



A Pro-Life Religious Outreach Newspaper

Pro-Life Champion John Paul II Beatified

The late Pope John Paul II was beatified on May 1 by Pope Benedict XVI in Rome. Throughout his life John Paul II was a champion who fought to protect every vulnerable person, especially the unborn and the elderly. The beatification of the late pontiff officially declares that he lived an exemplary life of virtue and that God granted a miracle to be worked through the intercession of John Paul II.



Blessed John Paul II

The young Karol Wojtya, who later became Pope John Paul II, lived amidst the horrors of the Nazi occupation of Poland during World War II. He saw many of his professors and family friends taken away to be killed or worked to death in Nazi concentration camps. After the war he witnessed previously unthinkable threats to life presented by

new technological developments. As a bishop and later as pope, he was given an international pulpit to preach about the dignity and sacredness of every person, especially the most vulnerable.

In 1995 John Paul II wrote a remarkable pro-life letter entitled *Evangelium Vitae*—the Gospel of Life. In it he enumerated the many threats against life in the modern world and presented a plan “for the building of an authentic civilization of truth and love.”

In *Evangelium Vitae*, John Paul II examines how it is possible that so many threats to life have developed. He says the “culture of death” has emerged because it “is actively fostered by powerful cultural, economic, and political currents which encourage an idea of society excessively concerned with efficiency.” This emphasis on utilitarianism causes a perplexing contradiction in modern thought. “On the one hand, the various declarations of human rights...show that at the global level there is a growing moral sensitivity, more alert to acknowledging the value and dignity of every individual as a human being, without any distinction of race, nationality, religion, political opinion, or social class.” On the other hand, those who cannot live their own lives without assistance from others are denied their fundamental right to life. In effect, the “culture of death” equates human worth with productivity so that anyone

who does not tangibly contribute to society is seen as an unnecessary burden. As long as human dignity is founded upon usefulness, it will always be threatened.

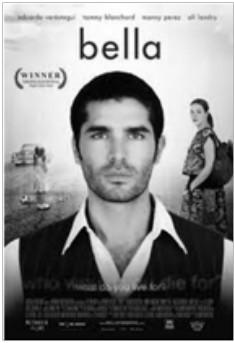
Thus, John Paul II reminded the world that the only sure foundation of human dignity is a proper recognition of God as creator. “When the sense of God is lost, the sense of man is also threatened and poisoned... Man is no longer able to see himself as ‘mysteriously different’ from other earthly creatures.” Without this recognition that life is a gratuitous gift from God, “life itself becomes a mere ‘thing,’ which man claims as his exclusive property, completely subject to his control and manipulation.” When God is removed from life and death, man begins to determine when and how life will occur and when it will end. It becomes an object of manipulation instead of a gift to be received.

John Paul II admits that “faced with the countless grave threats to life present in the modern world, one could feel overwhelmed by sheer powerlessness.” He responds that, “At such times the People of God...is called to profess with humility and courage its faith in Jesus Christ, ‘the Word of life’” (1 Jn 1:1). Christ, the subject of the Gospel of Life, is the antidote to the “culture of death.”

John Paul II’s own life embodied this Gospel of Life. After decades of fighting for life he developed a serious case of Parkinson’s disease. Many media critics from around the world clamored for the aging pontiff to resign. But despite his immense suffering, John Paul II knew that God had providentially placed him on the world stage and that he was called to be a global example, and neither disease nor age can ever deprive a person of his worth. In an era which systematically depreciates the value of the elderly and infirmed, John Paul II exemplified Paul’s immortal words, “I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me” (Phil 4:13). Until the day of his death, John Paul II preached the dignity of every person made in the image and likeness of God, and exemplified how to live with dignity. At his beatification Mass, Pope Benedict XVI commented, “The Lord gradually stripped him of everything, yet he remained ever a ‘rock,’ as Christ desired. His profound humility, grounded in close union with Christ, enabled him to continue to lead the Church and to give to the world a message which became all the more eloquent as his physical strength declined.”

