



Diocese of Joliet
Life Office

Life in focus

Invitation to the 2009 March for Life

Dear Friends in Christ,

Jesus Christ gave his life on the cross that we might have life and have it to the full. Each year people of all ages gather from around the country to March of Life in our nation's capitol. This is an opportunity for all those who believe in the sanctity of each human person to express themselves in a peaceful and prayerful way.

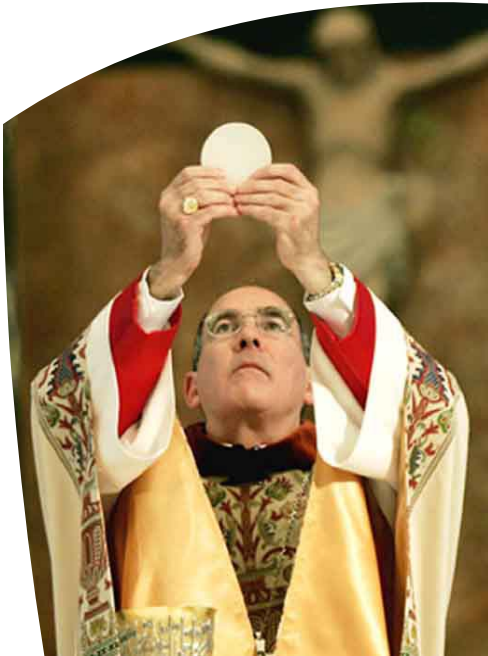
The focus is life. Bishops, priests, deacons and faithful gather to celebrate the Holy Eucharist the evening before the March at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. The experience of celebrating the Eucharistic with thousands of young people is truly inspiring.

The March for Life is held on the anniversary of the Supreme Court Decision, Roe vs. Wade, January 22. The Diocese of Joliet Life Office will be sponsoring a trip which will depart by bus from various locations around the Diocese on the evening of January 20, 2009 and return early in the morning on January 23, 2009.

I am looking forward to the opportunity of being with you on the trip during our entire time in Washington, DC, so please mark your calendars. We will be able to celebrate the Eucharist together and spend some time discussing the sanctity of human life.

Sincerely in Christ,
Most Reverend J. Peter Sartain
Bishop of Joliet

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE
2009 MARCH FOR LIFE, SEE PAGE 3.



Hope and Trust in Life!

By the USCCB Respect Life Office

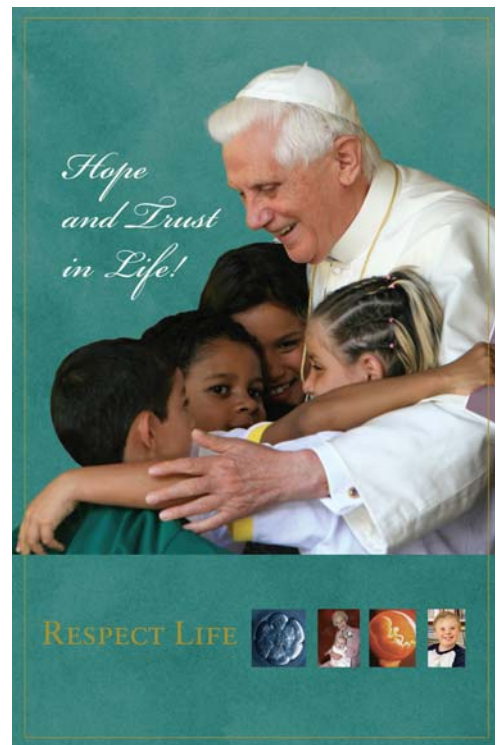
In April 2008, the United States was blessed by the pastoral visit of Pope Benedict XVI.

Americans discovered in our Holy Father a man of immense intellectual gifts, great wisdom, and an unparalleled knowledge of today's geopolitical, social and cultural realities. They also discovered a kindly, gentle priest imbued with humility, with holiness and love. Still, he would be the first to say that the trip was not about him.

God sent Pope Benedict to us with a message, one that doesn't lend itself to the ten-second sound bites and rapid-cycling images of today's media. We Christians in the United States can benefit greatly from carefully reading his talks and homilies,¹ from reflecting on his message and asking ourselves: "How does this message apply to my life?"

