

PRO-LIFE 2017

January 22, 2017—His name is Daniel and some time ago I stood by his crib in the intensive care unit of Women and Infants Hospital. Daniel had been born just five months after his conception. His mother, still recuperating at Kent County Hospital had asked me to baptize her first born child who was grasping onto the fragile gift of life. We were suited up with masks and hospital garments so that no stray germ might come near him, and then, with a tiny vial of sterilized water I leaned through the maze of tubes and equipment that surrounded this tiny youngster and pronounced these ancient words:

“Daniel Paul, I baptize you in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

In just a few seconds, the sacred ceremony was over, and Daniel Paul was now a child of God, with spiritual gifts, ready to assist him in the ongoing battle for his life. As we proceeded out of room into the hallway, I noticed that one of the grandfathers moved away from us and was standing with his face against the wall as he began to sob. I went over to him and placed my hand on his shoulder assuming that this ritual, and all the trauma of these last few days with his first born grandchild, was just too much to bear. But after he collected himself, he turned to me and said:

“Father, I am sorry. But as you were Baptizing Daniel, it suddenly hit

me, that here we are begging for the Lord to help him live, and little boys and little girls, the same age in months and even OLDER, are being murdered here and in hospitals and clinics throughout the land. What does God think of us? Why would He answer our prayers and when will it all end?

This month our Most Reverend Bishop, as part of our Diocesan Year for Mary Our Mother, has designated **January as Pro-Life Month**, so that we may reflect on the sacred value of every human life and the duty that is ours in a society that often flees from that notion. A country that, just like Daniel's grandfather said, finds itself *confused* when faced with human life at conception.

At times, with homilies such as these, one can feel that we are, in a sense, preaching to the choir—maybe not, but I know of your commitment and your support and I see first-hand the efforts you make and the prayers and love you offer to **stand for life**, even when so many others around us say it is none of our concern. But just like in our Gospel [Matthew 4:12-23] today, as Our Blessed Lord called His first followers, so He has called each of us to be His witnesses to the world.

Friday [Jan. 20, 2017] at noon, on the steps of our nation's Capitol, a new President swore his solemn oath before a watching, waiting, and anxious nation as a new administration was ushered in. His leadership and pro-life

position, and all those who are entrusted with the public good, we hope, will be what America deserves: voices willing to speak for all those who have no voice, and to pass laws and legislation that **protects rather than destroys**, that **heals rather than kills**, that **supports rather than divides**. It is not the placement of religion in public policy, it is the enshrinement in our country's code of conduct, of **what is right** as opposed to what is so dead wrong.

The price that has been paid since the legalization of abortion in this land, since that infamous Roe v. Wade decision in 1973, has been too high. More than 60 million children have died. But even with that fact, the truth remains that even if just one unborn child was denied life and snuffed out by an abortionist's knife, that price would also be too high. For every human being, those wanted and those supposedly unwanted, those of every race and color and creed, are all created in the image and likeness of God. They are all a one-of-a-kind gift, and that is why we must always stand in wonder and reverence and awe.

You know, we have now raised an entire generation of young people in a society in where the debate continues to swirl as the holocaust of killing children continues. Some might say that those of us who love God and value His gift of life should be dismayed that the hills of victory have been so few and valleys of defeat in this fight have been so great, but I sincerely disagree.

In fact, I know that a new dawn has now appeared on the horizon of our nation. It has nothing to do with Washington or Providence. Nothing to do with leaders elected or appointed. Nothing to do with doctors who prey on children and good citizens who beg them to stop. It has to do with our young people—the new generation who sit right here before you. Polls now tell us, and my pastoral experience with this generation bears it out: they are **pro-life** and they are resisting the scourge of abortion for themselves, their families, and their friends.

Maybe, just maybe, this new generation of leaders will right what we did wrong. For as long as breath is ours, as long as goodness has a voice in any of us, as long as God sees fit to give us the light of our eyes then the fight for life is ours. The babies, the sick, the infirmed, and the elderly depend on us and only on us.

Oh, and by the way, God did answer our prayers that day at the hospital and that young man named Daniel, of whom I just spoke, graduated from Bishop Hendricken High School near the top of his class. He is now in college excelling in all that he does and making us proud. In fact, Therese Ann Friel, a member of our parish, was his dedicated nurse during those frightening days in Natal ICU. She has continued being his and his family's lifelong good friend.

My friends, may we speak out! May we work hard, and may we pray even harder, but may we always stand up to be proudly pro-life, so that innocent little ones might live!

God Love You!