

## 40 Days for Life

*Do my thoughts reflect those of Christ and His Church?*

### **What is the Forty Days for Life?**

The Forty Day for Life is a peaceful, prayerful gathering for forty consecutive days outside an abortion clinic. "Prayer warriors" are called to fast and pray during the forty days in hopes of helping to guide those seeking an abortion to turn away, and choose life instead. Participants pray for everyone from the President of the United States to the workers and doctors who perform the abortions at facilities. They pray for boyfriends and husbands, wives and girlfriends. Prayers are said for those determined to have an abortion and those struggling to find a way not to end a life. These campaigns are joined by all denominations of faith and led by people who ache for the hearts broken through abortion and for the interior suffering caused by this single act of desperation. This prayerful presence is sometimes seen as controversial, but has brought much healing to passers-by and to the needy of Pittsburgh.

### **How did this movement begin?**

A group of four people from the Coalition for Life in Bryan/College Station, Texas saw abortion numbers in their county in Texas continuing to increase each year. They decided to turn to prayer to see in what direction God would lead them. They prayed around a small wooden table for one hour and felt called to begin the first ever campaign of continual prayer and fasting for forty days. They would also educate their entire community with the pro-life message, knocking on over 25,000 doors during this time.<sup>1</sup> This round-the-clock vigil would be at the Planned Parenthood abortion center which was stationed almost directly across the street from their own facility. They called upon their community to unite with them in prayer and had an amazing response of over 1000 participants.<sup>1</sup> The results of this first campaign reduced abortions by 28%, saving 100 lives.<sup>1</sup> After this, other cities started to run their own campaigns hoping to achieve similar goals.

### **When Does 40 Day for Life run?**

Campaigns run twice each year. The first is conducted during the forty days of Lent. The second runs during the fall season. The current campaign runs from September 28 through November 6, and, in Pittsburgh, starts each day at 7 a.m. and ends at 7 p.m. in front of Planned Parenthood at 933 Liberty Avenue. Saint Alexis has a time slot to stand up for life on Saturday, November 5, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Young and old are welcome to join us anytime during these hours to pray for an end of abortion and to pray for healing for all those who have had abortion touch their life in any way. Additionally, you can contact Beth Ann Veres if you are interested in standing at the clinic on any Thursday of this campaign from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Kate Giuffre at the Parish Center has further information on this. You can also visit the website for the Pittsburgh area at [www.40daysforlifepittsburgh.com](http://www.40daysforlifepittsburgh.com).



### **First National Campaign – 2007**

**Number of total campaigns to date – 4168**

**Lives saved from abortion since 2007 – 11,796**

**Number of abortion facilities closed – 73**

**Number of abortion workers that quit – 133**

**Number of states involved – 50**

**Number of countries with campaigns – 36**

**Number of churches involved - 18,500**

**Number of cities – 636**

<sup>1</sup>Bereit, David. *Introduction. Unplanned: The Dramatic True Story of a Former Planned Parenthood Leader's Eye-opening Journey across the Life Line.* By Cindy Lambert. Carol Stream, IL: Salt River, 2010. XVII. Print.

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***Is it scary? Do people openly scoff at you? Why would anyone knowingly want to bring ridicule upon themselves?***

*I thought that perhaps people would like to know what it is like to actually stand in front of an abortion clinic. I have been participating in these campaigns for the last four years and can give you my firsthand account of the details to these questions. On Thursdays, when my friend Marilyn and I arrive, friendly faces of those standing the previous hours that day greet us. They recall events at the clinic from the previous two hours and inform us of pertinent information before we begin our shift. We stand on the outside of a sixteen-foot half circle, drawn in yellow paint on the sidewalk, to pray. This line is the line that separates us from the doors of the clinic. It is a separation we obey to honor our promise to uphold a peaceful, prayerful vigil.*

*I have found that about 75% of passers-by are quietly supportive, vocally supportive or indifferent to our cause. About 25% of the people who pass the street will scoff or express themselves in an unsupportive manner. Very few engage us in conversation and if they do, we have the choice to participate or not. If we choose to discuss the issue of life with anyone for a length of time, we are allowed to leave the vigil and discuss it at another part of the sidewalk. Those at the vigil are in constant vocal or silent prayer. We pray for everyone too. There is a set of prayers on posters we can wear. There is a packet of prayers and litanies to recite - all for the cause of those people who are being touched by abortion.*

*At one time, there was a man who visited the campaign in order to engage those of us who stood vigil in a war of words. He would have his cell phone at the ready, using it to tape our every word. He established a website to use for belittling us as well as our cause for life. I would pray very hard to prepare for his appearance so that I would not be caught off guard and say something he could use to harm this movement. After about three campaigns of his tactics, I stopped seeing him. I mentioned his name to another vigil participant and she told me wonderful news of how*

*this man's life was helped by campaign participants. This man showed up at the vigil holding an eighteen-month-old baby and a very desperate look. Those participants gave him the help that he needed that day and direction to help fix what problems he was facing. See how God works in such strange ways...the very people who this man tried to trick and hurt ended up helping him in return. This is one of many accounts that you will experience from these campaigns. We are prayerful people who wish only the best for others - no matter who they are or what they have done. Is that not what God asks of us all?*

*I have seen fathers taking in their girlfriends/wives who are determined to eliminate the life that grows within them. One man came up to us in tears begging for immediate prayers so that his wife would have a change of heart. It is an uphill battle in some people's eyes, but it is a battle worth fighting.*

*I have never yet witnessed what is known to be a "true save" during the hours that I have stood vigil. What does that mean? It means that I have not been able to know a person determined to have an abortion, go inside the clinic, and return saying that they changed their mind about the life growing inside of them. I still know that the hours that I stand in prayer and fasting are worth every bit of effort on my part because of the fathers and mothers who will choose life instead of death. Mothers who have had abortions come past us after years of anguish and receive information about the healing process. We circulate pamphlets on Rachel's Vineyard, a retreat place for healing after abortions.*

*I hope after reading this account you will think about joining us this fall to help build a culture of life. It has been personally rewarding for me to know we are helping people who are hurt from abortion. Some days I leave the clinic after completing my shift feeling cold and tired. I always leave the clinic, however, with a feeling that I am doing God's will and helping others in some way. I know this is what He is calling me to do. What is God calling you to do?*