In his meeting with the Catholic bishops of the U.S., Pope Benedict affirmed that our country "is marked by a genuinely religious spirit," but this spirit is all too often confined to our places and times of worship:

[T]he subtle influence of secularism can ... color the way people allow their faith to influence their behavior. Is it consistent to profess our beliefs in church on Sunday, and then during the week to promote business practices or medical procedures contrary to those beliefs? Is it consistent for practicing Catholics to



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From the Director



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The Bishops of the United States wrote in their pastoral plan for pro-life activities: "We proclaim that human life is a precious gift from God; that each person who receives this gift has responsibilities toward God, self and others; and that society, through its laws and social institutions, must protect and nurture human life at every stage of its existence." The Diocesan Life Office was established to assist the Bishop, priests, deacons and all the faithful in fulfilling this mission. Last January, we gave thanks to Fran Fortier for her decades of service in fulfilling this mission.

Since last January, I have spent considerable time meeting with the directors of the pro-life committees in parishes throughout the Diocese. I encountered hundreds of men and women who are true believers in the sanctity of human life and dedicated to fostering the gospel of life throughout the Diocese of Joliet. One item that came up consistently was the need for us to gather more regularly as a group in order to support one another and coordinate our efforts on behalf of Life.

To this end, Bishop Sartain formed an Advisory Board that will meet quarterly and which includes priests, deacons, doctors, nurses, professionals, and members of the faithful integrally involved with life. In order to assist in the work of the Life Office, I have also formed an action committee, which will assist in the implementation of the Bishops' pastoral plan for pro-life activities throughout the Diocese. If you have any items of

concern which you would like discussed at the Advisory Board meeting, please contact Mary Scholp at the Life Office so that they can be put on the agenda.

We have also relocated the Life Office Library and Resource Center to the Pastoral Hall at Ss. Peter and Paul Parish. Although this office is more accessible to those in the northern portion of the Diocese, we will also be establishing satellite locations in Joliet and near Kankakee. Although the Southern satellites will not have the capacity of the site in Naperville, I pray they will provide greater support to all the corners of the Diocese.

The upcoming general elections are incredibly important in promoting the culture of life. Parishes are encouraged to distribute "Faithful Citizenship" in their parish bulletins which enunciates the Catholic principles that govern Christian consciences in voting. Bulletin stuffers may be downloaded from the US bishops' webpage: www.usccb.org. This is the only voter's guide approved for use in the Diocese of Joliet.

Finally, the most exciting development this year is that Bishop Sartain will be leading the trip to the March for Life in Washington, DC. The trip will depart on the evening of January 20 and return early in the morning on January 23. If you would like to register or obtain information for your parish, please log onto the Diocesan webpage (www.dioceseofjoliet.org) and click on the Life Office. All of the registration forms and information are there ready for your download in Spanish and English.

Well, then, of course, there is this wonderful bi-annual newsletter put together by Sue Striedl and our pro-life action committee with contributions from our Bishop's Advisory Board. I hope you enjoy it!

If you would like to volunteer to assist the Life Office in her mission throughout the Diocese or in your parish, please contact your parish office or the Diocesan Life Office at 630-718-2121.

Sincerely in Christ,
Fr. Thomas A. Milota
Director
Joliet Life Office

Bishop's Advisory Board

Dr. Brian Couri, M.D.
Fr. Gregor Gorsic
Dr. Lore Griffiths, PTH.D. LCPC
Karen Hatfield
Fr. Daniel Hoehn
Dr. Robert Lawler, M.D.
Fr. David Lawrence
Dr. Coleen Kelly Mast, M.S., D.H.L.
Mary Nemetz, Esq.
Dr. Richard W. Pugliese, D.D.S.
Jan Salihar, RN, CCM
Fr. Joseph Siegel

Diocese of Joliet Life Office

*36 N. Ellsworth St.
Naperville, IL 60540*

~ ~ ~

*Rev. Thomas A. Milota
Director of the Life Office*

*Mary Scholp
Administrative Assistant*

~ ~ ~

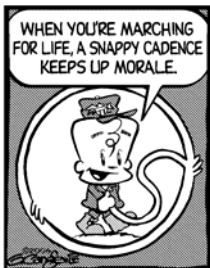
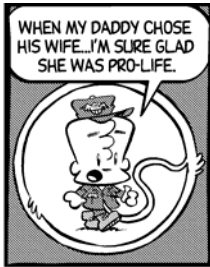
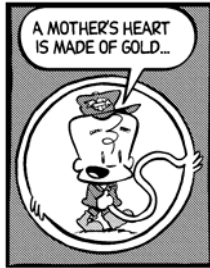
*Phone: (630)718-2121
Fax: (630) 355-1179
prolife@dioceseofjoliet.org*

