

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Dear Parishioners,

This Friday is the annual March for Life in Washington. The article below explains why it is important to telling the world that abortion is the worst form of violence against mothers & children and that there are alternatives. If you are interested in going to the March, Sacred Heart Church in LaPlata is sponsoring bus transportation. The number there is 301-934-2261.

With my prayers,
Fr. Conley

Ignorance Isn't Bliss by Teresa Tomeo *Our Sunday Visitor* What we don't know can hurt us, and others, shows recent survey on post-abortive women

There is an old saying, "what you don't know can't hurt you." And yet, when it comes to the choices we make and how we live our lives every day, eventually we realize just the exact opposite is true. Even Scripture tells us that knowledge is a positive rather than a negative. The Old Testament prophet Hosea reminds us, for example, that God's people "perish" for lack of knowledge.

The word "perish" in Hosea 4:6 can be taken literally in many ways. Firstly, since the Church exists to evangelize, what happens when Catholics haven't been taught or don't take the time to learn and embrace their faith? They often fall away and embrace practices that may harm and cost them their very souls.

Secondly, they can also engage in dangerous activities that can lead to serious illness, or worse. How many more reports, for example, do we need from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or the World Health Organization to remind us of the epidemic proportions of sexually transmitted infections? How many of the warnings, however, are not shared with the average person who might believe that doing whatever they want sexually is "freeing" rather than truly dangerous in more ways than one? "Ignorance is definitely not bliss," despite what we hear in yet another old saying. This is painfully obvious in a new survey of post-abortive women. This particular survey, conducted by the website FemCatholic, posed questions pertaining to their personal experiences with abortion. It is one to share, review and reflect upon as we head into the annual March for Life in January and the 46th anniversary of Roe v. Wade and Doe v. Bolton.

These Supreme Court decisions gave us abortion on demand through nine months of pregnancy. Planned Parenthood, along with much of the mass media and the rest of the culture, wants us to believe that women truly "know" what they are doing when they have an abortion. We are practically hit over the head with the word or message of "choice." Yet, more and more research shows us that women who "choose" to abort their

unborn children didn't realize they actually had a different alternative because they didn't have or weren't aware of information that could have changed their decision.

FemCatholic found, among other things, that women noted "a lack of practical information about the support available to young mothers." According to a Catholic News Agency article, one respondent said that she desperately wanted but couldn't find practical resources, information and inspiration when she was faced with an unexpected pregnancy.

"How can I finish my degree and be a parent? Where can I live? Can I continue in dorm housing? Are there other mothers out there with thriving careers who started out with an unplanned pregnancy as a single woman?" she asked.

As FemCatholic explains, this same woman said she came to the devastating realization after the fact, that there was actually plenty of help available right on her college campus. It would have been enough to keep her baby and continue her studies.

"It makes me sick to think about it. If that information had been readily available, I would have a 10-year-old today."

When it comes to abortion, what we don't know can be a matter of life or death. With the largest annual pro-life event scheduled in Washington, D.C., right around the corner, there's no better time to ask ourselves not only how much we really "know" and care about this issue, but also how much we're willing to share.

The Power in Praise: How the Spiritual Dynamic of Praise Revolutionizes Lives by Merlin Carothers

*Below are summary notes based on the book **The Power in Praise** by the late Merlin Carothers. Although Carothers wasn't a Catholic his book was recommended by Father Michael Scanlan, the past president of Franciscan University in Steubenville and the one who made that school a bastion of Catholic orthodoxy. The book is available through Amazon*

Praising God is something more than a change in our own attitude. The phrases "Praise the Lord!" or "Thank God!" are used so glibly that we tend to lose sight of their real meaning. There is power in our words of praise; there is power in our attitude of thankfulness and joy. When we sincerely accept and thank God for a situation, believing that He has allowed it to come about, there is released into that situation a supernatural, divine force that causes changes beyond what can be explained as an unfolding of natural events.

All sincere prayer opens the door for God's power to move into our lives. But the prayer of praise releases more of God's power to move into our lives than any other form of petition. The Bible gives examples which show this fact again and again. Psalm 22:3 declares "***You are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel.***" No wonder God's power and presence is near when we praise Him. He actually dwells, inhabits, and resides, in our praises!

An important step in the act of praising God is to take our eyes off the threatening circumstances and look to God instead. We are not to be blind to the very real threats of evil in our lives. But we are not to be pre-occupied with the appearance of evil around us. See it, admit our helplessness to cope with it in our own strength, then turn to God. The Lord says in Second Chronicles *“Be not afraid or dismayed.... for the battle is not yours, but God’s.”* (II Ch.20:15).

