Single Mothers Are Strong Together

Migration & Refugee Services has been hoping to have the ability to better serve single refugee mothers for years. Now, with the help of a grant, a case manager to run the program, and a property in which to house it, their dream has become a reality. Lianna Mueller, after serving with Migration and Refugee Services through Cap Corps and then serving at Maggie’s Place aiding pregnant moms, is the perfect fit for this new program, which began in September. The program is currently serving 21 mothers.

With the help of a house owned by Catholic Charities, the program allows them to aid single moms in three ways. They hold three classes each week, with the topics ranging from navigating an American kitchen, to budgeting, to basic home First Aid and when to call the doctor. Second, Mary’s House can provide housing for a limited number of moms. Lastly, they provide what the moms are lacking – a community where they can support each other in the quest to make a life in a new country.

“Mary’s House” is a safe and comfortable gathering space and allows them to create this support system along with a big plus – they can bring their kids to classes there. Alongside the many programs at Refugee Services, this new program allows Lianna to spend extra time ministering to single moms, giving them a stepping stone to become more self-sufficient. While living at the House, rent is based on income, which allows the mom to save money while also being in a stable living arrangement. Mary’s House aims to help pull the moms out of poverty, by allowing them to build a savings and through the classes, to gain the knowledge and tools to be self-sufficient in America. Lianna pointed out that the women have to start over when they arrive in Cleveland, regardless of the job they had in their own country; skills & education don’t always translate well. The services offered through this program have the capability to empower moms to get back on their feet and able to support themselves and their families.

There are a few ways to assist this wonderful program & the moms they serve. If you have a special skill that you feel would be helpful to the moms, you can volunteer to teach one of their weekly classes. Some topics desired include parenting and information on finding safe housing and home ownership. Migration and Refugee Services is also seeking volunteers who would be willing to mentor either a mom or another refugee family. You may also donate items such as dishes, bath & kitchen towels, furniture, and toiletries, all items that refugees need when they arrive in Cleveland. A complete list of needs for the whole office can be found at their website under “How you can Help.” For more information or to volunteer at the Mary’s House, contact Lianna at 216.939.3842 or lmueller@ccdocle.org.

We do not agree with terms that characterize immigrants as less than human, since no person is “illegal” in the eyes of God.

- Bishop Gerald Kicanas, Diocese of Tucson
For Life

For Life

the people involved in the issuing the punishment of death; can they be reconciled with God? I could go on and on. All of these people have been given life by our loving Creator God but have in some way participated in taking a human life.

God desires to give everyone love and mercy. What about our love and mercy? What do we do to help those who we encounter in our ministries that are not respecting the gift of life? How do we help others to be open to God’s great love?

We are called to love in a way that brings reconciliation, not judgement and condemnation. We must pray that those who have destroyed life and human dignity may open their hearts for the grace to receive God’s love and forgiveness. And pray for yourself, as this ministry takes God’s grace and mercy, especially when we fail.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Several years ago, there was a film produced about sex trafficking called, “Sex and Money: A National Search for Human Worth”. I was taken aback when I read the subtitle of this movie in a recent email. Why would someone need to search for human worth? It’s a given, isn’t it? Well, maybe not.

This reminds me of a discussion with a Catholic friend, long before I was involved in this human life ministry for the Church. He said that some people deserve more respect than others because of their position in society. His example was that a CEO should be given more respect than a janitor. I was appalled. I couldn’t believe he was debating me on this point.

Our Church teaches that we possess human dignity because we are human. All human beings were created in the image and likeness of God and there are no categories of worthiness when it comes to a person. All people deserve respect.

Recently, Pope Francis has been helping us to understand human dignity in terms of mercy. Because we were created equal in God’s eyes, when we do things that separate us of God, each of us has the opportunity to receive God’s loving mercy. God’s mercy is given because of God’s love, not because of earned status.

Pope Francis announced that from December 8, the Immaculate Conception, through November 20, 2016, there will be an Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy.

He said, “I am convinced that the whole Church, because we all are sinners, will find in this Jubilee joy to rediscover and make fruitful the mercy of God, with which we are all called to give consolation to every man and woman of our time.”

