

## Advent - Be Ready and Be Prepared for Life!

### Get Informed

Most of us get our news from TV, radio, the internet, and some get news from newspapers and magazines. But do we get a Catholic perspective on the news? One way is to tune into cable station EWTN. Or you can explore the internet for other Catholic and Christian views.

**Googling Around** So, next time you are doing some googling on your computer, take a quick look at these:

**www.youtube.com/user/wordonfirevideo** Word on Fire, operated by Fr. Robert Barron, has had a number of short videos go viral. He does 8- to 10-minute commentaries on public issues. His comments on Bill Maher's anti-Catholic movie "Religulous" generated lots of discussion by young men and numerous atheists.

**www.cardinalnewmansociety.org** For high school students considering college, this is a wonderful source of info that many college counselors ignore. Students can subscribe to *My Future My Faith* magazine for current info.

**Most students go to college eager to learn—especially to prepare for a career—and to make some good friends along the way. Surely these are good things, but a Catholic education offers that and so much more. A Catholic education is not only preparation for a career, but preparation for the rest of your life.** Most Rev.

William E. Lori, Archbishop of Baltimore

**www.lifenews.com** Life News is the leading source of reporting on national and international events touching on pro-life issues. If you ever want a Christian perspective on a current, controversial life-related report, log onto this site.

**www.deveber.org** The deVeber Institute for Bioethics and Social Research. For those interested in an informed response to human life questions. Recent topics have been autism, abortion, palliative care and euthanasia.

**www.usccb.org/respectlife** This links to the U.S. Catholic Bishops Respect Life programs. Also, stop at your church vestibule for free copies of their brief brochures on life-related issues such as advance medical directives, healing from an abortion, chastity before marriage, and many others.

**www.rachelsvineyard.org** Their motto is Healing the Pain of Abortion, One Week at a Time. For example, the Paterson Diocese operates Rachel's Vineyard Retreats. To sign up, call 973-777-8818 ext. 269. Calls are confidential. Or email at rachel@patersondiocese.org

### Ways to Be Pro-Life

• Plan your work schedule in order to participate in the annual March for Life, Thursday, **January 22, 2015**. If you cannot go to Washington, DC, consider joining a local area trip. For example, in NJ, there are many groups planning to converge on Trenton by bus for a pro-life rally that day.

• Celebrate life in all its uniqueness by volunteering with the **Special Olympics**.

• Spend time with an **elderly neighbor** or relative. Many are often alone. If they are able, go shopping with them. If not, sit and have a conversation.

• Encourage someone who has had an abortion to go to **confession**. There is no sin that cannot be forgiven.

• Speak up about euthanasia. **Palliative care** is acceptable in the eyes of the Church, but we can never encourage assisted suicide as a solution.

### One Woman's Commitment

When Eleanor McCullen, age 78, had a deep religious experience 14 years ago, her pastor challenged her to be more involved. **"I had no idea what he was talking about.** I am a wife, mother and grandmother. He said I should start praying outside abortion clinics. I said I guess I could do that. He said he could see me working at a prison. I said that sounded interesting."

McCullen, of Newton, Mass., found a ministry at a prison in Norfolk, and she also took her rosary to the sidewalk in front of Boston's Planned Parenthood.

"When I started, there was a 16-foot buffer zone. Then in 2007 it was changed to 35 feet." This really interrupted the discussions she had with those going to the abortuary.

Years later, her commitment to the unborn would thrust her into the national spotlight as the lead plaintiff in a unanimous landmark Supreme Court decision, *McCullen v. Coakley*. In June 2014, the ruling struck down the buffer zones around entrances to abortion clinics.

"We care about the woman, and **we are there for the woman**, and then we are there for the unborn child. We build up a trust with the mother who is in distress. I have to care for her, the one who is standing right before me, and she's scared. When she realizes that we are listening to her, conversation about the baby comes at the end."

"My life is completely led by the Holy Spirit. Since I work under Jesus Christ, he can trump any buffer zone." [Our Sunday Visitor, Oct. 19, 2014, pp. 10-11.]