Lead Actor from “Bella” Establishes L.A. Pro-Life Clinic

Last September Eduardo Verastegui, the star of the movie “Bella,” established a new pro-life clinic in Los Angeles to help the predominantly low-income Hispanic population. The new clinic is surrounded by ten nearby abortion facilities which contribute to the disproportionately high number of abortions suffered by Hispanic women.



Verastegui became a famous actor during years of starring in telenovelas. As he rose in fame, he stopped practicing his Christian faith and accepted roles which violated the values his mother had tried to instill in him. However, the prayers of Verastegui’s mother were answered when he needed to learn English to expand his career. His teacher was a Christian who challenged him to return to the faith of his youth. This led him on a new career path away from soap operas.

“Before my conversion, I was poisoning the world with my media projects,” Verastegui said. “Now I want to use my talents to make the world better.” After his conversion, Verastegui began to work on “Bella,” the story of a recluse Mexican soccer star who aids a waitress who is fired just as she learns she is pregnant and is considering abortion.

A recent “Our Sunday Visitor” article by Jim Graves narrates Verastegui’s visit to an abortion clinic while preparing for his role in “Bella.” “After arriving,” Graves writes, “he soon forgot his movie and was distressed to see

many young women enter the clinic in tears. Sidewalk counselors asked him to translate for a Mexican immigrant couple about to enter the clinic. The couple recognized Verastegui from his work on Mexican telenovelas, or soap operas, and talked with him for 45 minutes. They left without entering.

“Months later, the couple called him to share that the child they had intended to abort had just been born and they wanted to name him Eduardo in his honor. Verastegui went to the hospital and held the baby. ‘It was beautiful,’ he said. ‘By the grace of God, I was able to help save this baby.’”

This experience impassioned Verastegui to fight for the protection of the unborn. Near the release of “Bella” he founded “Mantle of Guadalupe,” a non-profit organization which specifically seeks to aid the Hispanic community. “My hope is that Guadalupe Medical Center will reach and help many women, children and families,” Verastegui said. “It will be an oasis of life for those most in need.” Our Sunday Visitor reports that the Mantle of Guadalupe has a 5,000-square-foot facility which serves 20 women daily. It offers free pregnancy-related services such as ultrasounds, prenatal care, and counseling.

Astrid Bennett Gutierrez, director of a pro-life counseling center near the Guadalupe Center, says Verastegui has already had an immense impact. “Since he established his clinic last year, we’ve been able to save hundreds of unborn babies, and their parents have been spared the tragedy of abortion.”

2011 People of Life Awards Bestowed by Bishops

A doctor, a diocesan leader, and an international advocate received the 2011 People of Life Award for lifetime commitment to the pro-life movement, during an August 8 ceremony at the annual Diocesan Pro-Life Leadership Conference in Atlanta. The People of Life Award recognizes those who have answered the call of Pope John Paul II by dedicating themselves to pro-life activities and promoting respect for the dignity of the human person.

As a physician, researcher and mentor, Dr. Angelo has been an advocate for post-abortion healing and a defender of the elderly and dying. She has published extensively throughout her clinical practice in child, adolescent and adult psychiatry. She has taught at Cornell, Harvard and Tufts medical schools. For 14 years, she has served as a member of the Pontifical Academy for Life.

Mary Katherine “Mimi” Eckstein has served for 20 years in the Respect Life office in the Archdiocese of Denver. During her tenure, she strengthened the network of parish respect life representatives and instituted key pastoral, educational and liturgical initiatives. She now leads the Gabriel Project, a parish-based outreach program that pairs pregnant women in need with parishioners who assist them throughout their pregnancy and beyond.

Magaly Llaguno is an international advocate for

life. In 1972 she founded Comite Pro Vida Internacional, which later became the Hispanic division of Human Life International. Ms. Llaguno has spread the pro-life message to Hispanics in 18 countries through international conferences, printed materials, TV, internet and radio.

