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Mother's Day 2016

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Keeping Mother's Day Sustainable by Marybeth Hagan

Thank goodness we still celebrate Mother's Day since legal abortion creates such confusion about maternity. Abortion advocates are so mixed up that they refer to pregnancy as a "reproductive health" issue, as if motherhood in its earliest stages is some sort of a disease.

No doubt, politicians are confused about the issue of abortion, too. Just last month, both major political parties' presidential primary frontrunners made outrageous remarks about abortion. To the revulsion of pro-life advocates, Republican Donald Trump said if abortions were made illegal, then women should be punished for having them.

In fact, pro-life activists consider abortion a tragedy for mother and child. "The pro-life movement's job is to recognize the humanity of the child and to support the mother," said the Pro-Life Union of Greater Philadelphia's Director Edel Finnegan. "More than anyone else, the mother instinctively recognizes the humanity of her unborn child."

To the horror of abortion advocates, Democrat Hillary Clinton clearly recognized the humanity of the unborn. "The unborn person doesn't have constitutional rights," Clinton said on NBC's "Meet the Press." Abortion advocates, and abortion-friendly politicians like Clinton, have long avoided using words like "person," "baby" or "child" in reference to the unborn.

Even as Trump and Clinton showed their true colors on abortion, Pennsylvania Rep. Kathy Rapp (R-Warren County) sponsored legislation addressing other aspects of the issue. If by some miracle Rapp's Pennsylvania House Bill 1948 passes, it would ban a type of D&E (Dilation and Extraction) abortion known as dismemberment abortion. The National Right to Life Committee reports that D&E is the most prevalent method of second-trimester (from 13 to 27 weeks) abortion, according to the 2009 National Abortion Federation Abortion Training Textbook. Dismemberment abortion is particularly gruesome and painful to the unborn person. The name suits the procedure and it is hard to imagine anyone defending such cruelty.

Passage of HB 1948 would also reduce Pennsylvania's legal limit for late term abortions from 24 weeks to 20 weeks. When Pennsylvania's Abortion Control Act first passed in 1989, 24 weeks gestation was considered the point where a baby born prematurely might be viable and survive outside of his or her mother's womb.

Why change this marker of fetal viability? Major advances in neonatal medicine now allow some premature babies to survive if born before 24 weeks gestation. The United States' smallest surviving and thriving premie is Amillia Taylor of Miami. Amillia was born at 21 weeks and six days in 2006. Germany's Baby Frieda was born at 21 weeks and five days in 2011. Canadian James Elgin Gill was born at 21 weeks and five days back in 1988.

Not only that, today, fetal-surgeons perform in utero surgery on unborn boys and girls who are diagnosed with life-challenging conditions like spina bifida or congenital heart disease.

Here again, abortion confuses us. In our hospitals, doctors and nurses on one ward do everything they can to save preemies' lives, or improve unborn infants' health, even as other doctors and nurses abort unborn tots of the same gestational age in another ward.

We're even muddled in celebrating Mother's Day. Once a year, we applaud motherhood. The rest of the year we terminate it in more than one million abortions annually. Those numbers of lost maternity and missing children add up. There have been more than 57 million U.S. abortions since the U.S. Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* ruling legalized abortion in 1973.

If motherhood is sacred as we say on Mother's Day, why not always treat it that way?



Celebrating Life

In this Mother's Day issue, we celebrate the amazing organizations that walk with women on their journey to motherhood. Over the last months, our maternity home, Guiding Star Ministries, has been blessed through our collaboration with Catholic Social Services. This is an incredible team of people and we are inspired every time we are with them. Heartfelt congratulations to Catholic Social Services who, once again, received the Real Alternatives' Service Provider of the Year Award along with Site Provider of the Year Award, recognitions so well deserved. Thank you for empowering women and families, and in a special way, for serving our Guiding Star families!



Annual Real Alternatives Conference

Mercy and Healing by Steve Bozza

The Synod Fathers explained the light offered by our faith by speaking of the gaze of Jesus and how he 'looked upon the women and men whom he met with love and tenderness, accompanying their steps in truth, patience and mercy...' "Amoris Laetitia #60

These words of Pope Francis are the heart of post-abortion healing ministry. Women who have had abortions are emotionally scarred for the rest of their lives. Sometimes women don't realize the negative effects abortion has had on them until many years later when something else - a failed marriage, a bout with depression or substance abuse - leads them to confront this tragic reality in their lives.

We are very fortunate to have here in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, Rachel's Vineyard, a post-abortion healing ministry that leads women and men into the loving embrace of their Heavenly Father who forgives them and heals their hearts. They do this so effectively through retreats and follow up sessions.

Along with Rachel's Vineyard, we need a more one on one approach to post-abortion healing. It is not always possible or practical for some women to get away for a weekend for a Rachel's Vineyard retreat. We are establishing Project Rachel to serve women and men who regret their abortions and now seek the merciful love of Jesus upon themselves and their situation.

