



PALM BEACH DIOCESAN COUNCIL OF CATHOLIC WOMEN
Embracing the Grace, Strength, and compassion of Women

LEGISLATION CHAIR REPORT
AUGUST 19, 2017 –NOVEMBER 4, 2017

On October 20 & 21, 2017, I attended the 31st Respect Life State Conference in Weston, Florida.

There were many highlights from the two day conference but what struck me most, was the Most Outstanding Person Diocesan Awards, the last event of the conference. A person was chosen from each diocese. Don Kazimir, Respect Life Director from our diocese presented the most interesting person. Folks, you can't make up these stories!

A young promising black man was to attend Harvard. But things took a turn for the worst when his girlfriend became pregnant and wanted an abortion. He could not convince her to keep the baby, and after what turned into a horrific event for him, began drinking, drugs, stealing, and eventually shot someone and went to prison for 1st degree murder. He barely skirted the death penalty.

A change in his life occurred when Donna Gardner, then director of Rachel's Vineyard, gave a retreat in the prison for men suffering from the loss of child through abortion. This retreat changed the life of EJ Hinson and he turned to God. Not only did EJ go through retreat, but became a facilitator for the retreat. He then became involved in prisoners turning to Catholicism through RCIA as well as the Welcome Home Initiative for veterans with Post Traumatic Syndrome Disorder. EJ or Dr. God, as he is known in the maximum security prison, was honored with this distinguished award. Just think of the grace that has been shown to him and the tragedy of what would have been had he been executed!

There were other heroic stories including a documentary of Doctor Jerome Lejeune who discovered an unexpected third chromosome on the 21st pair of patients with Down Syndrome. He was a champion of those who waged war of the powerful against the weak. Once while attending an international health conference at the United Nations, Dr. Lejeune was the lone pro-life voice when abortion was debated. A hospital in Washington, DC is now being constructed to help young babies with genetic disorders from the supporters of his foundation.

It was such an honor to be apart of this convention. I look forward to Capitol Days when I can tell these stories to our representatives in the Florida congress!

Respectfully submitted,
Janet Richards
Legislative chair