The Holy Father concluded, reminding those gathered how God always forgives all, and how we are to “walk with open hearts.” (zenit.org)

In this ministry of upholding human life, there are so many ways we can look at ourselves and how we are spreading God’s love with mercy. Of course, we often think of women who have had an abortion. What about those who encouraged or pressured her? What about the physicians and staff who worked to make it happen? Yet it goes far beyond this. Is the human trafficker or the person who sold another worthy of mercy? And the executioner, the people involved in the issuing the punishment of death; can they be reconciled with God? I could go on and on. All of these people have been given life by our loving Creator God but have in some way participated in taking a human life.

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Peggy Gerovac

More States Consider Passing ‘Right-To-Die’ Laws
Excerpts from Our Sunday Visitor Feb. 22, 2015

[Wesley J. Smith, a frequent writer/speaker in decent of assisted suicide said,] “We are turning into a nation and to a society of the Western culture that is moving away ... from the primary good being the protection of all human life, from the primary good being the equality of all human life — something we’ve been struggling for in the West for hundreds of years — to the primary purpose of society (being) to prevent and eliminate suffering, Smith said. “And of course, you can’t eliminate suffering. ... But if the purpose of society is to eliminate suffering as we see tonight, that quickly morphs into eliminating the sufferer. If you eliminate the sufferer, that isn’t only what happens. The concept of what constitutes suffering also becomes very elastic. Society has to decide which value system it’s going to pursue.”

According to Oregon’s 2013 report on the state’s “Death with Dignity Act,” since the law was enacted in 1977, 1173 have been prescribed death inducing medication and 752 people have died from ingesting medications prescribed under the law. [prescriptions have gone up approximately 81% from 1998 to 2013.]
What does it mean to “Pray to End Abortion,” as the 40 Days for Life campaign asks us to do? This surely manifests itself in many ways, depending on where God asks us to serve. As St. John Paul II says in the Gospel of Life, “Everyone has an obligation to be at the service of life…the responsibility of each individual, called by the Lord to “become the neighbor” of everyone.” I have had the privilege to pray outside abortion clinics in the Cleveland area for the last 5 years during the twice-yearly campaigns. I say privileged because I feel blessed to have the courage to just stand and pray. I don’t feel called to be a sidewalk counselor and my group is normally there when the clinic is closed. However, I keep in mind all those driving by and the way we remind them what is going on in their neighborhood. I pray for God’s loving mercy to be on those who perform and assist in the taking of innocent life, as well as the counselors and even the receptionists. Mostly, I pray for the women, men and children who are forever changed because of walking into this building. I peer up at the windows, which are sometimes illuminated as the staff cleans, and I try to imagine what might be going through the hearts and minds of the women who sit in those rooms to recover. I pray that they might know forgiveness; that someone in their life will share God’s love with them. During the Rosary I talk to Mary, asking her to be with these mothers; to be their Mother in this uncertain time. I get lost in my own thoughts about how women must feel to be put in a situation where the world tells them that ending the life of their child will make their lives easier. From my work with pregnant mothers, I know this is not true. St. John Paul II says in the Gospel of Life that, “Evangelization is a profoundly ecclesial act, which calls all the various workers of the Gospel to action, according to their individual charisms and ministry.” I see this act of praying outside the abortion clinic to be part of how I evangelize. Praying for the end of abortion publicly during 40 Days for Life is one way that I battle the culture of death and shine light into darkness. As our beloved John Paul the Great reminds us, there are many ways to champion the culture of life and we want to know yours. In what ways has God called you to be a witness to the Gospel of Life? Please share your story with us and you could be featured in our next publication!

In the wake of the Hobby Lobby ruling, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in August issued more than 70 pages of new regulations pertaining to contraceptive coverage. The new rules — the Obama administration’s eighth change to the mandate — would allow new ways for nonprofits to state their objections and direct HHS to directly contact issuers and third-party administrators. The new HHS regulations also requested public comments on how to provide the same accommodation to for-profit companies such as Hobby Lobby. In October, the US Conference of Catholic Bishops said the regulations still force employers to facilitate contraceptive coverage and do not change the mandate itself or its “extremely narrow” exemption for religiously affiliated organizations. “In short, the interim final rules fail to remedy the violation of religious liberty that the mandate causes and that has been the subject of continued litigation. The mandate continues to substantially burden the religious liberty of stakeholders with religious objections to the mandated coverage,” stated an October 8th letter to the U.S. Department of Labor written by Anthony R. Picarello Jr., USCCB associate general secretary and general counsel, and Michael F. Moses, USCCB associate general counsel.
'We Must Accuse Ourselves in Order to Be Merciful'
Rome, March 02, 2015 (Zenit.org)

"When we learn to accuse ourselves of our sins, we can become merciful with others."
These were Pope Francis' words during his homily at Casa Santa Marta this morning. According to Vatican Radio, the Holy Father reflected on today's Gospel from St. Luke, in which Jesus preaches on being merciful with others.

"Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven," Jesus says.

The Pope said that mankind is "master…in justifying ourselves." "We all have an alibi that explains our shortcomings, our sins, and many times we are capable of making that face of 'I don't know', a face that says 'I didn't do it, maybe somebody else did': to pretend to be innocent. And one cannot go forward in Christian life like this."

Continuing his reflection on mercy, the 78 year old Pontiff stressed that the first step in being merciful with others is to reflect on one's own sins instead of judging those who have sinned. "Have you thought that you have been capable of doing those things they did, maybe even worse?", he asked. "This is to accuse oneself, to not hide from oneself the roots of sin that is in us, the many things that we are capable of doing, even if we don't see it."

The Holy Father went on to say that the Lenten season offers an opportunity to Christians to reflect and "accuse" themselves. "The phrase – "Who am I to judge the other?" – he said, obeys Jesus' exhortation: "Do not judge and you will not be judged; do not condemn and you will not be condemned; forgive and you will be forgiven."

"May the Lord, in this Lent give us the grace to learn to accuse ourselves."
Cardinal O’Malley, Archbishop Lori Urge Support for the Health Care Conscience Rights Act

February 20, 2015

WASHINGTON—Congress should reaffirm the principle that government “should not force anyone to stop offering or covering much-needed legitimate health care” because of a conscientious objection to abortion or other procedures, said Cardinal Seán P. O’Malley of Boston and Archbishop William E. Lori of Baltimore. In a February 13 letter to the House of Representatives, the bishops, who chair the Committee on Pro-Life Activities and the Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), urged legislators to support and co-sponsor the Health Care Conscience Rights Act (H.R. 940).

“It is increasingly obvious that Congress needs to act to protect conscientious objection to the taking of innocent human life,” wrote Cardinal O’Malley and Archbishop Lori. “Recently California’s Department of Managed Health Care began demanding that all health plans under its jurisdiction include elective abortions, including late-term abortions. This mandate has no exemption for religious or moral objections, and is being enforced against religious universities, schools and even churches. Similar proposals have emerged in Washington and other states.”

The bishops noted that the Abortion Non-Discrimination Act (ANDA) section of the bill would give firmer legal basis to the Weldon amendment, part of every Labor/HHS appropriations bill since 2004, which forbids governmental bodies receiving federal funds to discriminate against those who decline to take part in abortion or abortion coverage. They noted that President Obama has expressed support for the Weldon amendment.

In addition, the bishops said that H.R. 940 would incorporate respect for rights of conscience into the Affordable Care Act, allowing those who purchase, provide and sponsor health coverage under the Act to opt out of abortion or other specific items that violate their moral and religious convictions. Finally the bill would recognize a private right of action for victims of discrimination under either provision, so they can go to court to defend their rights.

“We strongly urge you to support and co-sponsor the Health Care Conscience Rights Act,” the bishops concluded.

Help share this information! This sign is available in color on our website for bulletin use under Pastoral Care, Adoption, and can be requested as a laminated sign to post on the parish property. To request signs, contact Sandra Fay at 440.843.5631 or slfay@ccdocle.org.

Want to spend a year of your life serving mothers & their children?

Maggie’s Place provides houses of hospitality and ongoing support to help pregnant and parenting women in need reach their goals, and welcomes them into a community filled with love and dignity. Full-time, live-in volunteers called MissionCorps members provide non-professional case management to the moms.

Maggie’s Place is seeking female applicants 21+ years who are interested in a July or August 2015 start date. For more information or if you would like to apply, please contact Amanda Ayala, Director of MissionCorps at missioncorps@maggiesplace.org. To learn more, visit their website at maggiesplace.org.

