



From Deacon Mark Miller's Desk

We are two weeks into the Forty Days for Life that began Ash Wednesday. It's a twice-a-year campaign against abortion. There is also a fall campaign. For the last several years, as part of the fall campaign, OLG has placed four thousand flags on our lawn representing the children aborted in a single day. The latest statistical analysis is in, and this fall, we'll be planting a lot fewer flags – 25 percent fewer! The abortion rate in the U.S. is now lower than it was the year Roe v Wade was decided. In 2018 [the last year full data is available], abortions – both surgical and medical occurred 3,000 times daily.

The success of the anti-abortion movement is a testament to the power of prayer, perseverance, and political will. Hours spent in prayer near abortion centers and in churches have been and continue to be rewarded. Countless volunteers who stood vigil at the doors of abortion centers can now see the fruits of their labor. These successes would not have been possible if it weren't for the courage and integrity of our state officials who continue to champion changes to laws and practices.

Abortions occur in two types of facilities: independent clinics and Planned Parenthood Health Centers. The most recent data reveals 58% of abortion-seeking patients go to independent clinics. In the last eight years, 166 of those clinics have closed – a 32% reduction. In six states, there is only one abortion clinic still in operation. Planned Parenthood provides 37% of all abortions in its 700 health centers. A recent major funding change has significantly impacted those operations.

The Title X Family Planning program provides comprehensive family planning and related preventive health services. Planned Parenthood has participated in the program since its beginning. Title X never provided direct funding for abortions, but it didn't stop employees from discussing and encouraging abortion or referring a patient to a clinic/center for an abortion. The rule changed in 2019, and now Title X funds cannot be used to perform, promote, refer for, or support abortion as a method of family planning. Because of this new limitation, Planned Parenthood withdrew from the program cutting as much as \$560-million from its annual budget.

We can celebrate more than the decrease in abortions. The number of independent clinics dropped 32% since 2012. There were 510 clinics providing abortions that year; by last November, there were only 344. In six states, there is only one abortion clinic still in operation.

2019 also saw other pro-life successes. While temporarily blocked by various judges, Alabama, Louisiana, Ohio, Kentucky, Georgia, Utah, Arkansas, and Missouri have passed either fetal heartbeat or abortion limitation bills. An additional eight states [Pennsylvania, Florida, South Carolina, Maryland, Minnesota, West Virginia, Mississippi, and Tennessee] have begun steps to institute some form of abortion limitation.

While we continue to pray for more successes, let's not forget to give thanks for the advances we've made so far.