Thanks to the generosity of Jim Amato, Secretary of Catholic Human Services, we were able to appoint a coordinator for Post-Abortion Healing Ministry in February 2016. We have gathered a cohort of priests, deacons, pastoral care workers and clinical psychologists who could work with the women and men who call for our help.

Among other administrative duties, our Post-Abortion Healing Ministry Coordinator, Estela Bugge is responsible for receiving these calls. She will assess, through conversation, what help would be most appropriate care for the one who calls. Estela will recommend either a priest in her area for sacramental care, a pastoral care worker close by, a psychologist or she will recommend a Rachel's Vineyard retreat. We hope to have the Project Rachel Hotline up and running by June.

Extending hope and healing for those who have had abortions is not just the job of us here in the Pastoral Center. It is all of our jobs. Each one of us has contact with many people – some of whom we can count as saintly and many who have lived lives that are contrary to our faith. We are to look upon with love and tenderness each of these people.

Our expanded post-abortion healing ministries now bring all of these efforts to a deeper level. The women we serve and hope to serve need to know unequivocally that the Church is their home. They often feel that they have no place in our Church because what they did is so condemned. This can be no further from the truth! The Church is the Mother of us all. She reaches out to embrace those who have fallen far away from her and is particularly close to them. This is the essence of Pope Francis' pontificate and his latest Apostolic Exhortation. "Mercy is the very foundation of the Church's life. All of her pastoral activity should be caught up in the tenderness which she shows to believers; nothing in her preaching and her witness to the world can be lacking in mercy". #310



Pro-Life Vigils

Catholics – (The Rosary will be prayed after each of these Masses. Location in parentheses.)

3rd Friday – 8 am Mass – Nativity of Our Lord, 625 W. Street Rd. (PP Warminster)

1st Saturday – 8:30 am Mass – St. Laurence, Upper Darby (PP Upper Darby)

1st Saturday – 7 am Mass – Christ The King, Morell & Chesterfield (PP Comly & Blvd.)

1st Saturday – 8 am Mass – St. Agnes, West Chester (PP West Chester)

2nd Saturday – 8:30 am Mass – Newman chapel, U of P, 38th & Chestnut (Penn Family Care, 39th & Chestnut)

3rd Saturday – 7 am Mass – St. John, 13th & Market (PP 12th & Locust)

4th Saturday – 6:30-8:30 am – Phila. Women's Ctr., 8th & Cherry

Member Organizations: Missions and Information

The Culture Project

Wynnewood, PA
800-315-8684
www.restoreculture.com

The Culture Project International is an initiative of young people set out to restore culture by proclaiming the dignity of the human person and the richness of living sexual integrity. Their missionaries are formed, trained, and sent out on mission teams to serve local communities on an international scale, delivering presentations to young people in schools, conferences, and parishes, as well as engaging culture through friendship and conversation. The Culture Project challenges the status quo by inviting young people to reclaim a life of virtue, thereby promoting a culture fully alive. Schedule a presentation for your parish, school, or retreat!

Terri Schiavo Life & Hope Network

1-855-300-HOPE
www.lifeandhope.com

The Terri Schiavo Life & Hope Network upholds human dignity through service to the medically vulnerable. They express this mission by affirming essential qualities of human dignity from a patient-centered perspective, which include the right to food and water, the presumption of the will to live, due process rights for those facing denial of care, protection from euthanasia as a form of medicine, and access to rehabilitative care.

Alliance Natural Family Planning Network

Media, PA
267-800-8514
www.alliancenfp.com

Alliance Natural Family Planning Network (Alliance) is a non-profit 501 (c)(3) corporation that was formed in 2014 with the goal of helping families live out their marriage vocation as God has intended. Alliance brings the good news of Natural Family Planning (NFP) to those preparing for and who may already be living within the marriage covenant.

Chester County Pro-Life Coalition

West Chester, PA
610-692-4463
www.chescopro-life.org

Chester County Pro-Life Coalition's mission is to promote respect and protection for all human life by informing and educating the people of Chester County, Pennsylvania. They do this through the publication of newsletters, organizing regular public witnesses, participating in public events, providing financial support to "Youth for Life" and West Chester University "Students for Life," communicating with local legislators, providing support for local alternatives agencies and maintaining a large selection of pro-life literature and materials.

The King's Men

Oreland, PA
www.thekingsmen.us

The King's Men mission statement is "Under Christ the King's universal call to serve, we as men, pledge to unite and build up other men in the mold of leader, protector, and provider through education, formation, healing, and action." They accomplish this with a community presence, talks and seminars and "Into the Wild" retreats, outdoor, skill-oriented weekends providing men with experiences linked to a man's natural vocation of Leader, Protector, and Provider.

