



News & Notes

LIFE, HEALTH & FAMILY

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SAVE THE DATE

JANUARY 2021 LIFE MARCHES

- Midwest Moving the Movement Tour
Fort Wayne, Ind. – January 16, 2021
- National March for Life
Washington, D.C. – January 29, 2021

Information and details will be sent
by email soon.

Crusade Call to Repentance, Faith and Action

BY REV. DR. DAVID P. SCAER

The Roe v. Wade decision legalizing abortion should be commemorated on December 28, the day of the Holy Innocents. Churches should be decked in black for the hideous American crime of abortion which matches in its brutality Stalin's extermination of the Ukrainians in the 1930s, Hitler's destruction of Jews in Germany and Poland in the 1940s, and the near obliteration of the Cambodians by the Khmer Rouge in the 1970s. Our slaughter is more thorough and covers the '70s, '80s, and now the '90s. We could very well pray the collect for the Day of the Holy Innocents:

"O God, whose martyred innocents showed forth Thy praise not by speaking but by dying, mortify all vices within us that our lives may in deed confess Thy faith which our tongue doth utter; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

With these words we are at the very foundation of Christian truth — not that we speak the right things and sigh in horror at the abominations of others, but, as the collect says, "that our lives may confess" that which "our tongue ... utters." For the time comes when the Christian faith is only inadequately expressed by words and must be brought to perfect completion by action. The slaughter of the holy innocents is for the church an unrefusable crusade call to repentance, faith and action.

Our opposition to abortion is part of our confessional commitment. With Luther in his explanation to the Fifth Commandment, we say that we should "help and befriend our neighbor in every bodily need." And no bodily need of our neighbor's has a greater claim on us than the unborn who die their deaths not by their own desire or God's, but by the will of those whose bodies have given them life. Though burdened with inherited sin from Adam in their conception, they have not been born to a life of sin. Though they are among those who are redeemed by Christ, they hear not the Gospel of that redemption. Their infant bodies, washed in salt, never are comforted by the saving flood of baptism.

Thomas Jefferson said that "a single human being is of infinite worth." This non-religious principle is sufficient to oppose abortion with every fiber of our bodies and

every thought of our souls and every emotion of our spirits. But the sacredness of human life has been raised to an even higher dimension by the coming of the Son of God in the flesh. "In Him was life, and the life was the light ... which gives light to everyone, [which was] coming into the world" (John 1:4, 9). Now through the

already sacred before God. The womb of the Virgin was, as Luther says, the throne room of God. It was here, as St. Paul says, that the man Jesus saw Himself with all of the attributes which are God's. The womb of His mother was the temple of God where Christ ruled the world and still offered Himself in continual prayer to God and His Father

continue and even for the mothers who out of ignorance or willful design or simple inconvenience or apparently legitimate financial reasons abort their own children. These, however, still have time to pray for themselves, to perform their own penitential vows, and to cry their own tears of sorrow. But let us shed our tears for those who were never able to shed their own tears of repentance. Let us ask God to remember in His mercy those who will never be able to ask mercy for themselves. As did Luther and the fathers of Lutheran orthodoxy, we pray that God in His mercy would provide a way for those who forever remain unborn in this world to be born into the next world. For if John the Baptist could at the voice of the mother of God confess the faith by leaping in Elizabeth's womb, perhaps God in His infinite grace and mercy may provide a word of redemption which these children may hear and believe before their lives are snuffed out. They no less than the Holy Innocents slaughtered by Herod are entitled to be called innocent and deserve our commemoration on this day of remembrance. "Rachel is still weeping for her children, because," as Jeremiah says, "they are not."

If their lights are not permitted to shine on earth before men to glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, perhaps

"Let us shed our tears for those who were never able to shed their own tears of repentance. Let us ask God to remember in His mercy those who will never be able to ask mercy for themselves."

Incarnation, the Son of God shares in the life of every man, woman and child; and not only those children who are born, but those who were conceived and never born. The Incarnation is bound to one place and time, but it has a universal dimension infiltrating every life, filling every place, and affecting every time. We human beings are not a collection of individuals, but we are all taken out of the flesh of Adam so that we are part of one another. By His conception the eternal Logos permeated all of humanity, and all of humanity became part of Him.