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Bulletin Inserts

October 2 – Respect Life Sunday is a day set aside for reflecting “with gratitude on God’s priceless gift of human life. It is also an occasion to examine how well we, as a nation and individually, are living up to our obligation to protect the right of those who... are at risk for their very lives.” Cardinal Justin F. Rigali, statement for Respect life Sunday, 9/29/09.

October 9 – “Abortion-rights activists sneer about anti-abortion advocates ignoring science. But the reality is that science is not on the side of NARAL or their ilk, and they know that. That’s why they don’t want women looking at ultrasounds or hearing what they call a ‘little clump of cells’ has a heartbeat a three weeks.” Democratic political analyst Kirsten Powers in blog entry on “The Fox Forum,” 4/1/09

October 16 – “The sick person in a vegetative state, awaiting recovery or a natural end, still has the right to basic health care (nutrition, hydration, cleanliness, warmth, etc.) and to the prevention of complications related to confinement in bed.” Pope John Paul II, addressing the International Congress on Life-Sustaining Treatments and the Vegetative State, 3/20/04

October 23 – Secretary of State in accepting Planned Parenthood’s Margaret Sanger Award said she was “in awe” of Sanger. Commented Rep. Chris Smith, “Are you kidding? In ‘awe’ of Planned Parenthood founder Margaret Sanger who said in 1922, ‘The most merciful thing that a family does to one of its infant members is to kill it.’”

October 30 – “Every child brings us God’s smile and invites us to recognize that life is his gift to be welcomed with love and preserved with care always and at every moment.” Pope Benedict XVI

November 6 – Speaking to a conference of health care workers, Pope Benedict XVI cautioned that good health care does not include practices that destroy human life like abortion, euthanasia or artificial reproductive techniques that involve the destruction of human embryos. Vatican Radio, quoted in Life News, 11/18/10

November 13 – In their first major statement on Physician-Assisted Suicide, the U.S. Catholic Bishops stated that the assisted suicide movement “actually risks adding to the suffering of seriously ill people.” The bishops state that feelings of isolation and hopelessness are compounded by “the realization that others—or society as a whole—see their death as acceptable or even desirable solution to their problems.” The Southern Cross, July, 2011

November 20 – In 2004 California voters approved Proposition 71 allocating \$3 billion of state taxpayer funds for embryonic stem cell research. Some 7 years later, the San Diego Union Tribune notes that although the state-created California Institute of Regenerative Medicine has been involved in important research, “there has not been a blockbuster breakthrough of the kind that proponents in 2004 seemed to imply was just around the corner in terms of converting research into applied medical treatments and cures.” This comes from a newspaper that endorsed Proposition 71. San Diego Union Tribune, 6/29/11

The following are based on “Mary’s Pregnancy” by J.C. Willke M.D.

November 27 – As we begin the season of Advent when we prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ, it is a good time to remember that both Mary and her cousin Elizabeth firmly believed that Mary was pregnant not with an abstract scientific name but with the person of the God-man Jesus.!

December 4 – While society continues to deny the humanity of the unborn child, the Bible tells us that Elizabeth tells Mary that when she heard her greeting, her child (John the Baptist) leaped in Elizabeth’s womb for joy upon recognizing

his cousin Jesus. The six-month old “fetus” recognizes His Lord and Savior, even when He was a ten-week old embryo.

December 11 – In today’s culture, Mary would be told that the rational decision in light of her “problem” would be to have an abortion. An unwed mother, certain to be cut off by Joseph, her friends, and family, living in an age without a governmental safety net, she had every reason to seek an abortion. But Mary knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that she was carrying a child of God, and abortion was therefore out of the question.

December 18 – As we walk the Advent journey toward Christ’s birth with Mary, it is an appropriate time to reflect on the gift of unborn life and to pledge anew to defend the unborn child’s right to life while renewing our commitment to women with difficult pregnancies.