Mother's Home

Darby, PA
610-583-4663

Mothers' Home provides a safe haven for vulnerable pregnant women in crisis who choose life as a sacred gift. They encourage mothers to celebrate the joy of new life and help them to prepare for their and their child's futures.

Our Lady's House

Jenkintown, PA
215-885-2531

Our Lady's House is a pregnancy home founded by Pat and Wendy Stanton which provides shelter for women and children in Montgomery County. They have served women and families for over 20 years.

Adoption is a Loving Option

www.adoptionisalovingoption.org
info@adoptionisalovingoption.org

Adoption is a Loving Options' mission is to make a difference by educating youth about the positive options for facing unplanned pregnancies. By sharing their personal stories on adoption, they give a voice and a face to unborn children. By educating youth and young adults on adoption, they empower them to speak up against abortion, support adoption as a better choice and understand more options if faced with an unplanned pregnancy.

Friends of Fertility Care

Jenkintown, PA
www.fertilitycarefriends.org

The Friends of FertilityCare™ Philadelphia are a group of health care professionals and members of our community who wish to promote effective, integrated health care for women and couples. To that end, the Friends of FertilityCare are dedicated to making Creighton Model FertilityCare services and NaProTechnology known, respected and applied throughout the Greater Philadelphia region.

40 Days for Life

www.40daysforlife.com
Warminster, PA
West Chester, PA
Center City Philadelphia, PA

40 Days for Life is a community-based campaign that takes a determined, peaceful approach to showing local communities the consequences of abortion in their own neighborhoods, for their own friends and families. It puts into action a desire to cooperate with God in the carrying out of His plan for the end of abortion. It draws attention to the evil of abortion through the use of a three-point program: Prayer and fasting, Constant vigil and Community outreach.

Knights of Columbus

#1333 Monsignor Schuyler Council (West Chester, PA)
#7515 St. John the Evangelist Council (Morrisville, PA)
#11013 Father McCafferty Council (Yardley, PA)

The Knights of Columbus base their good works on four core principles: Charity, Unity, Fraternity and Patriotism. Members of the Knights of Columbus show love for their neighbors by conducting food drives and donating the food to local soup kitchens and food pantries, by volunteering at Special Olympics, and by supporting, both spiritually and materially, mothers who choose life for their babies.

Save the Date!

Before you know it, the 2016 Stand Up For Life Dinner will be upon us and you really don't want to miss out on this wonderful event where pro-life friends and families, students and teachers gather for an evening of fellowship. We are so happy to announce that our speaker this year is Karen Gaffney. Karen became the first person with Down syndrome to complete a relay swim of the English Channel, is the subject of the documentary "Crossing Tahoe: A Swimmer's Dream" after her 9 mile swim of Lake Tahoe, received a honorary doctorate from the University of Portland and is the president of the Karen Gaffney Foundation, which is dedicated to championing the journey to full inclusion in families, schools, communities and the workplace for people with Down syndrome or other developmental disabilities.



Sunday, November 20th
4:30 p.m. Cocktail Reception – 5:30 p.m. Dinner
Sheraton Philadelphia Downtown Hotel

Getting to Know the PLU

Mother's Day has always held special significance here at the Pro Life Union as we honor the incredible gift of motherhood. We often can't help but think of the many women we encounter who have chosen life despite the obstacles they face. We meet so many pregnant women who are confused and afraid when faced with an unexpected pregnancy. Without a job, family support or a safe place to call home, abortion can seem like the only option.

That's why the PLU is committed to ensuring a true continuum of care so that every woman can continue her pregnancy and every child is welcomed into life. Last fall we adopted **Guiding Star Ministries**, (www.guidingstar.org) a maternity home in the Germantown section of Philadelphia. Six moms and nine children are currently living in this home and we are so grateful that these women welcome us into their lives as they strive to reach independence.

We work together with our member organizations to proclaim the sanctity of life throughout Greater Philadelphia. We have distributed over 10,000 pieces of information at area abortion facilities, brought the pro life message to Harrisburg, organized prayer vigils and 40 Days for Life campaigns, and responded to the needs of women by providing housing, support and material assistance. We are so grateful for the parish reps and supporters who join us in this effort by offering pro-life items and bulletin inserts throughout the year.

The Pro-Life Union is committed to the sanctity of life. We live out that commitment through our work in education, outreach, public affairs and providing alternatives. To learn more about our work, call our office or visit www.prolifeunion.org. (The Pro-Life Union of Greater Philadelphia is a 501(c)3 organization.)

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I would like to be a donor to the Pro-Life Union of Greater Philadelphia. Enclosed is my donation of \$_____.

Please charge a one-time donation of \$_____ to my credit card.

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ E-Mail _____

Credit Card number _____ Exp. Date _____ CSC # _____



"How can there be too many children? That is like saying there are too many flowers." — Mother Teresa