In the moment of our conception we are all without visible race or gender, without culture or inheritance, without language or skill. We stand *coram Deo*, before God, with the first Adam to hear a verdict of condemnation and death: "in sin did my mother conceive me." And more importantly we stand *coram Deo*, before God, with the second Adam, our Lord Jesus Christ, to hear a verdict of righteous acquittal and justification, of holiness and innocence, of life and resurrection. "This was the light which lightens everyone who comes into the world."

If life which exists between the conception of one simple cell and a fully developed baby is so insignificant that it can be arbitrarily snuffed out for whatever reason, then our Lord's life within His mother's womb was equally unimportant and we would be without hope and salvation. But life within the womb is the most significant of all lives, and our Lord's conception of His pure mother and His life within her womb raised to a level of perfection that life

not for His sake, but for ours. Here, before He received the adoration of the shepherds and the worship of the Magi, He received the worship and adoration of the Baptist, who though still unborn was already the greatest of all the prophets and in whom all the prophets from Adam to Malachi were present.

We are here to commemorate those who were once alive, but are never born. Yes, we offer our prayers for ourselves and for a nation which permits the holocaust to



they can still shine in heaven. God can perfect praise from unborn babes, as easily as He can from sucklings.

If with these words we trespass into the land of divine mysteries, we have done it not only out of a sense of our own frustration, but out of the knowledge that these children have been redeemed by the one who lived His life in the womb specifically for their sakes. When the church confessed, “*incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria Virgine et homo factus est*,” “He was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary and was made man,” let the church not only genuflect in devotion to this greatest of mysteries, but may her corporate heart bend in sorrow and contrition for those

who go from conception to grave without birth, for those whose mothers’ wombs are not temples of safety but halls of slaughter.

Will He, who reigned over heaven and earth from His mother’s womb and who in His infancy escaped the butcher’s hand of King Herod, not hear our prayer and join His prayer with ours before God and His Father in heaven even now for those for whom no way of escape is provided?

I am not one for drawing banners. But I would be pleased to march with the community which is Concordia Theological Seminary this Saturday morning at the City-County Building behind a banner which said, “The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.”

Let us pray.

O almighty God, who out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast ordained strength and madest infants to glorify Thee by their deaths, mortify and kill all vices in us and so strengthen us by Thy grace that by the innocence of our lives and constancy of our faith, we may glorify Thy holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

This sermon by the Rev. Dr. David P. Scaer is included in “In Christ: The Collected Works of David P. Scaer” – Volume 1, p. 282. Published by Concordia Catechetical Academy. Used by permission.

How Long?

BY REV. DR. JOEL LEHENBAUER



PICTURE THE PSALMIST ASAPH

with rather large, dark circles under his eyes from all the sleepless nights he spent pondering questions like the one he ponders in Psalm 73: Why is life so good for so many people who care so little about God? Why are they so healthy? Why are they so wealthy? Why do they seem so happy and care-free, when they spend their lives mocking, or at least ignoring, the God who gives them everything they have?

Why does God bless them like this, while He allows many of the faithful to suffer? It doesn’t make any sense. It doesn’t seem right. And it almost destroyed Asaph’s faith.

“What’s the use?” he began to think. “What’s the point? If God doesn’t care how they live, why should I care how I live? I might as well do whatever I want to do. I might as well get my slice of the good life.”

There’s no promise in the Bible that you’re going to get the answer to whatever burning question you happen to be asking just by going to church on Sunday morning and listening to God’s Word. But every once in a while, it happens — sort of like it happened to Asaph. “When I tried to understand all this, it troubled me deeply,” he says, “till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny ...

Those who are far from you will perish” — maybe not now, but someday; maybe not here, but somewhere. “You will destroy all who are unfaithful to you” (Ps. 73:16–17, 27 NIV).

