**Let There Be Life**

Saint Cletus Respect Life Apostolate Newsletter #2, January 2022

“**If you want peace, work for justice. If you want justice, defend life. If you want life, embrace truth—the truth revealed by God.” ---Saint John Paul II**

**I. From the Teaching of the Early Church**

**“Murder is once and for all forbidden. Therefore, we do not destroy even the *fetus* in the womb while as yet the human being formed derives blood from other parts of the (mother’s) body for sustenance. To hinder a birth is merely a speedier way to kill a human being. It does not matter whether you take a life that has been born or destroy a life that is not yet born” (Tertullian, c. 197 AD). *Fetus* is a Latin word meaning “little child.” Tertullian was an important theologian and prolific writer in the Latin Church.**

**II. From the St. Cletus Respect Life Apostolate**

Pope Francis used his first general audience of 2022 to speak about family, having children, and adoption. His talk was so timely and important, we thought we should include some of the key points he made.

Pope Francis addressed what he termed “the demographic winter we have today. . . many couples do not have children because they do not want to, or they have just one—but they have two dogs and two cats. Yes, dogs and cats take the place of children. Yes, it’s funny, I understand, but it’s reality, and this denial of fatherhood and motherhood diminishes us and takes away our humanity.” Pope Francis continued, saying that “with this selfishness on the part of some couples, civilization becomes older as the richness of fatherhood and motherhood is lost.” The Pope went on to say, “I ask St. Joseph for the grace to wake up our consciences to think about this: having children. Fatherhood and motherhood are a fullness of a person’s life. Please think about this.” Continuing his reflections in his series on the life of St. Joseph as Jesus’ foster father, he said, “This particular aspect of St. Joseph allows us to reflect on fatherhood and motherhood. And I believe this is very important to think about today, because we live in an era of notorious orphanhood.” Pope Francis went on speak at length about “accepting life through the pathway of adoption, a generous and beautiful act. “How many children in the world are waiting for someone to take care of them? . . . We must not be afraid to choose the path of adoption, to take the risk of acceptance . . . Having a child both naturally and through adoption is always a risk, but it is riskier not to have any.” Pope Francis closed his remarks with a prayer:

“St. Joseph, you who loved Jesus with a fatherly love, be close to the many children who have no family and who wish for a father and mother. Support couples who are unable to have children. Help them discover, through this suffering, a greater plan. Make certain that no one lacks a home, a bond, a person to take care of him or her. Heal the selfishness of those who close themselves off from life so that they may open their hearts to love. Amen”

(January 5, 2022, Pope Paul VI Hall, Vatican City-State)

**III. Locally in the St. Cletus Respect Life Apostolate**

St. Cletus Respect Life Apostolate offered two showings of the movie “Roe v Wade.” This was **not** the made for television “Roe vs Wade” film of 1989, but the made for theatres film of 2019. The film draws on Dr. Bernard Nathanson’s two books, The Aborting of America and his autobiography, In the Hands of God. Dr. Nathanson was one of the founders of the abortion rights movement in the U.S. and NARAL (National Abortion Rights Action League), and operated the largest abortion clinic in the country. He even aborted his own child before leaving the abortion industry to become a pro-life activist and eventually a convert to the Catholic faith. The movie presents compactly, but accurately how the pro-abortion movement began and evolved, the lies and deception that led to the Roe vs Wade case and why the U.S. Supreme Court caved in to legalize abortion across the nation. Alveda King, niece of Dr. Martin Luther King, is executive producer and Stacey Dash (as Dr. Mildred Jefferson), Jon Voight, and Nick Loeb star in the film. The film is definitely worth watching. If people are interested, we could offer a third public showing. You could borrow the DVD from us if you would like to view it at home, or you can buy copies inexpensively via Amazon. The entire film is available for viewing free on the internet. Both of Dr. Nathanson’s books are enlightening and worth your time. His autobiography is especially moving.

***Please note*** that we will have a special second collection for Life Line Coalition on the weekend of February 5-6, 2022. In Jan. 1986, Archbishop John L. May of St. Louis established Life Line Coalition to assist pregnant women in crisis situations with medical expenses, food, clothing, housing, education, adoption services, and spiritual guidance. It continues to provide invaluable help to countless women and families in our Archdiocese. Please be generous.

**IV. State and National**

It is important to stay informed on what is going on in the U.S. Congress and locally on human life issues. For instance, the U.S. House of Representatives recently passed the State Operations & Related Programs Bill (sounds innocent enough) that eliminates the Hyde and Helms Amendments which, since the 1970s, have prevented Medicaid funds from being used to pay for abortions and banned the use of funds for overseas abortions. The President has promised to sign the bill if it passes the Senate. The House is working on legislation that would eliminate the conscience clause for doctors and nurses when abortions are requested. On Sept. 29, 2021, the U.S. House, by an 8 vote margin, passed HR 3755 which essentially bans virtually any limitation on aborting the unborn. It is currently in the Senate. We must pray unceasingly for the conversion of hearts of our leaders. We can write or call the offices of our federal and state legislators. They do take note, especially when a number of people contact them. It’s important to contact pro-life legislators as well. They must know that their efforts do not go unnoticed and they are greatly appreciated.

We meet the third Wednesday of every month in the St. Cletus Parish Hall.