



# Life Matters

The Newsletter of the Respect Life Office of the Diocese of Rockford  
Mitch Striedl, Director    Rev. David A. Peck, Spiritual Director  
555 Colman Center Drive    Rockford, Illinois 61108    815.399.4300  
[mitchstriedl@rockforddiocese.org](mailto:mitchstriedl@rockforddiocese.org)

January 2011

vol. x • no. 4

## Thirty-Eight Years Later

By Mitch Striedl

January 22, 2011 will mark the 38<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's tragic *Roe v. Wade* decision. Since that time, over 51 million of our brothers and sisters in Christ have been slaughtered in their mother's womb. There is nothing in our history that has done more to devalue human life and erase from people's understanding the notion of the dignity of the human person than the evil of abortion.

People in the pro-life community are often asked why we focus so much attention on the issue of abortion. The reason is because abortion is the taking of human life at its most vulnerable and innocent stage, and the sheer volume of those killed by this most heinous act is greater than any other violation of human dignity. Furthermore, all other violations of human dignity flow from the destruction of human life in the womb. The common good and all other rights we have as human persons cannot be fully realized unless we defend human life from the moment of conception. This does not mean we should quit working tirelessly for an end to all other violations of human dignity. As people of life, we are called by faith to work for the respect of human life from conception to natural death. However, we must understand how all of these issues are connected, and how at the heart of this devaluing of human life is the destruction of life in the womb through abortion.

Actor Jim Caviezal (made most famous from his role as Jesus in the film *The Passion of the Christ*) put the whole discussion of abortion in another light during an interview with the Spanish publication *Sembrar*. In responding to a question, Caviezal called abortion the greatest

moral defect of the western world and said, "When a man kills a man in a war situation, it is bad, very sad. Attila [the Hun] went further. He said 'not only am I going to kill men, but also women and children.' He raised the bar to another level." Caviezal went on to say, "abortion goes much further: when the mother herself kills her son she goes against her own nature, against her own instinct. People talk about 'choice', but when a woman does that, when she destroys the life of her unborn child, then we have arrived at the limit. The level cannot go higher regarding evil."

To add to the tragedy of abortion, is the fact that most often women are pressured and coerced into it, not fully realizing what they are actually doing. Thus, often times, there are two victims of abortion, the unborn child and the mother.

In the end, the pro-abortion side has slowly been losing ground. The younger generations are more and more pro-life and those in the abortion business know it. Furthermore, the distorted notion of life and its lack of value is literally collapsing in on itself as more and more countries are experiencing declining populations and are forced to confront the devastation that abortion has brought. My former colleague in the Archdiocese of Chicago, Nicholas Lund-Molfese, recently wrote about this and so I have reprinted it with his permission for our reflection.

## Sex, Desire, and Babies

By Nicholas C. Lund-Molfese

Nicholas Lund-Molfese is Director of the Office for Peace and Justice in the Archdiocese of Chicago. He and his wife Christine have six children and live in the Chicago suburbs.

I once stumbled into the Playboy Enterprises' headquarters while going to meet a girlfriend who worked in the same building, for the Family

Institute. (I was lost and it is a big building, honestly.) The receptionists of Playboy had no idea where the Family Institute might be. It was made clear to me that they did not have any connection to it. Being a provocateur, I could not resist making a comment -- on my way out the door -- to the effect that there might be a connection between sex and families.

We live at a time where the celebration of sex and sexual desire is everywhere in the developed world, but oddly it is also a time of falling birth rates. The overpopulation myth is collapsing in the face of a reality that is even being articulated in the pages of the *New York Times*: "With low growth, low birthrates and longer life expectancies, Europe can no longer afford its comfortable lifestyle . . ." While there are still voices playing with the idea that a childless world would be a happier and wealthier one, such views reflect more an ideology than any economic reality.

Along the same lines are the annual articles proclaiming that it will cost \$475,680 or \$250,260 or \$222,360 to raise a child. Where do they get these numbers? The different numbers in the headlines are a sign that much of this is just made up. These statistics put a price on everything the child makes use of and claim that as a "cost." For example, \$70,020 per-child for housing. I don't know about you, but my mortgage doesn't change when I have a child.

Only five of the thirty-eight most developed nations are reproducing at a rate sufficient to maintain their population. Our own nation's economic and population growth is essentially tied to immigration. Is there a connection between anti-immigrant attitudes and anti-child

ones? Do both perspectives reflect a view that people are a problem and a burden rather than a gift and an economic resource? A Catholic approach to being pro-life and pro-immigrant is rooted in a common principle -- the inherent dignity of each human person. Individuals and couples are called to different paths by God. Some are not called to have children either because of their vocation or because of nature; some are called to adopt; some to have two children, and others more. Each of these paths will include in their own way an affirmation of life. However, when whole societies and peoples are at risk of demographic collapse, we should question if something is deeply wrong -- something that makes us as a society unwelcoming to both the migrant and the child.

---

For additional commentary on life issues, check out "Life Lines" on the first Friday of each month in *The Observer*.

***Have you considered donating to the Respect Life Office or volunteering your time?***

Only with your generous support can the Respect Life Office continue to promote the Gospel of Life. The Office needs your help through donations to the Annual Diocesan Stewardship and also through private donations directly to the Office. You may also want to consider making a lasting gift to the Respect Life Office by remembering us in your will.

The Respect Life Office is also seeking those that are willing to volunteer their time at our office in order for us to more effectively communicate the Gospel message.

**If you are interested in donating to the Respect Life Office or volunteering your time, please contact us at 815-399-4300 x 435 or email us at:**

**[mitchstriedl@rockforddiocese.org](mailto:mitchstriedl@rockforddiocese.org)**