



LIFE MATTERS

The Newsletter of the Respect Life Office of the Diocese of Rockford
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Editor's note: *Men, please know that God's mercy is boundless and there exists healing and forgiveness if you have been involved in an abortion in any way. Please visit www.hopeafterabortion.com or call Project Rachel at 815-399-4300 for hope and healing!*

Men and Abortion: The Forgotten Accomplices

by Jonathon Van Maren

On September 14, LifeSiteNews reported that the pro-life organizations Issues4Life Foundation and The Radiance Foundation are organizing a billboard campaign entitled “Fatherhood begins in the Womb.” They say “the campaign is aimed at exposing ‘the culture of abandonment that abortion has created’ by revealing the statistics of fatherlessness, single-parent poverty, and the deterioration of two-parent married households.”

Ryan Bomberger of The Radiance Foundation stated that “Men have been empowered by *Roe v. Wade* to have sex and run. They’ve been forced out of their crucial role by perpetual welfare and today’s brand of liberal feminism.”

To boil the point down: men have an extraordinary but often unrecognized culpability in the barbaric practice of abortion happening thousands of times a day across North America. They are, in many ways, the invisible accomplices of the abortion industry while the debate rages around “women’s issues.”

For example, several months ago, one of my friends from Vancouver contacted me to ask for advice: A girl she knew was planning to have an abortion, and my friend needed to know what to say. Over the next two weeks, I and another one of my friends from Vancouver attempted to help this pro-life woman convince the pregnant girl not to abort her child. The girl, initially open to discussion, had her phone taken away by her boyfriend, and was eventually coerced into having an abortion by the man who saw his own future as more important than the offspring he had fathered.

This is when a question struck me: what has manhood in today’s culture become when two girls in Vancouver are fighting harder for the life of a child than his or her own father?

While the abortion debate is often centred on the woman and the pre-born child, the male is almost never mentioned. Increasingly, I have noticed in dozens of debates on campuses and on the street that women often state they can’t raise a child on their own, as if it is a foregone conclusion that the father of this child will not step up to his responsibilities. Even more often, women cite their significant other leaving them as one of the motivations behind aborting their children in the first place.

This brings a glaring question to the forefront of the debate: Where are all the men?

Traditionally, manhood was defined by a number of things. Men were supposed to be loyal, courageous, responsible, and above all, willing to sacrifice for those they had a duty to protect—namely, women and children. This protective instinct was considered to be as natural as the female maternal instinct.

In American historian William Manchester’s classic narrative history of America, *The Glory and the Dream*, Manchester describes young men during the first half of the 21st century gleaning their values from heroes of the past, noting that the virtue which brought victory was most frequently an ability to control the self; for instance, to be brave.

Today, popular culture seems to measure manhood up against how many women a man has slept with.

When debating others, I have often found myself facing this same “ideal.” One university student asked how I was a man if I wasn’t sleeping with “chicks,” to which I informed him that I held to the quaint point of view that it took more of a man to keep one woman happy for a lifetime than dozens for ten minutes.

When I was doing “Choice” Chain on the streets of Vancouver with two of my pro-life friends, one middle-aged man walked past and asked us, “Shouldn’t you guys be out trying to get laid or something?” This actually shocked me. Whether or not you agree with our position, surely it is more admirable to defend your beliefs in your free time rather than trying to “get laid.”

This is why catch phrases such as “pro-choice” are heralded by many men with such ferocity. “Pro-choice” to them doesn’t just mean the woman’s right to kill her pre-born child; it also means “pro-choice” regarding whether or not men have to stick around and care for the offspring they fathered.

One of my friends who regularly pickets abortion clinics has informed me that we would be shocked to see how many sobbing girls are pushed into abortion clinics by their angry boyfriends and fathers. When picketing in front of the Edmonton abortion clinic, I noticed boyfriends driving up, dropping their girlfriends off, and then promptly leaving. Perhaps more women would stop being “pro-choice” about killing pre-born children if the fathers of these children would stop being “pro-choice” about actually shouldering their responsibilities, as has been the tradition of true manhood in the past.

That some men think that sex is purely recreational and has no consequences is imbecilic and delusional.

That men would send their girlfriends, sisters, and wives to have their bodies violated in an absurd crime against nature and have their offspring dismembered is the most disgusting abrogation of responsibility by males in this century.

Maybe the old values of fidelity, responsibility, and self-sacrifice are scorned by many of today’s “academic” elites, but I can assure you that deep down, everyone recognizes that these men do not deserve the title of “man,” for their actions defy the term.

While responsibility for abortion is shared equally by men and women, I believe that many women would choose life if men chose to be men. Instead, thousands of pre-born children are sacrificed daily on the altar of their fathers’ selfishness.

Jonathon Von Maren is Communications Director for the Canadian Centre for Bio-Ethical Reform

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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