Now, finally, things begin to make a little more sense for Asaph. Now, maybe, he can get a little sleep. Or maybe not. In the very next psalm, and in several of the psalms that follow, Asaph begins to ponder another troubling question: “How long?”

In Psalm 74:10 (NIV), he asks, “How long will you allow your enemies to mock you, O God?” How long will You tolerate the arrogance, the violence, the hypocrisy, the idolatry, the immorality, the depravity that fills every corner of this world that You have created for Your glory and that even creeps insidiously into the church that bears Your name? “Why do you hold back your hand, O God?” What in the world are You waiting for? “Rise up, and defend your cause! Take your hand from the folds of your garment and destroy them!” ...

... The season of Advent [for example] gives us opportunity to ponder God’s answer to Asaph’s question, “How long?” And God’s answer, it seems to me, goes something like this:

“How long? Good question. How long?”

“How long should a father wait before giving up on a wayward child? How long?”

“How long should a farmer keep working his fields and cultivating his crops, through seasons of drought and disease and disappointment, in the hope of someday yielding a harvest? How long?”

“How long should a shepherd keep searching for that one lost sheep? How long?”

“How long should a fisherman keep casting his line into the water before deciding that there must be no more fish — at least none worth catching? How long?”

“How long should a doctor keep tending to his dying patient while there is still even the smallest hope of recovery?”

“How long should a mother sit by the bedside of a terminally ill child, praying for a miracle, a second chance at life?”

“How long should a lover keep on wooing the one who has captured his heart, in the hope of finally somehow capturing hers?”

“How long should a friend stand by the side of a friend in need, even when that friend doesn’t seem to want to be helped?”

“How long should a master craftsman keep working to shape that stubborn lump of clay into the precious work of art he knows it can be, before giving up and tossing it aside, or hurling it into the fire?”

“Good question, Asaph: How long? You tell me. How long?” ...

... [It is] time to ponder God’s remarkable patience with us and with a world full of sin and full of sinners. “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son,

that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16 NIV).

“How long?” says Asaph in Psalm 82 (NIV), “How long will you defend the unjust and show partiality to the wicked?” And God points to the cross and says: “As long as I possibly can. As long as there is one scoffer whose heart is not yet totally hardened; as long as there is one fool who might yet become wise; as long as there is one wanderer who might become willing to be found; as long as there is one sinner who may yet yearn to be forgiven. That’s how long I will wait; that’s how long I will work. And I invite you to wait and work with me, and to bear with me the burden of this agonizing question, ‘How long?’”

All of this is summed up quite well in the words of 2 Peter 3:3–15 (NIV): “Above all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, ‘Where is this “coming” he promised?’ ...

“But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping

his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

“But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare.

“Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming...”

“Bear in mind that our Lord’s patience means salvation.”

And as you wait and as you work, says Peter, “Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever! Amen” (2 Peter 3:18 NIV).

The Rev. Dr. Joel Lehenbauer is the executive director of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations. This article is reprinted from LCMS Life Ministry.

Talking About DEATH

QUESTION: How should I talk with children about the death of a family member and about death in general?

ANSWER: First, it is important to be honest. The Bible presents death as a tragic “reality of life” in a fallen world, and children (like adults) need to know and understand this. The prospect and reality of death, of course, can be frightening, sad and painful for children as well as for adults.

Therefore, (secondly) children also need the reassurance of the Gospel message, communicated in clear and simple language that they can understand. They need to know that Jesus Himself experienced death on the cross to win victory for us over sin, death and the devil (Rom. 4:25; Col. 2:15).

He rose triumphantly on Easter morning, and by His resurrection has defeated death forever (1 Cor. 15). Through His Word and Sacraments, He now shares His victory with all who believe (Rom. 6:4–5; Luke 22:17–18).

All those who trust in Jesus, who are baptized into His death and resurrection, will live forever with Him in heaven, where there is no more pain, suffering or death (Rev. 21:1–4).

When Jesus comes again, we will be reunited with our Christian loved ones and with all believers to enjoy life in heaven

forever with our loving, living Savior (John 11:23–27).