Life Office Action Committee

Mike Crowell
Deacon William Hetzel
Jeremy Hylka
Fr. Peter Jarosz
Amy Malatt
JoAnne Mehon
Dee Pugliese
Dr. Richard W. Pugliese, D.D.S.
Tom Schager
Sue Striedl
Debbie Verdico
Joe Verdico

PICTURES FROM THE 2008 MARCH FOR LIFE

Umbert the Unborn



by Gary Cangemi



Join the 2009 March for Life

IN ADDITION TO THE MARCH FOR LIFE, ITINERARY INCLUDES VISITS TO:

- Shrine & Home of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton
- National Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes
- Mass at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception
- Sites and Monuments of Washington, D.C.

COST FOR PARTICIPATION

(Price includes transportation by bus, lodging, and food.)

YOUTH, 15 – 21 years of age \$240.00
Four (4) youth to a room

ADULT, over 21 years of age \$360.00
Double Occupancy

Buses will be departing from Naperville, Joliet, and Kankakee on Tuesday, January 20 and will be returning Friday, January 23.

Take a trip that will change your life...

Please add me to the March for Life 2009 mailing list. I am interested in attending and would like to receive full details when they become available.

Name: _____ Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____ Parish: _____

____ I am 15 – 21 years of age. Name of school: _____

____ I am over 21 year of age

Please complete and mail to: Diocese of Joliet, Life Office, 36 N. Ellsworth St., Naperville, IL 60540
The registration deadline is October 15, 2008.

Rachel's Vineyard Post-Abortion Healing Retreats

By Dr. Lore Griffiths

Rachel's Vineyard weekend retreats are diocesan sponsored opportunities for psychological and spiritual healing for those suffering from the after effects following an abortion. Post abortion syndrome does exist and many women and men suffer not only emotionally but spiritually as well. These symptoms may surface immediately, but usually appear within five to seven years following an abortion. These post-abortion symptoms can include: unresolved grief, guilt, anger, anxiety, shame, depression, flashbacks, emotional numbness, insomnia, problems with alcohol and drugs, relationship difficulties, suicidal thoughts, inability to

forgive oneself and fear of punishment from God. Rachel's Vineyard retreats offer forgiveness and hope to the post-abortive.

These weekends provide opportunities to grieve the loss of the unborn child and to receive and accept God's forgiveness. Specific exercises during these weekends assist the post-abortive to find hope after abortion and to begin the healing process both emotionally and spiritually, accepting God's forgiveness and unconditional love. There is hope after an abortion; it is not the unforgivable sin. Christ Himself said to the accused, "Neither do I condemn you," and this

should be our compassionate attitude toward helping those suffering the pain after abortion.

If you know of someone suffering and struggling with the emotional and/or spiritual pain following an abortion, Rachel's Vineyard retreats provide an opportunity for healing and forgiveness. The next retreat is scheduled for the weekend of September 5-6-7, 2008 at the St. Charles Borromeo Pastoral Center in Romeoville. Confidentiality is strictly maintained.

Contact Kay at 1-866-99-4-GIVE for additional information. ■



Catholic News Agency reports about 40 Days for Life that, "150,000 people in 43 states have responded to its previous calls for prayer and fasting, with more than 35,000 reportedly praying outside abortion facilities and Planned Parenthood centers. More than 500 unborn children were reportedly saved, while two abortion facilities that were prayer vigil locations have closed." Over 100 cities will be participating in 40 Days for Life this fall, and the Diocese of Joliet will be among the participants.

Approximately one year ago, the largest Planned Parenthood abortion clinic in the country opened in Aurora. This opening mobilized Christian groups and pro-life groups from our Diocese to prayer for the unborn, their parents, and ultimately, the closing of the clinic.