December 25 – The birth of Christ makes God’s love visible. The unborn life nurtured by Mary for nine months is now made manifest as God’s most beautiful creation, a new born baby. Who can doubt that this child, conceived by the Holy Spirit and saluted with joy by the unborn child John, was ever anything less than a cherished human being?

Suggested Prayers

October 2 – That the many initiatives of Respect Life Movement may produce a renewed dedication to protecting life, we pray

October 9 – May abortion alternatives groups receive increased support for their life-saving mission, we pray

October 16 – That we may rely on the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the struggle to protect the unborn and fragile elderly, we pray

October 23 – That, grateful for our own life, we may work to protect the right to life of those yet to be born, we pray

October 30 – For the triumph of the Culture of Life in the ongoing battle with the Culture of Death, we pray

November 6 – For those in policy-making positions that they may rely on Divine Wisdom in making decisions regarding the sanctity of human life, we pray

November 13 – For fathers involved in abortion decisions, that they may support and love both the pregnant mother and the unborn child, we pray

November 20 – For men and women in pain because of their participation in an abortion, that they may turn to the Good Shepherd for healing, we pray

November 27 – For those involved in the abortion industry that they may turn to the protection of life rather than its destruction, we pray

December 4 – That this nation may hear the call of John the Baptist and repent from the sin of legalized abortion, we pray

December 11 – That Mary’s acceptance of God’s will may be a model for troubled pregnant women, we pray

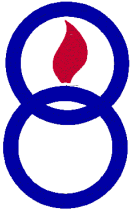
December 18 – That those who are working to restore respect for life may rely on prayer as the foundation of all they do, we pray

December 25 – That as we kneel at the crib of the newborn Jesus we may renew our commitment to protecting all children’s right to be born, we pray

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Alabama Passes the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act

On June 15th, Alabama Governor Robert Bentley signed the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act. In signing the law, Governor Bentley remarked, "I believe that life begins at conception and I signed this bill to further commit my promise to protect the life of an unborn child." The Alabama Senate had passed the measure in a 26-5 vote after the House assented in a 69-19 vote. Alabama becomes the fifth state to enact the protective law which takes effect on September 1.

"We are encouraged by the growing trend to enact the model Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act and other pro-life laws that protect unborn children and help their mothers," said Mary Spaulding Balch, J.D., director of state legislation for the National Right to Life.

In all, 50 Alabama legislators co-sponsored the model Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act which, as drafted by the National Right to Life Committee's state legislation department, protects the life of the unborn child at the point that they are capable of feeling pain, except when the mother "has a condition which so complicates her medical condition as to necessitate the abortion of her pregnancy to avert death or to avert serious risk of substantial or irreversible physical impairment of a major bodily function or...it is necessary to preserve the life of an unborn child."

The Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act was first adopted last year in Nebraska where LeRoy Carhart was one of the most prominent late term abortionists in the United States. When the law was enacted, Carhart needed to flee from Nebraska and transfer his practice to Maryland. Since his departure, abortions in Nebraska have decreased 10%. Statistics from the Nebraska Health & Human Services Department reports that there were 1,153 abortions performed from January through June 2011, a decrease from 1,288 for the same period in 2010. Nebraska Right to Life believes this decline could be in large part due to the passage of LB 1103—the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act—which went into effect last October.

"It is clear that LeRoy Carhart taking his abortion business to Maryland probably has a lot to do with this ten percent decline in abortions in Nebraska," said Julie Schmit-Albin, Executive Director of Nebraska Right to Life. "Legislation does save lives. Carhart admitted when LB 1103 was enacted last fall that he would be forced by the law to do late abortions out of the state."

During this year's spring legislative session three other states, in addition to Alabama and Nebraska, have passed the law: Idaho, Kansas, and Oklahoma. Similar legislation is also currently under consideration in Oregon, Massachusetts, and Minnesota.

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