

# Wyoming Catholic Register Family Life & Family Ministry October 2003

Respect Life & Family Ministry

October 2003

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CASPER – The prophets and psalmist cried out to the Lord, “How long, oh Lord, how long?” Throughout the Old Testament, people longed for the Lord’s coming and waited. They prayed and pleaded for divine intervention. They lamented the evils of their day and the tragedies of their lives. It is, in fact, not so different today.

In spite of the fact that God, our Father, sent His only Son, Jesus, to die for our sins and those of all the world, our personal sins and the sins of society, we persist in pursuing our own self interest. With a certain brash arrogance we are, of course, grateful for the forgiveness He offered and continues to offer, but still we act against each other in ways that call for constant forgiveness. Somehow, we just seem to fall short of the true conversion, the kind that changes hearts and lives and makes us both true advocates and advocates for the Truth.

Over the years since Roe v. Wade, many of us have tried to be such advocates, but we have become tired and discouraged. We have continued to lament the evils of abortion and other violent attacks on human life, but we have become somehow quieter. Our lamentations have taken on a private character and are heard only in circles of those who are like-minded with us. Among us who are old in the battle can be heard things like, “It’s time for someone younger to lead the way.” Our energy level makes it hard for us to attract those younger to the cause. And then gradually, very gradually, the victims are abandoned and left alone to suffer and die and we wait for Jesus to “come again” as if He never came in the first place at all.

I have created a bleak picture, but one not too greatly exaggerated. The truth is that while one child dies, while one mother or father suffers with the trauma of living with a past abortion, while one elderly or disabled person lies helplessly at the mercy of those who would end life, while one woman or child is abused, while one family goes hungry or without shelter, while one more soldier dies, the gospel of life that is meant for all people of all times, races, and religions, goes unheard.

We, by our baptism, are called to preach the hope of that gospel, sprung from the life of compassion and clarity lived by our Lord. We are mandated to go forth from our places of comfort into the marketplace and the political arena and the hospital corridor to teach gently but persistently by both word and action that all life is sacred by its very nature and that every life, no matter how seemingly diminished, is to be respected and protected. Being Christ’s Body, His hands and feet and voice and heart is not like

volunteering for a two year stint in a church or community organization. It is who we are called to be from the moment of our baptism to the last breath of our lives. Why? There are many reasons. The following is only one.

Two weeks ago Holly Marie Patterson died as a result of a septic infection in her uterus caused by an incomplete abortion resulting from RU-486 given to her in a Planned Parenthood Clinic. Holly Marie Patterson was a healthy 18 year old who, with her boyfriend, tried to go it alone without anyone from her family or her church knowing and with only the help of the worlds largest abortion provider who makes millions of dollars further victimizing women in our society....and now, Holly Marie Patterson is dead along with her unborn child. She is not the first woman to die as a result of this supposedly safe and yes, FDA approved, "easy" and "more private" abortion technique. Now her Father hopes that telling his daughter's story will help others to get more information before they risk what happened to his daughter. More information?

Hearing this story, we are tempted to cry out with our Old Testament ancestors once again, "How long oh Lord, how long?" With the grace of our baptism and all the sacraments of our church and with the Word and example of Jesus who healed the leper and the blind man and the bleeding woman, let us dare to answer our own question.

"Not one more minute will pass before I fall on my knees and pray for an end to the evils of this day." "Not one more day will pass before I speak to another person not only about the dignity and precious worth of every human life, but also about the healing compassion of our God." "Not one more week will pass before I make a decision about how to become involved in proclaiming the truth about human life not only by what I say, but by what I do." "I will give, not only money but time and effort." "I will learn and then teach, not only by what I say, but also by what I do for others." "I will live as though I really believe the truth that Jesus has come and that, through His Spirit, He is with us now calling us forth from darkness and sin and fear to hope and healing and recommitment to the work of His Body here on earth."

On this Respect Life Sunday and throughout this year, let us remember that we are never too old or too young, nor can we ever afford the luxury of giving in to tiredness or discouragement. In Him we can do all things. Never again, should a young woman die because she is afraid to tell her story or to turn to family or church. Never again should innocent people be victimized by our silence. Think about the people in your lives today. Who do you need to tell that they are precious, that no matter what you will be there for them, that they are not alone? Don't let one more day go by because, in truth, we are called not just to give an answer. We are called to be the answer.

And they lamented and cried out, "How long, oh Lord, how long?" And in the help and compassion of another they heard the answer, "I am here."