This year we would like to encourage our parishes to participate in the 40 Days for Life vigil of prayer and fasting for these same intentions at the Aurora Planned Parenthood, which is the site for the Diocese of Joliet. 40 Days for Life begins September 24 and runs through November 2. The hope would be that parishes might be able to commit to one 6-hour period during that time. For more information about 40 Days for Life, please log onto the webpage: www.40daysforlife.com. If you would like to participate at the Aurora Planned Parenthood site, please contact Mary Villim at mjvilim@gmail.com from "Families Against Planned Parenthood."

Planned Parenthood

3051 E. New York St., Aurora

Contact: Mary Villim at mjvilim@gmail.com

Rosary at 2:00 PM every Tuesday

24 hours a day – to schedule a time to pray visit

<http://www.familiesagainstplannedparenthood.org/>

If you are unable to join us for 40 Days for Life at the Aurora Planned Parenthood, please consider joining us in prayer at the times listed below at an abortion facility near you.

▪ Anchor Medical Center

1186 Roosevelt Rd., Glen Ellyn

Contact: Carol Wright (630) 469-2165

Wednesday 7:45 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

Saturday from 7:45 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

▪ Access Health Center LTD

1700 75th St., Downers Grove

Contact: Barb Smith (630) 778-0270

Monday, Tuesday, Friday, & Saturday 7:00 a.m. to Noon

Wednesday 10:15 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.

Saturday from 6:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

▪ ACU Clinic

736 N. York Rd., Hinsdale

Contact: Lynn Benz (708) 296-2830 or lynnbenz@sbcglobal.net

Tuesday 7:15 a.m. – 8:30 a.m., 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Thursday 7:30 a.m. and 12 Noon to 1:00 p.m.

Saturdays – Sidewalk Counselors 5:30 a.m.- 8:00 a.m.

▪ Advantage Clinic

203 E. Irving Park Rd, Wood Dale

Contact: Fran Fortier (630) 529-5837

1st Friday 9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

3rd Wednesday 9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

Saturdays 9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

On Becoming a Pro-Life Doctor

By Dr. Robert Lawler

It was November 2003 when I decided to stop prescribing the pill to my patients. Years earlier, I had stopped performing sterilizations. How I got to this point is a long story in itself, but it suffices to say that with lots of prayer both by me and for me, I was able to make the decision that I did.

Since that time, my practice has stayed relatively busy, and I have been able to support my wife and our ten children. There certainly have been struggles along the way; mainly, the majority of my patients, including Catholic patients, have no problem with contraception or sterilization. I have attempted to educate my patients not only about the moral concerns, but also about the medical complications that are

associated with the pill and sterilization. I have been a strong proponent of fertility awareness programs, i.e. NFP because they are very effective, very safe, and Church approved. The difficulty is getting patients to believe it and to live it.

Many patients are not aware of the Church's teaching on contraception and sterilization. Many Catholics believe that this matter is a private one between them and God. Some Catholics see no difference between NFP and the pill, but there is a clear difference. If they would only take the time to learn more about our beautiful faith, then they would know. Unfortunately, parishioners are not motivated to find out why the Church teaches what it does, and some of our clergy do not feel comfortable speaking

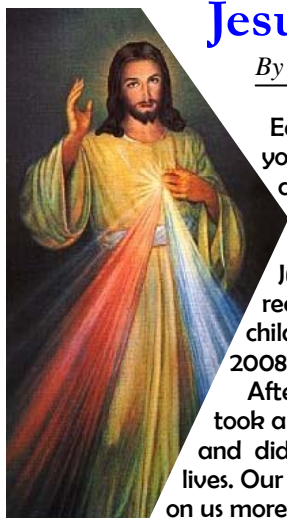
about such a personal topic. However, from this doctor's point of view, it is time to start the dialogue, it is time to learn and love our faith. We can no longer ignore the 600-pound gorilla in the room. We must confront it with honesty and charity, and we will all be the better for it. ■



Dr. Robert Lawler is a board certified, fully pro-life obstetrician/gynecologist. His practice is located in the professional building at Good Samaritan Hospital in Downers Grove, Illinois. Dr. Lawler has been in private practice for 15 years. He can be contacted at (630) 968-2144.

Jesus, I Trust in You

By John and Mary Beth Zabinski



Earlier in our marriage when we were younger, we assumed we would have a child someday but kept delaying it by using artificial means, which we greatly regret. We were married on July 28, 1990, 18 years ago, but only recently were we blessed with our first child, Maria Faustina Zabinski, on May 28, 2008.