## Embryonic Stem Cell Backers Make More False Claims

A newly-released paper on stem cells making insulin from the lab of Dr. Doug Melton, published in the journal *Cell*, provides a small but important improvement in the derivation of functional (insulin-secreting) beta cells. Melton's lab developed an improved method to generate millions of insulin-secreting cells from both human embryonic stem cells, and from adult stem cells created from normal skin cells, without using embryos. But the media have been touting the embryonic stem cell aspect.

As much other research has shown, however, **adult stem cells remain the gold standard** for real patient treatments. [Dr. David Prentice, *LifeNews.com*, 10/9/14]

## 10 Million YouTube Views

At the end of October, Fr. Robert Barron's media ministry, "Word on Fire," had received 10 million views on YouTube. The medium provides pretty thorough demographics that indicate the vast majority of viewers are young men in their 20s and 30s, the very group that the Church has a notoriously hard time reaching.

"Early on," wrote Fr. Barron, "communications 'experts' advised me to lose the Roman collar and appear in civilian clothes so as to attract the more secular audience. I never took that advice, thank God. I always want it to be clear that I am a Catholic priest speaking on behalf of the Catholic Church – and **I don't think young people are the least bamboozled** by awkward attempts at 'relevance.'"

"We find ourselves at a moment in the history of communication comparable to the early **16<sup>th</sup> century's printing press revolution**, especially in the propagation of the Bible. Social media today provides tools for the announcing of the Good News that Paul, Augustine, Aquinas, Pascal, Newman, and even Fulton Sheen never dreamed possible." [The Beacon, Nov. 6, 2014. Fr. Barron is the rector/president of Mundelein Seminary, Ill, and is the creator of the award-winning documentary series, "Catholicism" and "Catholicism: The New Evangelization.]

## Showing Compassion ... and Marching

"Our greatest moments are when we show compassion," said Bailey Wright, president of Students for Life at the **University of Michigan-Flint**. She became involved in pro-life work after doing a debate in freshman year: "Just the straight-up science of it, that life begins at conception. This is so straightforward. A lot of what we fight is indifference and lack of knowledge."

Students from **Benedictine College, Kansas**, were asked to head the March for Life in January 2014. Kathryn Brown, a senior, coordinated the school's trip that sent a record eight buses (430 people) to Washington. Laura Peredo, a junior, is the president of Benedictine's Ravens Respect Life group: "I've been blown away with the people called and equipped to be part of this movement. It's the civil rights issue of our day. I want future generations to know we didn't let abortion happen without a fight."

"Without compassion, passion for a cause means little," said Wright. Stephanie Kaefer, a junior, who is president of Students for Life at **St. Louis University**, agreed. "You have to respect and listen to other people. You can advocate for life by being a supportive friend while witnessing for life." [National Catholic Register, 9/21/2014]

## The Family in Crisis [The Beacon, 10/16/2014]

"Divorce, cohabitation and a generally permissive attitude towards sexual activity outside of marriage have had a major impact on the American family," writes Bishop Arthur Serratelli, Bishop of the Paterson, NJ, Diocese. "In the 1950s, more than 80 percent of children were part of a family where both biological parents were married to each other and living together. In less than 30 years, only half our children were growing up in an intact family. In the 1960s, 4 percent of our children were born out of wedlock. Today, the number is 40 percent."

Yet, studies indicate "the sad fact that the children whose parents divorce or never marry tend to face greater struggles in life than children of families with a married mother and father. Children born out of wedlock are 82% more likely to end up in poverty."

Marriage benefits not simply the spouses but the children as well. "Thus, it is a blessing for society. Marriage is about commitment, fidelity, trust, communication and sacrifice for the good of another. Marriage cannot be equated with cohabitation. Cohabiting partners may love each other, but not enough to commit themselves to a permanent bond."

The Synod of Bishops called by the Pope was aimed at responding to the new challenges of the family. "The Catholic Church, drawing from the Word of God, teaches that marriage is a permanent and exclusive union of a man and a woman who, in their love, are open to new life. This has been the same teaching since the beginning. Yet the Church must continue to show compassion to those in irregular situations, but mercy cannot be separated from truth. Otherwise, it becomes mere sentimentality."