against the encroaching shadows of the culture of death, against forces commanding immense power and wealth, against the perverse doctrine that a woman's dignity depends upon her right to destroy her child, against what St. Paul calls the principalities and powers of the present time, this convention renews our resolve that we shall not weary, we shall not rest, until the culture of life is reflected in the rule of law and lived in the law of love.

It has been a long journey, and there are still miles and miles to go. Some say it started with the notorious *Roe v. Wade* decision of 1973 when, by what Justice Byron White called an act of raw judicial pow-

er, the Supreme Court wiped from the books of all fifty states every law protecting the unborn child. But it goes back long before that. Some say it started with the agitation for "liberalized abortion law" in the 1960s when the novel doctrine was proposed that a woman cannot be fulfilled unless she has the right to destroy her child. But it goes back long before that. It goes back to the movements for eugenics and racial and ideological cleansing of the last century.

Whether led by enlightened liberals, such as Margaret Sanger, or brutal totalitarians, whose names live in infamy, the doctrine and the practice was that some people stood in the way of progress and were therefore non-persons, living, as it was said, "lives unworthy of life." But it goes back even before that. It goes back to the institution of slavery in which human beings were declared to be chattel property to be bought and sold and used and discarded at the whim of their masters. It goes way on back.

As Pope John Paul the Great wrote in his historic message *Evangelium Vitae* (the Gospel of Life) the culture of death goes all the way back to that fateful afternoon when Cain struck down his brother Abel, and the Lord said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" And Cain answered, "Am I my brother's keeper?" And the Lord said to

Cain, "The voice of your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground." The voice of the blood of brothers and sisters beyond numbering cry out from the slave ships and battlegrounds and concentration camps and torture chambers of the past and the present. The voice of the blood of the innocents cries out from the abortuaries and sophisticated biotech laboratories of this beloved country today. Contending for the culture of life has been a very long journey, and there are still miles and miles to go.

"... it struck me then that, by the criteria of the privileged and enlightened, none of these my people had a life worth living. In that moment, I knew that a great evil was afoot. The culture of death is an idea before it is a deed."

The culture of death is an idea before it is a deed. I expect many of us here, perhaps most of us here, can remember when we were first encountered by the idea. For me, it was in the 1960s when I was pastor of a very poor, very black, inner city parish in Brooklyn, New York. I had read that week an article by Ashley Montagu of Princeton University on what he called "A Life Worth Living." He listed the qualifications for a life worth living: good health, a stable family, economic security, educational opportunity, the prospect of a satisfying career to realize the fullness of one's potential. These were among the measures of what was called "a life worth living."

And I remember vividly, as though it were yesterday, looking out the next Sunday morning at the congregation of St. John the Evangelist and seeing all those older faces creased by hardship endured and injustice afflicted, and yet radiating hope undimmed and love unconquered. And I saw that day the younger faces of children deprived of most, if not all, of those qualifications on Prof. Montagu's list. And it struck me then, like a bolt of lightning, a bolt of lightning that illuminated our moral and cultural moment, that Prof. Montagu and

those of like mind believed that the people of St. John the Evangelist—people whom I knew and had come to love as people of faith and kindness and endurance and, by the grace of God, hope unvanquished—it struck me then that, by the criteria of the privileged and enlightened, none of these my people had a life worth living. In that moment, I knew that a great evil was afoot. The culture of death is an idea before it is a deed.

In that moment, I knew that I had been recruited to the cause of the culture of life. To be recruited to the cause of the culture of life is to be recruited for the duration; and there is no end in sight, except to the eyes of faith.

Perhaps you, too, can specify such a moment when you knew you were recruited. At that moment you could have said, “Yes, it’s terrible that in this country alone 4,000 innocent children are killed every day, but then so many terrible things are happening in the world. Am I my infant brother’s keeper? Am I my infant sister’s keeper?” You could have said that, but you didn’t. You could have said, “Yes, the nation that I love is betraying its founding principles—that every human being is endowed by God with inalienable rights, including, and most foundationally, the right to life. But,” you could have said, “the Supreme Court has spoken and its word is the law of the land. What can I do about it?” You could have said that, but you didn’t. That horror, that betrayal, would not let you go. You knew, you knew there and then, that you were recruited to contend for the culture of life, and that you were recruited for the duration.

The contention between the culture of life and the culture of death is not a battle of our own choosing. We are not the ones who imposed upon the nation the lethal logic that human beings have no rights we are bound to respect if they are too small, too weak, too dependent, too burdensome. That lethal logic, backed by the force of law, was imposed by an arrogant elite that for almost forty years has been telling us to get over it, to get used to it.

