



Helpers of God's Precious Infants

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Greetings and Christmas Blessings from The Monastery of the Precious Blood, headquarters of The Helpers of God's Precious Infants,

I would like to begin this newsletter by wishing all Helpers a happy thirtieth anniversary. It was on October 7, 1989 that the first large Helpers prayer vigil was held. After engaging for many years in protest and civil disobedience which was having diminishing effects on its intended audience, myself and four others; two grandmothers, a grandfather and a young business woman, founded the Helpers. We would focus our efforts on prayer and sidewalk counselling and invite the local police to lead us to the abortion sites, rather than have them come to arrest us. This has been our method of operation since and the results have been outstanding. Over twenty-five abortion facilities have closed in the New York area alone since 1989, thousands of babies have been saved, and countless mothers have been spared the grief and injury (as often occurs) of aborting their child at Helpers vigils. A tree grew in Brooklyn and its branches have spread all over the world. Helpers chapters are now in over forty countries. The Helpers are there for every woman who is contemplating abortion, whether she goes through with it or not. I would say that we are there especially for those who choose abortion. After the procedure is performed most women are bereft and already are mourning the loss of their child. The Helpers sidewalk counselor is there to console her and to assure her that God can and will forgive her. If the woman listens at all to what the counselor is saying, she will never come back. These facilities thrive on repeat business and will close if it is not forthcoming. We seek to bring Jesus to the streets of our cities, allowing Him to use us to bring His healing touch to those who most desperately need it. The Helpers should be there to help before the woman has entered the abortion facility and after, should she choose to reject her child. I would like to thank each and every Helper from the bottom of my heart for all that you do to bring a Culture of Life back to our cities and nations.

Writing in the Human Life Review in 1975, celebrated British author and television personality Malcom Muggeridge wrote "Our Western way of life has come to a parting of the ways; time's takeover bid for eternity has reached the point at which irrevocable decisions have to be taken. Either we go on with the process of shaping our own destiny without reference to any higher being than Man, deciding ourselves how many children shall be born when and in what varieties, which lives are worth continuing and which should be put out, from whom spare parts - kidneys, hearts, genitals, brainboxes even - shall be taken and to whom allotted. Or we draw back, seeking to understand and fall in with our Creator's purpose for us rather than to pursue our own; in true humility praying, as the founder of our religion and our civilization taught us: Thy will be done." The developments in technology and science since 1975 have only exacerbated the problem Muggeridge described. As verified by the Center for Medical Progress, unborn babies are now routinely destroyed in such a way that their "spare parts" are still useful for research. Cloning is a common occurrence. The elderly and the ill are encouraged to "end their suffering" by voluntary euthanasia. In some cases, they are denied treatment or have medical decisions made for them without their consent. The Church, however, since its very beginning has insisted that Man is made in Imago Dei, the image of God. As such, men and women have an inherent dignity that must not be compromised. God alone has created the universe and all that is in it. God is the final arbiter of all decisions concerning life, and men and women must respect God's prerogatives. It would appear at first glance that we have indeed rejected God, as ever more anti-life legislation has been enacted in some of our states and countries. Secularists dominate the media, the academy, and government. However, there are clear signs of hope. The total number of abortions have declined every year in the USA since 2010, according to Planned Parenthood's own research institute. Young people are increasing proclaiming themselves pro-life as evidenced by the massive outpouring of young people at Marches for Life all over the country. These young people are not just marching, many are volunteering as sidewalk counselors and pray-ers with the Helpers and 40 Days for Life. While there still are many advocating for abortion on demand, I believe the tide is

turning. Pro-lifers, often called anti-science, have science on their side. 3D and 4D ultrasound images have made a deep impact on the question of the humanity of the child in the womb. Seeing images of the child swimming and playing in the womb has convinced many that abortion is wrong. Dr. Bernard Nathanson, the founder of the National Abortion Rights Action League, and presider of over 60,000 abortions including his own son as an abortionist, became convinced of the humanity of the unborn when he saw an ultrasound image of a child in the womb. In 1984 he appeared in the film "The Silent Scream". "The Silent Scream" was the first film to document an abortion as it happened. Dr. Nathanson, whose abortion facility I had sidewalk counselled in front of in the 1970s, narrated the film showing images of a baby fighting for its life as the abortionist continued his grisly work. For many years I was convinced that Dr. Nathanson was my enemy. In truth, Dr. Nathanson was my friend. It just took him many years to hear God's call and act accordingly. I was present when in 1996 Dr. Nathanson was received into the Catholic Church. God does indeed work in mysterious ways.