Individuals or foursomes welcome!
Fee: $150 per golfer/$600 per foursome
Event Sponsorship available.
Includes: 18 holes of golf, cart, lunch, All-American Cookout dinner, beverages, raffle, and special speaker!
All proceeds support the moms and babies living at The Zechariah House!
Pope Francis Asks that Every Person be Respected
Vatican City, March 1, 2015 (Zenit.org)

Decrying the violence, kidnapping, and harassment in Syria and Iraq, Pope Francis has launched an appeal for all human lives to be respected.

Following the Angelus prayer, the Holy Father said, “I urge everyone to reject violence and respect the dignity of every person and the sanctity of human life.”

“I encourage you,” he added, “to take a journey together for the good of the country, opening spaces for encounter and sincere and constructive dialogue.”

“We want to assure those involved in these situations that we do not forget them, but we are close to them and pray insistently, to put an end to the intolerable brutality of which they are victims.”

The Holy Father noted how he, along with members of the Roman Curia, offered the last Mass of the Spiritual Exercises, Friday, to this intention.

“I urge everyone to reject violence and respect the dignity of every person and the sanctity of human life.”

"At the same time, I ask everyone," he urged, "to work to alleviate the suffering of those who are being afflicted, because of their faith."

In addition to condemning the tragic events in the Middle East, the Holy Father said, “Let us also remember Venezuela,” the Pope said, “which is living again moments of acute tension.

“I pray for the victims and, in particular,” he said, “for the boy killed a few days ago.”

Earlier this week, a 14-year-old boy was shot in the head during an anti-government protest in the city of San Cristobal and died. The nation’s president condemned the attack and San Cristobal’s residents expressed their outrage.

Before concluding, the Pope gave his usual greetings to various groups present, including a group from San Francisco, California. He also wished all the pilgrims a good Sunday, lunch, and reminded them to pray for him.

A Test of Convictions

My brothers and sisters were together one evening when the topic of the death penalty was discussed. My order, Sisters of the Precious Blood, Dayton, had given us the option to sign a statement declaring that if we were ever the victim of murder we did not want the perpetrator of the crime sentenced to death. I signed that statement. My siblings were uncomfortable with my decision. My brother Pat, a police officer, just looked at me and said, “We will see how that holds in court.” He was very much in favor of the death penalty.

A week later Pat was killed in the line of duty.

When a cop is killed, the death penalty is almost automatically considered. The District Attorney asked my siblings and me to write letters to the judge expressing our support for a death sentence. I knew where my brother stood on the death penalty and I wanted to honor his desire, despite my personal convictions. I sat down to write a letter in favor of the death sentence but as I wrote I became overcome with anger. I was not being true to my beliefs or myself. I was acting in violation of everything I stood for as a person and as a sister of the Precious Blood. The blood of Christ was going to be poured out in my name and I could not allow that.

Standing in opposition to most of my family, I wrote to ask that my brother’s killer be spared.

In the end, a death sentence was not considered because of the circumstances of the case.

Sister Teresa Maher advocates for ending the use of the death penalty in her home state of California. She has led murder victim family outreach in the Diocese of San Bernardino since 2011.

Read more at http://catholicsmobilizing.org/9420/we-are-able/

We Use Recycled Paper
We want to congratulate St. Vincent Charity Medical Center on 150 years of caring for Cleveland! Here is just a snapshot of a few moments in their history:

- October 10, 1865—Eight Sisters opened the doors, aiding the sick & suffering regardless of creed or race
- 1898—School of Nursing is opened with the motto of “Charity is Kind.”
- 1950—Cardiovascular Laboratory opens, one of the first in the Midwest
- 1952—Rosary Hall Solarium founded, providing help to those with addictions
- 1956—First open-heart surgery in the Midwest performed
- 1984—School of Nursing merges with Ursuline College

Find out more about their celebration at www.stv150.org.

Project Rachel, the Catholic Church’s ministry to those who have been involved in abortion, is a diocesan-based network of specially trained priests, religious, counselors, and laypersons who provide a team response of care for those suffering in the aftermath of abortion. In addition to referring for Sacramental Reconciliation, the ministry provides an integrated network of services, including pastoral counseling, spiritual direction, and referrals to mental health professionals. Support groups and retreats may be offered in addition to individualized care.”

Please call 216-334-2966!

If you would like to include this in your bulletin, you can find the file at our website under Pastoral Care, Project Rachel.

If you would like to receive more periodic emails & the email version of ‘For Life’...

Please send your e-mail address to:

pmgerovac@ccdocle.org