After ten years of marriage, our careers took a bad turn, and we experienced job loss and did not know what to do next with our lives. Our parents also got sick and depended on us more and more for help. We both started attending Eucharistic Adoration to pray for all of these problems and continued our daily attendance even when things were going well. Through our prayer, we started to realize the importance of having a family and decided to let God take control.

Being 42 years old, various medical professionals told us that statistically the chance of a woman over 40 conceiving a child is less than 1 in 100. Despite the statistics, we continued to have faith and took a pilgrimage trip in 2006 to Medjugorje where we prayed that we would have a family. About six months later, we found out about a natural family planning class from our church bulletin and met a nurse who taught us the NaPro Technology Creighton Model, developed by the Pope Paul VI Institute, which uses various hormonal events of a woman's monthly cycle to track fertility. Previously, we tried other methods of natural family planning but were not successful in achieving pregnancy. After practicing the Creighton Model for nine months, I became pregnant, and even my doctor said we

were blessed.

As we were practicing the Creighton Model of natural family planning to achieve pregnancy, we continued to pray for the blessing of a child and prayed outside of the abortion clinic in Aurora. In August 2007, before the clinic was open, we saw a flyer in the Adoration Chapel about a pro-life rally. Neither of us ever got involved with the pro-life movement, so we decided to go to see what it was all about. We both cried the first few times we stood outside that fortress, wondering how many innocent babies would be killed there. We started attending the weekly rosary on Tuesdays, and shortly after that, I became pregnant. We continued throughout the pregnancy to pray outside the clinic, and currently, we go with our baby to pray, hoping that a mother will change her mind about having an abortion after seeing us.

We would have never achieved pregnancy without natural family planning and prayer. We had been childless for so long, but we trusted and accepted God's plan for us. Our attitude was that we would joyfully love to have a child, but if it did not happen naturally, we would never use any artificial means. We were fortunate to be blessed with Maria Faustina and named her after the Divine Mercy Saint who was given the phrase, "Jesus, I Trust in You." God was merciful to us even though we did not always follow His will. We learned that by putting our trust in God, everything works out for the best. When people ask about Maria Faustina's name, we explain to them the Divine Mercy of Jesus. ■



John, Mary Beth, and Maria Faustina Zabinski are parishioners of SS. Peter and Paul Parish in Naperville, Illinois.

Saint Spotlight



Gianna Beretta Molla
(1922-1962)

Gianna Beretta was born in Magenta (Milan) October 4, 1922. Already as a youth, she willingly accepted the gift of faith and the clearly Christian education that she received from her excellent parents. As a result, she experienced life as a marvelous gift from God, had a strong faith in Providence and was convinced of the necessity and effectiveness of prayer.

She diligently dedicated herself to studies and applied her faith through generous apostolic service. After earning degrees in Medicine and Surgery from the University of Pavia in 1949, she opened a medical clinic in Mesero (near Magenta) in 1950. She specialized in Pediatrics at the University of Milan in 1952 and there after gave special attention to mothers, babies, the elderly, and poor.

Having chosen the vocation of marriage, she embraced it with complete enthusiasm and wholly dedicated herself "to forming a truly Christian family". She became engaged to Pietro Molla, and they were married on September 24, 1955, in the Basilica of St. Martin in Magenta. In November 1956, to her great joy, she became the mother of Pierluigi, in December 1957 of Mariolina, in July 1959 of Laura. With simplicity and equilibrium, she harmonized the demands of mother, wife, doctor and her passion for life.

In September 1961 towards the end of the second month of pregnancy, she was touched by suffering and the mystery of pain; she had developed a tumor in her uterus. Before the required surgical operation, and conscious of the risk that her continued pregnancy brought, she pleaded with the surgeon to save the life of the child she was carrying, and entrusted herself to prayer and Providence. The life was saved, for which she thanked the Lord.

A few days before the child was due, although trusting as always in Providence, she was ready to give her life in order to save that of her child: "If you must decide between me and the child, do not hesitate: choose the child - I insist on it. Save him". On the morning of April 21, 1962, Gianna Emanuela was born. Despite all efforts and treatments to save both of them, on the morning of April 28, amid unspeakable pain and after repeated exclamations of "Jesus, I love you. Jesus, I love you," the mother died. She was 39 years old. Gianna was canonized by Pope John Paul II on May 16, 2004. Her feast is celebrated April 28.

