

St. Valentine, Life, Love ... and Lent

This Month: Valentine's Day and Ash Wednesday

"Valentine was a Roman Priest when emperor Claudius the second persecuted the church," said Fr. Frank O'Gara of Whitefriars Street Church in Dublin. "Claudius had an edict that prohibited the marriage of young people, based on the idea that unmarried soldiers fought better because married soldiers would worry what might happen to their families if they died." The idea of encouraging them to marry within the Christian church was what Valentine was about. And he had to secretly marry them because of the edict."

In the year 269 AD, Valentine was caught & sentenced to execution because of his stand for Christian marriage. The story goes that the last words he wrote were in a note to his friend Asterius' daughter. He inspired today's romantic missives by signing it, "**from your Valentine.**"

"Valentine has come to be known as the patron saint of lovers. Before you enter into a Christian marriage you want some sense of God in your life, some great need of God in your life. And we know, particularly nowadays, many people are meeting God through his Son, Jesus Christ."

"If Valentine were here today, he would say to married couples that it's not going to be easy to maintain your commitment and your vows in marriage."

Don't be surprised if the 'gushing' love that you have for someone changes to something less 'gushing' but maybe much more mature. Is that young person ready for that?

"Love -- human love and sexuality is wonderful, and blessed by God -- but there is also the shadow of the cross. That's what Valentine means to me." [Source: <http://www.cbn.com/>]

Just 44 years after Valentine's martyrdom, the forty-day season of Lent as a preparation for Easter was officially recognized by the Council of Nicea. Lent gives us the opportunity to re-focus our Christian life. Ash Wednesday is the perfect way to start our new journey. It would be a great time, also, to re-examine our commitment to life in all its stages, from conception to natural death.

According to Mother Teresa, "I must be willing to give whatever it takes not to harm other people and, in fact, to do good to them. This requires that I be willing to give until it hurts. Otherwise, there is not true love in me and I bring injustice, not peace, to those around me."

"I assure you, as often as you did it for one of my least brothers, you did it for me." (Matthew 25:40)

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Assisted Suicide Made to Look "Attractive and Desirable"

29-year-old Brittany Maynard's publicly announced suicide in Oregon gave an appealing human face to efforts by the former Hemlock Society (now named "Compassion & Choices") to promote assisted suicide in all 50 states. At present three states allow assisted suicide.

Of the 752 people taking their lives under Oregon's law from 1998 to 2013, only six were under 35 years old; the median age is 71. In 2013, less than 3% had any evaluation to check for treatable depression. **Few had untreated pain or even fear of pain.** The government has told cancer patients it will fund assisted suicide but not some wanted treatments to help them live longer. And all reporting on the circumstances of their deaths was done by the same doctor prescribing the lethal dose.

Is it the government's job to make suicide "convenient" for people? Shouldn't it value everyone's life and prevent suicide?

Rip the mask off this campaign, and we find grandma and grandpa being nudged toward death by individuals and governments not wanting to be bothered with 'burdensome' people. As Catholics, we ask: Will lawmakers see through the mask? [Richard M. Doerflinger, "A Public Relations of Death," *The Beacon*, Diocese of Paterson, NJ, 1/29/15.]

"Fifty Shades of Grey" Hypocrisy

From Teresa Tomeo, *Our Sunday Visitor*, 2/1/15: E.L. James' pornographic and sadomasochistic trilogy continues to break sales records wherever "mommy porn" fiction is available. The new film is also expected to be a cash cow.

Women make up the majority of this particular (and very sad) market, including purchasing candles, bed sheets, earrings and all kinds of accessories. Women who claim 'freedom' as their mantra embrace and promote the complete opposite. Go figure!

The Catholic Church is crystal clear that pornography is a grave offense to our humanity. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* states: "Pornography removes sexual acts from the intimacy of partners & displays them deliberately to third parties. It gravely injures the dignity of its participants, since each becomes an object of base pleasure & illicit profit for others. It immerses all who are involved in the illusion of a fantasy world." Experts tell us that it poses great danger to men, women and their relationships.

