

Creating a Culture of Life

By: Stephen Wandor

Yesterday, hundreds of thousands of supporters of the pro-life movement gathered in Washington D.C. to defend the rights of the most vulnerable among us, the unborn. There were slogans and posters all calling for an end to abortion; however, the message that can be lost among all of the raised voices is that there is so much more to the Pro-Life movement than a single day of protesting.

This does not mean the March is not very important, but being pro-life does not only mean attending the annual March for Life or being anti-abortion, it means building and living out a culture of life.

The crux of the argument for life, and the very base upon which everything we do should be built, is that each and every human being has immeasurable dignity—a value that needs to be celebrated as well as defended. In today's society where cash is king, it is so easy to lose sight of what really brings joy and fulfillment into our lives. At our very core we are social beings and if we really look at what makes us happy it is very rarely more money or other tangible goods, but rather the relationships we share with those around us.

Ask yourself what truly makes you happy. Confronted with the choice of building a friendship or extra spending money, which would you choose? All too often we fail to take into account what truly brings us joy when interacting with each other. It is this simple idea that members of the pro-life movement need to bring to the forefront of the pro-life movement. Above and beyond all other things, what brings value, joy, and comfort to everyday life is not societal or economic status, but the people around us.

What does this mean for the pro-life movement? It means that we must not only oppose abortion, but also provide love and support for all women, especially those in crisis pregnancies. One of the greatest ways that we can show how we truly value the dignity of each individual is through providing for the needs of those among us who are struggling. They, meaning both the woman and unborn child, need love and care, not judgment and pressure to solve the 'problem'.

We, as a society, need to see the unborn for what they are: children who will bring tremendous love and joy into our lives. So many times the reason cited for abortion is that "they will not have a fulfilling life" or "the child will put too much of a financial burden on me." Can anyone honestly say they could look into the loving eyes of a three year old child or even an innocent newborn and say to him or her "I have to kill you because you are too much of a

burden" or "you do not have a good chance at a successful life so I have decided to end any chance you may have." How can we say the same to an unborn child? This is not to say that children do not bring difficulty and hardship along with joy, but the 'problem is not the child, but rather our society.

It is time that we stand up and ensure that there is love and care for all these children. Yes, we do have a duty to help our neighbors, especially those who need it, because each and every one of us has value and dignity immeasurable by economic means. We should help those around us not because we have the economic means, but because it is the right thing to do.

I have heard it said many times by pro-lifers that "one of those aborted could have cured cancer," but this is the wrong way to look at it. Perhaps the statement is true, however what is more important is the dignity of each life and the joy that each and every child is capable of bringing into the world. Saying abortion is wrong due to a perceived loss of a medical advancement misses what is really lost in an abortion: a human life.

Another concern is that the vast majority of unborn babies believed to have down syndrome are aborted, yet every child I have met with down syndrome brings more joy to those around them than can ever be measured by what they can and cannot do. Raising a child with a disability, brings many difficulties, but also many rewards. They cannot be defined by what they cannot do and we are not defined by how much money we make or what our accomplishments are, but by how we act and how we care for our fellow human beings. This is where pro-lifers must place their emphasis.

One of the greatest ways in which the pro-life movement is living out this care is through pregnancy resource centers. These centers provide support, counseling, and care for women in crisis pregnancies through their child's infancy. Many also provide free ultrasounds. While more can always be done to care for one another in our society, this is a great start and we must continue to push forward in this and other similar endeavors. The pro-life movement cannot be satisfied with just outlawing abortion, but needs to continue to try to create a culture in which every life is valued and the dignity of all our fellow humans is respected.

Being pro-life is not a political stance, it is a way of life. Let's live it!