Hope and Trust ...

(continued from page 1)

ignore or exploit the poor and the marginalized, to promote sexual behavior contrary to Catholic moral teaching, or to adopt positions that contradict the right to life of every human being from conception to natural death?

The answers to these questions are obvious. But have we really considered the consequences of this gap between our profession of faith and our living it out? Under "America's brand of secularism," Pope Benedict explains:

Faith becomes a passive acceptance that certain things 'out there' are true, but without practical relevance for everyday life. The result is a growing separation of faith from life: living 'as if God did not exist.' This is aggravated by an individualistic and eclectic approach to faith and religion: far from a Catholic approach to 'thinking with the Church,' each person believes he or she has a right to pick and choose, maintaining external social bonds but without an integral, interior conversion to the law of Christ. Consequently, rather than being transformed and renewed in mind, Christians are easily tempted to conform themselves to the spirit of this age (cf. Rom 12:3). We have seen this emerge in an acute way in the scandal given by Catholics who promote an alleged right to abortion.¹

By treating religious faith as an isolated set of beliefs that is irrelevant to our personal and political decisions, Americans have allowed a culture of death to take

root and spread. While it is easy to cite politicians who publicly sever their "personal" religious beliefs from their voting behavior, each of us falls short of living out our beliefs perfectly and consistently.

What is meant by the expression "culture of death"? It is a pervasive attitude that accepts the intentional killing of an innocent human being as a solution to a social or economic problem. The broad acceptance of abortion, "mercy" killing, assisted suicide, population control measures, abortifacients marketed as "contraceptives," and the destruction of human embryos for research signal how far we still need to go to build a society where all understand that every human life is sacred because each of us is created, loved, and redeemed by God.

Pope Benedict encourages us to be clear in our beliefs, act consistently with them, and be animated in our efforts to transform our culture.

"The proclamation of life, life in abundance, must be the heart of the new evangelization," said Pope Benedict in his homily at St. Patrick's Cathedral. "For true life—our salvation—can only be found in the reconciliation, freedom, and love which are God's gracious gift."

Therefore, he continued:

"The Church ... is called to proclaim the gift of life, to serve life, and to promote a culture of life. ... This is the message of hope

we are called to proclaim and embody in a world where self-centeredness, greed, violence, and cynicism so often seem to choke the fragile growth of grace in people's hearts."¹

Our Holy Father urged us to let our daily prayer to the Father—"Thy Kingdom come!"—bear fruit in the way we lead our lives and build up our families and communities. He added: "Praying fervently for the coming of the Kingdom ... means overcoming every separation between faith and life, and countering false gospels of freedom and happiness. It also means rejecting a false dichotomy between faith and political life."¹

Through the sacraments and meditative prayer, we can rediscover the truth and joy of Christian life fully lived for God and for others. By letting the love of Jesus Christ permeate our lives and actions in defense of our vulnerable brothers and sisters, we can transform our nation, building a culture where all people can again hope and trust in life! ■

¹ These are available at www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/travels/2008/index_stati-uniti_en.htm.

² Pope Benedict XVI, Responses to the Questions Posed by the American Bishops, April 16, 2008.

³ Homily, Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral, April 19, 2008.

⁴ Homily, Mass at Yankee Stadium, April 20, 2008.

Dear Pastors and Parish Pro-Life Coordinators,

If you have not yet received your *Hope and Trust in Life!* Respect Life Program packet, please contact the Diocese of Joliet Life Office at (630) 718-2121.

LIFE *around* TOWN

SEPTEMBER

- *September 5-7*—Rachel's Vineyard Post-Abortion Healing Retreat at the St. Charles Borromeo Pastoral Center in Romeoville. Call Kay at 1-866-99-4-GIVE for additional information.
- *September 8*—Feast of the Birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- *September 24*—40 Days for Life begins. See page 4 for details.

OCTOBER

- *October 5*—Respect Life Sunday; 2:30 - 3:30 PM, Life Chains will be providing prayerful witness at the five abortion clinics in the Joliet Diocese along with the Helpers of God's Precious Infants prayer group.
- *October 15*—Registration deadline for the 2009 March for Life trip. See page 3 for details.