Faithful Converge on the Capitol and Inundate Social Media with Messages

[based on Cecile San Agustin, *The Beacon*, 1/29/15.]

When Diana Nunez, a young adult from Passaic, NJ, sent out an Instagram post Jan. 22 about the 42nd March of Life in D.C., she posted a picture of a massive crowd of marchers with the caption “#TeamLife.”

She may not have realized that she was part of nearly a half-million people who consider themselves “Team Life” from all across the nation, expressing their opposition to abortion and the Supreme Court’s 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision that legalized it through all nine months of pregnancy. (Sadly, not one major television outlet--except EWTN--gave any coverage to the massive event.)

Nunez said: “I’m here because I used to think it was OK to be ‘pro-choice’ but then I learned that there is no such thing as being pro-choice when it comes to abortion.

Developing humans, babies, are being killed everyday.”

With the predominance of college and high school students present, **social media sites were inundated with photos and messages about the March.**

Even Pope Francis sent a message via his Twitter account on the morning of the annual March: “Every Life is a Gift. #marchforlife.” It was re-tweeted thousands of times.

A member of the Knights of Columbus said: “For the knights, showing our support for life is one of our most important ministries. Of course, we would never demean a woman’s choice, but **when it comes to abortion there is no choice, only life.** If a baby is unwanted or a woman is experiencing hardships she will always have help available during her pregnancy and she can always put her child up for adoption.”

Appeals Court Takes Up EWTN Challenge to HHS Mandate

[from EWTN.com]

The 11th US Circuit Court of Appeals granted a temporary injunction to EWTN that allowed EWTN to continue its court challenge of the contraceptive services mandate without incurring penalties of more than \$35,000 per day.

The mandate, issued by the US Department of Health and Human Services as part of the Affordable Care Act, **requires employer-sponsored health care plans to provide full coverage for contraception, abortion inducing drugs and sterilization procedures** or face massive government imposed fines for failing to do so. “Three years after we first began our legal fight against the government’s unjust mandate, EWTN finally had its day in court,” said Chairman & Chief Executive Officer Michael

P. Warsaw. “Despite the fact that there have been hundreds of lawsuits filed against this mandate and that the government has lost nearly all of the cases that have been considered by the courts, it continues to argue that it should be allowed to force organizations like EWTN to violate deeply held religious beliefs and to provide services which they find to be immoral,” continued Warsaw.

“Religious ministries have been winning these challenges overwhelmingly. **Most courts understand that the government can’t fine you for living out your faith,**” said Lori Windham, Senior Counsel of the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty and lead attorney for EWTN. “EWTN is asking for nothing more than the most basic religious freedom: the freedom to practice what it preaches,” said Windham.

Founded by Mother Mary Angelica, a Poor Clare Nun, the EWTN Global Catholic Network is now in its 34th year. It is available in over 238 million television households in more than 140 countries and territories. With its direct broadcast satellite television and radio services, AM & FM radio networks, worldwide short-wave radio station, website www.ewtn.com, electronic and print news services, and publishing arm, EWTN is the largest religious media network in the world.

Pro-Abortion Movement in a State of Panic Because of Young Americans

“The younger generation is more intensely passionate about ending abortion than their peers are about supporting it, and believe abortion is morally wrong.” According to Kristan Hawkins, President, Students for Life of America:

“Pro-aborts have tried winning you over by saying that they want abortion to be safe, legal and rare. Then they tried to throw out the term ‘pro-choice’ because it’s no longer resonating with you. Then they tried to tell you that pro-life politicians and businesses wanted to take away your rights. **Then they tried to de-stigmatize abortion by saying it’s a hard decision but a responsible one.** And now their latest scheme to win your approval is to just fool you by saying over and over again that abortion is a social good so that you will come to believe it.”

“The trouble is that you have grown up with the incredible advantage of technology. You’ve seen your brothers, sisters, and maybe even your own children’s fingers and toes and heard their heartbeat during an ultrasound. It’s undeniable that **in the womb is a child, a living human being,** and that an abortion takes the life of that child.”

[LifeNews.com, 1/19/15]