Many of us are constantly defeated by the circumstances around us because we aren’t ready to accept that the battle is God’s, not ours. Even when we realize our own powerlessness, we are afraid to let go and trust ourselves to God’s power.

PRAISE & WORSHIP We will have a praise and worship gathering this Thursday from 6:30 to 8:30 PM and dinner will be served. Everyone is invited to come and join us for Spirit-filled praise of our Lord. For more information contact Fr. Conley.

HEALING PRAYER NEXT SUNDAY

As part of our new healing ministry, next weekend trained prayer teams will be available after each Mass to pray briefly and confidentially for you and your intentions.

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. ANNUAL CELEBRATION

All are invited to the annual archdiocesan Celebration of the Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on Saturday, January 19, at 4:30pm at St. Luke Catholic Church in Washington, DC (4925 East Capitol St.). This celebration of Dr. King’s life provides a special occasion of renewed inspiration for courageous conversations that help us build respect and solidarity within our communities, bearing witness to God’s boundless love for all the human family. For more information, contact the Office of Cultural Diversity and Outreach at 301-853 -5335 or

culturaldiversity@adw.org.

HELP FOR YOUR MARRIAGE

Do you feel alone? Are you frustrated or angry with each other? Do you argue ... or have you just stopped talking to each other? Does talking about it only make it worse? Retrouvaille (pronounced "retro-vi" with a long "i") helps couples through difficult times in their marriages. This program has helped tens of thousands of couples experiencing difficulties in their marriage. For confidential information or to register for the upcoming program beginning with a weekend on February 1-3, please visit www.HelpOurMarriage.com, call 443-400-7017, or email 3015@retrouvaille.org.

MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT SERIES

Free Event: Sacred Heart Parish, 201 St. Mary’s Avenue,

La Plata, MD 20646 (Friendship Room)

Starting: Thursday, January 31 – Thursday, February 28 from 7:30 – 9:00 p.m.

January 31: Equal

Temperaments, Love, Languages, Money, Personalities, Family of Origin

February 7: Communication

Fighting Fair, Raw Spots, Linear vs. Circular, Internal vs. External Processors

February 21: Sexuality & Intimacy

Infallible Lovers, Debunking Myths, Levels of Intimacy

February 28: Thriving Vs. Surviving

The Exceptional 7%, Surprising Habits of Happy Couples, The Spiritual Difference

For more information or to register contact: 301-853-4546 or e-mail: visiblesign@adw.org.

MANY THANKS TO ALL WHO GAVE TO OUR CHRISTMAS COLLECTION.

This is a very important annual collection as every penny of it stays in the parish. It is also part of our budget. **To date we have received \$40,157.76.** We are grateful to everyone who has contributed. If you haven’t yet given to the Christmas collection we ask you to please do so. If you no longer have a Christmas envelope, just write “Christmas collection” on your check. Thank you for your support of our parish!

MASS INTENTIONS FOR THIS WEEK:

SUN: 8am Parishioners, 10am Rev. Joseph Kleinstuber, 12N: Kate Corcoran, **MON:** 8am Cristina Arguelles, **TUES:** 8am Sam & Darlene Grogan, **WED:** 8am Patricia Jean Padgett, **THURS:** 8am Ernest J. Keller, Jr., **FRI:** 9:30am Betty Ann Watson, **SAT:** 9am Yvonne Coates, 4pm Ramon Alfonso.

PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR DAILY

PRAYERS: Stephen Balenger, Mary Bowes, Deacon Gene Burroughs, Quint Burroughs, Brenda Callahan, Joe Cross, Agnes Curtis, Chuck Davis, Kendall Farrell, George Fassel, Arlene Gandolfi, Kevin Gardiner, Martha Gehring, James Gibson, Zynae Green, Irma Johnson, Angie Kalnasy, Regina Kijesky, Lillian Komar, Susie Logan, Larry Miller, Joseph Mona, Wayne Mullings, Mary Reeves, Sylvene Savoy, William Leon Savoy, Edna Sweeney, Jean Turner, Eva Washington, Beth Weise, Pat Werner, Brice Zimmer.

OFFERTORY COLLECTION LAST WEEKEND:

\$9,703.68. The unidentified donations totaled \$693.68. We received \$663.00 for our School Support.