NOVEMBER

- *November 1*—Solemnity of All Saints
- *November 2*—All Souls Day
—40 Days for Life ends.

DECEMBER

- *December 8*—Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, a Holy Day of Obligation
- *December 25*—Nativity of Our Lord, Jesus Christ
- *December 28*—Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph

JANUARY

- *January 1*—Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, a Holy Day of Obligation
- *January 4*—Memorial of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton
- *January 11*—Feast of the Baptism of the Lord
- *January 18*—Mass for Life celebrated by Bishop J. Peter Sartain at the Cathedral of St. Raymond, 604 N. Raynor Ave., Joliet, Illinois at 2:00 PM. A special blessing will be given at the Mass for those attending the March for Life in Washington, D.C.

- *January 20-23*—Diocese of Joliet March for Life trip to Washington, D.C. See page 3 for more information.
- *January 22*—The anniversary of Roe v. Wade is designated as a day of penance for the violation of the dignity of the human person committed through acts of abortion and prayer for the full restoration of the legal guarantee of the right to life. Check the Life Office website for prayer vigils and services.

FEBRUARY

- *February 25*—Ash Wednesday

MARCH

- *March 19*—Solemnity of St. Joseph, Husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary

If you would know of any pro-life events happening in or around the Diocese of Joliet, please contact the Life Office at (630) 718-2121.

RESOURCES

If you or someone you know is suffering and struggling with the emotional and/or spiritual pain following an abortion, please contact one of the following organizations:

Rachel's Vineyard/RETURN Ministries
1-866-99-4-GIVE

A Time to Heal
1-866-Time 2 Speak

If you or someone you know is considering an abortion, please contact one of the following organizations:

Birthright of DuPage (630) 355-9888
Birthright of Joliet (815) 725-3411
Birthright of Kankakee (815) 937-5881
Woman's Choice Services (630) 261-9221

Websites:

U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops
<http://www.usccb.org/prolife>

National Catholic Bioethics Center
<http://www.ncbcenter.org>



Diocese of Joliet
Life Office
 36 N. Ellsworth St.
 Naperville, IL 60540

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If you know someone who would like to receive the Life Office newsletter, "Life in Focus," please contact us.

Rev. Thomas A. Milota – Director of the Life Office
 Mary Scholp – Administrative Assistant

Phone: (630) 718-2121
 Fax: (630) 355-1179
prolife@dioceseofjoliet.org
<http://www.dioceseofjoliet.org/life>

The Joy of Love, the Poisoning of Love

By Dr. Coleen Kelly Mast

The feelings of love are exhilarating. The deep joy of love comes in sacrificing for the good of the other. Self-mastery is ordered toward the gift of self. God offers us all three in his plan for chastity.

*"Chastity is the spiritual energy capable of defending love from the perils of selfishness and aggressiveness and able to advance it toward its full realization."
 (Familiaris Consortio #33)*

We live in a culture that has tried to change the definition of love, family, and marriage, thus reducing God's magnificent plan for love down to a mutual pleasuring of bodies. Many of our young people have bought that lie and some are living it, unaware that fornication and contraception are poisoning the 'could-be beauty' of their love. We cheat our youth - big time - if we don't do all that we can to teach them the truth and help them to counteract the lies they are hearing.

With a divorce rate edging at 50%

and the knowledge that couples who practice chastity (abstinence before marriage and NFP-only during marriage) have only a 3% divorce rate, it would seem that God knows a lot about the inner lives of human persons. Bad habits of using a person for selfish pleasure do not disappear once a wedding has taken place. The teachings of the Church show us the way to reflect God's love to the world, as well as save us from selfishness or from being used by others. God wants all people to know and live the extremely beautiful love of his son Jesus Christ. 'Extreme sports' is not enough; we need 'extreme love'. God is calling all of our youth to chastity. What can we do to help them live it? ■



Dr. Coleen Kelly Mast, a wife, mother, and international speaker, is the hostess of the popular radio talk show, "The Doctor is In." Mast is also the author of both the Sex Respect and Love and Life chastity education programs.

A parent brochure on chastity to use in your parish has been developed by Mast with our Diocesan Religious Education Office. For more information, access www.sexrespect.com or www.dioceseofjoliet.org/reo.



Pray For a
 Greater Respect
 for Life!