

40-40



In 1987 I sat through a Cleveland Indians home game. Though the Indians were horrible that year – they lost 100 games – I went to watch Joe Carter play because he was completing a record season as only the 7th Major League baseball player join the 30-30 club (Cincinnati's Eric Davis became the 8th player that same season). The 30-30 club was special.

The 30–30 club is the group of Major League Baseball players who have collected 30 home runs and 30 stolen bases in a single season. During the waning months of a season, the march towards an echelon of single-season greatness achieved by this rare feat drew even casual sports fans to scan the box scores in the morning newspaper for the previous night's results.

Today joining the 30-30 club barely rates a mention; the feat has become common. Even ardent sports fans are distracted by the clutter of cultural cacophony.

There is also a 40-40 club. Only four players are members, which should make 40 an honored number: Jose Canseco, Barry Bonds, Alex Rodriguez and Alfonso Soriano. Three of them are known-steroid users, however; a fan's admiration has turned to antipathy.

This month we mark another tainted "40." January 22, 2013 marks the 40th anniversary of the Supreme Court's decision in *Roe v. Wade*. This barely registers with many Americans: legalized abortion has become common – more than half of Americans were born with *Roe v. Wade* already the law of the land. That legalized abortion is woven into the fabric of American culture has distracted Americans from paying attention to January 22. December 7, 1941 will live in infamy as the beginning of a four-year span when 405,000 Americans died in World War II. In a span 10 times longer than American involvement in World War II, the number of unborn children that died through abortion is a staggering 135 times larger. The cultural mantra of individual liberties and women's rights has drowned out the cry of the community.

Women's rights include the right to equal pay and equal benefits for equal work; the right to equality under economic laws of property ownership and inheritance; the complete elimination of even the slightest whiff of discrimination; the conscious elimination of glass ceilings in business and government.

Granting women the power of choice, where the choice is between life and death, and a personal right to decide life is an unnatural right. America is a great country made even greater when we respect and protect human life, including the life of the unborn, who are human. In the Catholic tradition of "and", we offer hope by embracing the principles of liberty and dignity of the individual *and* the principles of community rights and ethics and the tradition of the common good. These are natural rights.

Beginning on Ash Wednesday there is a "40" that we can celebrate: 40 Days for Life. Since *Roe v. Wade* there have been 55 million abortions in the United States. One person can make a difference by participating in 40 Days for Life, a focused pro-life campaign that consists of 40 days of prayer and fasting, peaceful vigils, and community outreach to end abortion in America. Within the Archdiocese of Portland there are vigils in Portland, Beaverton, Salem and Eugene. For more information on 40 Days for Life go to <http://www.40daysforlife.com/location.cfm>

Individuals can also make a difference by praying for increased adoption support.

Finally, individuals can make a difference by praying for those who chose abortions. Many members of the 30-30 and 40-40 clubs used steroids because it was common practice. Just as society welcomed ballplayers who realized the error of their ways and asked for forgiveness, we Catholics walk with those men and women who seek to return to the Church.



Office of Life, Justice, and Peace