Another powerful tool for promoting the Culture of Life has been the recently released film "Unplanned". Based on the book of the same name by Abby Johnson, "Unplanned" tells Johnson's story, and what a story it is. Ms. Johnson began volunteering for Planned Parenthood while she was in college, all the while believing that she was helping women in difficult situations. After graduation she began working as an escort, eventually rising to become one of the youngest clinic directors in the nation. She was so successful at her job that she was given an "Employee of the Year" award by Planned Parenthood. However, one day while filling in for a nurse in during an actual abortion procedure, she saw the child visibly squirm away for the abortionist's cannula on the ultrasound machine. After seeing this, she could no longer work for the largest abortion provider in the USA. She quit and joined a local 40 Days for Life team. Ms. Johnson has had two abortions herself, one chemical and one surgical which are shown in the movie. The chemical abortion, in which she took one pill to kill the child, and a second pill to expel the child from her womb, is shown the actress playing her suffering greatly as the child is expelled in her shower amid large pools of blood. This is what happens in a chemical abortion, and it is the first time it has ever been shown on screen. Even this was not enough to convince Ms. Johnson of the horror and brutality of abortion, but when she saw the image of the child on the ultrasound it convinced her. Ms. Johnson now runs "And Then There Were None" which helps those trapped in the abortion industry to leave and find other jobs. Several people have told me that after seeing this movie that they have become convicted that something must be done to end this horrible practice. Some have joined the Helpers. We welcome them.

The gruesomeness and horror of abortion was never so apparent than on one fall day in New York City in 1975. Some of the Helpers in the New York area may remember this. While walking on his way to work, Dr. Richard Selzer felt something beneath his shoe that was sticking to it. What was sticking to his shoe was not the ordinary litter found on the streets of New York. Dr. Selzer at first thought it may have been an injured bird. In fact, what was sticking to his shoe was the remains of dead baby killed in an abortion. A local hospital had had put the remains in a garbage bag with other debris and left it for the sanitation department to pick up. When one of the sanitation trucks did so and subsequently hit a pothole on the road, the bag broke and several babies spilled out all over the street and sidewalk. Together with a few other people I travelled to the scene as soon as we heard of this and picked up what was left of the babies and gave them a proper burial. Both the Sanitation Department and the New York City Health Commissioner insisted that this incident was anomaly and would never happen again. The hospital claimed it was an oversight and that "usually fetuses under one pound were incinerated and fetuses over one pound were buried in one of the city's cemeteries." New regulations were forthcoming following this macabre occurrence. Remember this was 1975 before fetal experimentation was allowed. However, is the fact that dead babies are now disposed of "properly" or are being experimented upon make it any less terrible? It is for this reason I always blessed the hazardous materials trucks that would come to pick up the remains of unborn children whenever these trucks would come to whatever facility I was praying and counselling at.

Schedule of Vigil Masses from December 2019 to June 2020

<i>Date</i>	<i>Church</i>	<i>Abortion Site</i>
December 14, 2019	St. James Cathedral Downtown Brooklyn	14 DeKalb Avenue
January 11, 2020	St. Catherine of Genoa 520 Linden Boulevard, Brooklyn	Kings County Hospital Brooklyn
February 15, 2020	St. Paul and St. Agnes Congress and Court Streets, Brooklyn	Planned Parenthood, 44 Court Street, Brooklyn
March 21, 2020	Our Lady Queen of Martyrs 110-06 Queens Boulevard, Queens	All Women's Medical 124-10 Queens Boulevard, Queens
April 25, 2020	St. James Cathedral Downtown Brooklyn	14 DeKalb Avenue
May 23, 2020	Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary 88-19 Parsons Boulevard, Queens	Choices 147-32 Jamaica Avenue
June 20, 2020	Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary 88-19 Parsons Boulevard, Queens	Choices 147-32 Jamaica Avenue