But “We the People,” who are the political sovereign in this constitutional democracy, have not gotten over it, we have not gotten used to it, and we will never, we will never ever, agree that the culture of death is the unchangeable law of the land.

“We the People” have not and will not ratify the lethal logic of *Roe v. Wade*. That notorious decision of 1973 is the most consequential moral and political event of the last half century of our nation’s history. It has produced a dramatic realignment of moral and political forces, led by evangelicals and Catholics together, and joined by citizens beyond numbering who know that how we respond to this horror defines who we are as individuals and as a people. Our opponents, once so confident, are now on the defensive. Having lost the argument with the American people, they desperately cling to the dictates of the courts. No longer able to present themselves as the wave of the future, they watch in dismay as a younger generation recoils in horror from the bloodletting of an abortion industry so arrogantly imposed by judges beyond the rule of law.

We do not know, we do not need to know, how the battle for the dignity of the human person will be resolved. God knows, and that is enough. As Mother Teresa of Calcutta and saints beyond numbering have taught us, our task is not to be successful but to be faithful. Yet in that faithfulness is the lively hope of success. We are the stronger because we are unburdened by delusions. We know that in a sinful world, far short of the promised Kingdom of God, there will always be great evils. The principalities and powers will continue to rage, but they will not prevail.

In the midst of the encroaching darkness of the culture of death, we have heard the voice of him who said, “In the world you will have trouble. But fear not, I have overcome the world.” Because he has overcome, we shall overcome. We do not know when; we do not know how. God knows, and that is enough. We know the justice of our cause, we trust in the faithfulness of his promise, and therefore we shall not weary, we shall not rest.

Whether, in this great contest between the culture of life and the culture of death, we were recruited many years ago or whether we were recruited only yesterday, we have been recruited for the duration. We go from this convention refreshed in our resolve to fight the good fight. We go from this convention trusting in the words of the prophet Isaiah that “they who wait upon the Lord will renew their strength, they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not be weary, they will walk and not be faint.”

The journey has been long, and there are miles and miles to go. But from this convention the word is carried to every neighborhood, every house of worship, every congressional office, every state house, every precinct of this our beloved country—from this convention the word is carried that, until every human being created in the image and likeness of God—no matter how small or how weak, no matter how old or how burdensome—until every human being created in the image and likeness of God is protected in law and cared for in life, we shall not weary, we shall not rest. And, in this the great human rights struggle of our time and all times, we shall overcome.

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How I Got My Groove Back

by Jill Stanek

Editor's note: The author, Jill Stanek, will be the featured speaker at MRL's Pro-Life Action Day in Jefferson City on March 10, 2009.

It was the Sunday after the election, and everywhere I looked I could only see impending doom.

There is no way God would have allowed Barack Obama to become president were He not finally turning America over to judgment, to whatever great or lesser extent that will be.

I sat in my mother's church and was surprised to feel anger when the worship leader smiled and sang the same songs as ever, as if life hadn't drastically changed the week before, as if the Church itself wasn't indicted by Obama's election.

Then my eye caught a teen with Down's syndrome coming late to service with his mother, sitting down the row from me.

He immediately began to sing with all his ecstatic might, smiling heavenward and air-playing guitar with the band, all for God.

And I began to cry ... pretty hard, shoulder-shaking hard. I hadn't done that yet, but pent up sorrow was no excuse; this was ridiculous. I got a grip and dialed it down to rolling tears throughout the song service, and then got distracted by a very good sermon on listening for God to speak.

But I started up all over again when running after the boy after service to meet him and



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tell him how much his worship had uplifted me.

His Mom thanked me, saying she always worried Eric might be a distraction. It was so opposite of that for me. Eric reminded me of Jesus and the coming joy and why I fight abortion and why I was so sad, all rolled up into one kid.

I could only murmur, "Oh, no," and restarted the crying, leaving Mom with a slightly puzzled expression. It was too long a story.

I described that incident on my blog Monday and got enough notes of sympathy I decided I'd better get a grip. Pity is pathetic.

Enough of this, I said to myself. Barack

Obama is only a man. The fight against abortion does not start and stop with the president. He can help, and he can hurt. But if this president tries to hurt, he's in for a fight.

I felt my missing buddy, militancy, return.

Yesterday during my devotion, I read Psalm 66:7. "He rules forever with his might. He watches every movement of the nations. Rebels will not be able to oppose him."

So God spoke to me twice this week, which was nice. I really needed it.

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