



Life Matters

The Newsletter of the Respect Life Office of the Diocese of Rockford
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Honoring Mothers and Women's Health

By Mitch Striedl

As we enter into the Easter Season, we take time this month to honor our mothers for the sacrifices they have made on behalf our families and for the courage they have had to say yes to bringing us into the world, especially in a culture that is so often hostile to the gift of new life. As we take time to honor our mothers, we should also extend prayers and support to our sisters in Christ who have suffered the trauma of losing a child through miscarriage, stillbirth, or abortion. The experience of losing a child, no matter in what way, is always traumatic and leaves an indelible mark on their identity as a mother.

Furthermore, we should also be aware of all the women who desire to have a child but bear the cross of infertility. One in six couples struggle with infertility, and this problem is continuing to grow in our society for a multitude of reasons. If we know of couples struggling with this cross, we should make them aware that help does exist that respects their dignity as a couple and respects the dignity of the life to be co-created with God. This help is called NaPro-Technology, and it is more successful and less expensive than the morally problematic IVF because it actually addresses the reproductive health of its patients.

During this month that we honor mothers, I wanted to focus on an organization that says it supports mothers and women's health, yet its most profitable business is the killing of innocent human life.

Planned Parenthood has recently been caught-up in a debate among elected officials as to whether they should receive federal taxpayer money. In the course of this debate, we have heard legislative officials and Planned Parenthood both say that

defunding the abortion giant would take women's health back to the stone-age, causing mothers and daughters to suffer immensely.

Adding to the hyperbole, the president of Planned Parenthood made a plea for keeping their federal funding on national television, saying that Planned Parenthood is about more than abortions and provides services such as mammograms. This claim has been found to be false partly through the investigative work of a group called Live Action. Live Action contacted 30 different Planned Parenthoods in 27 states and all expressed they do not provide mammograms. I guess we can just add this to the many lies used by Planned Parenthood to drum-up sympathy and support.

All of the "services" that Planned Parenthood provides are aimed at getting women in the door for an abortion, because that is their biggest profit-maker. The Guttmacher Institute, which is the research arm of Planned Parenthood, has shown in studies that increased contraceptive services and comprehensive sex education programs actually leads to increases in abortion. There is no "service" that Planned Parenthood provides that other medical institutions are not providing, except abortion.

In a complete twist of irony, the current administration and legislators who have been advocating for federally funding Planned Parenthood have not batted an eye at cutting funding to community health centers, most of which provide basic healthcare services to women, including mammograms. This irony highlights that the battle over funding for Planned Parenthood is not about access to women's health, but rather, it is about government support of a supposed "right to choose," as long as the choice of the child in the womb doesn't count.

Also, caught-up in the controversy over mammograms and Planned Parenthood is the Susan G. Komen for the Cure Foundation, which gives money to Planned Parenthood. In their latest form letters sent to those who inquire, Komen admits that the grant money given to Planned Parenthood doesn't go towards receiving mammograms or breast cancer screenings directly. Instead, Planned Parenthood may refer women to a local program or have a local provider perform the screening and get reimbursed by Planned Parenthood.

It makes one wonder why Susan G. Komen wouldn't give the grant money directly to local medical centers that actually offer these services. Furthermore, Komen's support of Planned Parenthood is sadly ironic, given that multiple scientific studies have indicated that there is a connection between abortion and breast cancer.

In this month of honoring mothers, instead of federally funding Planned Parenthood or supporting Susan G. Komen for the Cure, let us try to do our part in actually supporting the health and well-being of mothers and women. There are many ways to help, including volunteering or donating to a local crisis pregnancy center or giving to Catholic Charities. Furthermore, for mothers facing a terminal diagnosis of their unborn child or for those that lose a child to miscarriage or stillbirth, the Haven Network of Northern Illinois provides hospice and bereavement services. Donating to the Haven Network is a way of supporting those mothers who have or will lose a child. We can also look to donate to local medical centers that actually offer cancer treatments, rather than organizations like Susan G. Komen, which do no research or treatments themselves. One can always contact the Respect Life Office for help in determining good charities to support.

All in all we should do our part and do what we can to encourage our government to support programs that actually have to do with the health and well-being of mothers, women, and children, not about

preserving the ability and supposed "right" of mothers to kill innocent human life. Our government should be funding crisis pregnancy centers and local community health centers, not Planned Parenthood. When we do our part in supporting programs that promote motherhood and the well-being and health of women, we are doing our part in building a culture of life. For more information on all the ways you can do this please contact the Respect Life Office in the Diocese of Rockford.

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

How can you help the Respect Life Office?

- 1) The Respect Life Office is supported through the Annual Diocesan Stewardship Appeal. Your generous support of the annual appeal is crucial to helping the Respect Life Office fulfill its mission of building a culture of life.
- 2) Support the Respect Life Office by using GoodSearch, a cost-free internet search engine, at www.goodsearch.com and by selecting "Diocese of Rockford-Respect Life" as your charity to support. Every time you search the internet or shop online at your favorite online retailers through the website's GoodShop section, you will help raise money for the Respect Life Office, and it will cost you nothing extra!
- 3) Please consider making a lasting gift to the Respect Life Office by remembering the office in your will, naming it as a beneficiary of a Charitable Gift Annuity, and/or making a donation to the Respect Life Office Endowment. If you are interested in more information, you can contact Dave Hougan at 815-399-4300 or learn more at www.foundationrockford.org and clicking on the folder titled Planned Gifts.
- 4) Volunteer your time and talent with the Respect Life Office.

If you have any questions concerning all the ways you can support the Respect Life Office please contact us at 815-399-4300 or email us at mitchstriedl@rockforddiocese.org

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