News and Notes



In an incident reminiscent of Dr. Selzer's experience, earlier this year an abandoned, deceased unborn baby girl was discovered in a bag near a school in Brooklyn, New York. Fred Trabulsi, executive director of the Life Center of New York, upon learning of this sprang into action. He contacted the New York City Police, The New York City Department of Health, and a local funeral home about conducting a funeral for "Baby Monica" as he decided to call her. After waiting months for permission from the Health Department, Fred was permitted to hold a funeral Mass for the child presided over by my good friend Fr. Norman Bennett. She was then escorted from the Church by an honor guard from the New York City Police Department which included bagpipers. Baby Monica was laid to rest at a cemetery in Staten Island, New York. Many thanks to Fred, a Helper of long standing, for recognizing the humanity of this child and doing all that he could to ensure that she had a proper burial.



On October 13, 2019, a party to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the founding of the Helpers was held at the Monastery of the Precious Blood. A gathering of about forty people was on hand to share stories of their experiences in trying to bring a Culture of Life to the streets of New York. A very good time was had by all, and I was able to talk with many whom I have not seen for some time. Some of you may remember seeing on the news that earlier this year, Rep. Brian Sims, a state legislator from Pennsylvania, publicly harassed and vilified an elderly woman and two young teenagers who were praying at two different abortion facilities in his district. He even threatened to expose their home addresses on the internet to get them stop praying. After this story went “viral” on the internet, Rep. Sims was asked to resign by several of the other state legislators, and to offer an apology. Under some pressure, but backed by the leaders of his party, Rep. Sims did neither. A rally was held in his district, but no apology was forthcoming. Unfortunately, this kind of behavior is applauded rather than denounced all too often. It does, however, show the benefits of perseverance. One of the teenager’s parents initiated a fundraising campaign which raised over \$100,000 for a nearby crisis pregnancy center “in honor” of Rep. Sims. Both the teenagers and the elderly woman has continued to pray at their respective posts, unintimidated by the likes of Rep. Sims. Sean JP McAndrew, a Helper based in Manchester, England, has written to me asking for prayers for his group. One the sidewalk counselors he works with was charged in civil court with harassment, and unfortunately felt she had to plead guilty. The Helpers all over the United Kingdom have been facing many difficulties, particularly from overzealous politicians passing laws restricting free speech. I ask for prayers for Sean and his group now at the hour of their need. Thank you. In the latest issue of Day 41, a publication of 40 Days for Life, there is a story of Fr. Philomeno James. In 1999 he impregnated his girlfriend of the time, and despite his protests she aborted their child. Fr. James, raised Catholic, had left the Church and was living a life of dissipation. In 2003 he met a doctor who convinced him that life with and for Christ was better than any drug or any other of life’s “pleasures”. He was sincerely contrite for his sins and became active in pro-life work. As Fr. James became more involved in the pro-life movement, he discovered that he had a higher calling still, and entered the seminary. He was ordained on July 5, 2019 and has helped set up a crisis pregnancy center and has led prayer vigils in Portsmouth, England. May God Bless him in his priesthood and in his work for Life. The Tablet, the diocesan newspaper of the Brooklyn Diocese, has reported on a unique way of promoting the Culture of Life. Earlier this year, as I mentioned in my last newsletter, Gov. Andrew Cuomo of New York signed into law the Reproductive Health Act, making abortion legal until birth. When Jack Thimons read about this, he, with the help of his father, created a website asking for prayer for the conversion of heart of the governor. convertcuomo.com collects digital prayer pledges submitted by visitors to the site. What is truly unique about this site is that Jack is all of nine years old. He knows that abortion is wrong and is not only willing to do something about it, he is doing the very thing that has the best chance of changing Governor Cuomo’s heart. God Bless young Jack, and I hope and pray that he will have many more years of fruitful pro-life activity. As some of you may know, I have had my share of medical difficulties, particularly in the last year. I would like to take this opportunity to thank my niece, Susan Moore, for her steadfast companionship over the last several years. She is always at my side, making sure I get to my doctor’s appointments and any place else I need to be. In closing I would like to wish everyone reading this newsletter the blessings of the Christmas season.

Until We Meet at Calvary,
Msgr. Philip J. Reilly