By the power of God’s Spirit working through Word and Sacrament, children, too, can cling with strong and simple faith to the precious promises God gives us regarding Christ’s victory over sin and death (John 11:25–26; 14:2–3; 14:19).

Sharing, memorizing and discussing these promises (and singing about them in treasured Easter hymns and songs) are wonderful ways of helping children deal with the death of a family member or with more general concerns about death.



Set Free

BY PAUL CLARK

THE WORD OF THE LORD in Paul's letter to the Galatians, Chapter 5, verse 1: "For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery."

How we love the word "freedom"! And yet, many in our nation take the freedom we have for granted. They often fail to reflect on the cost, especially the many lives that have been sacrificed for the defense of this nation and her people. As Christian citizens of this nation, we should indeed be glad of the freedoms that we enjoy, including our First Amendment's pledge of freedom of speech and of religion.

However, there is a greater and more precious freedom that should cause us to rejoice even more. "For freedom Christ has set us free." This is a precious and costly freedom indeed, for it is freedom from the power and sting of sin, freedom from the curse of eternal death, and freedom from God's wrath and judgment.

The price tag on this freedom was very high: the very life of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

The holy blood that was poured out for you and me at Calvary now washes us clean from the filth and stain of our sin. The Holy Son of God died and rose for you and for me that we might be free from the curse of death and hell, free to eat again of the Tree of Life in Christ, free to be His people, royal priests and a holy nation, free to love others in His name.

But this year, it feels as though in many ways we have not been free. This viral plague has brought about changes of such magnitude that we at times almost feel like prisoners, cut off from other people and left to baste in our own anxiety and fear.

But Jesus says, "Fear not." He has overcome the world. In Him, you overcome the world.

So, we as Christ's holy people, strengthened by the Word, nourished by the Sacrament, continue in our callings and vocations — to serve the Lord our God and to serve others in His name.

This certainly includes "the least of these."

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"We as Christ's holy people, strengthened by the Word, nourished by the Sacrament, continue in our callings and vocations — to serve the Lord our God and to serve others in His name."

//// Life Profile ////



Jamielynn Tinkey: Leading Life Conversations in Latin America

Who: Jamielynn Tinkey is a newlywed; a nurse; a student of the deaconess program at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne; the regional life coordinator for the LCMS Latin America and Caribbean region; and a member of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Bremen, Ind.

What: She advocates for life in the Dominican Republic alongside pastors, deaconesses and lay leaders, and spends her time focusing on "life conversations, providing educational resources, and becoming (slowly) an expert on each country's unique situation, views and treatment of all lives."

Why: Jamielynn's interest in life issues first led her to nursing school where she "had the opportunity to witness life at every moment, from conception and prenatal visits, to volunteering and working as a hospice aid and volunteer." But she soon realized "something was missing. We were not telling [patients] about Jesus." In 2014, she served as a religious life intern at Bethesda Lutheran Ministries' Camp Matz, Watertown, Wis., and her experience there taught her that as a Lutheran and a nurse, she could "share the Gospel and care for the physical body," the best of both worlds!

Where: Jamielynn and her husband, a seminary student at Seminario Concordia el Reformador, live in Santiago, Dominican Republic. Both at the seminary and in her work, Jamielynn gets to witness firsthand how "The Gospel message of salvation and life eternal are being preached around the region, and the next generation of those to preach are being formed right here in the Dominican Republic. Thanks be to God!"

How: Read more about Jamielynn's work at lcms.org/tinkey or email her at jamielynn.tinkey@lcms.org.

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GIVE NOW



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And that is why we must persevere — virus or no virus — in the battle to defend the lives of all innocent people, especially the unborn child who cannot mount his or her own defense. That is why we continue to proclaim the truth that every life is sacred, every baby is a miracle, and every human being deserves the protection of the law, even as the Declaration of Independence states: “the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” These are unalienable rights, bestowed not by man or by government but by our Creator Himself.

So, let us stand fast in the freedom for which Christ has set us free. Forgiven by God, let us forgive. Loved by God, let us love. Let us stand up for the least of these, our tiniest brothers and sisters. Use your voice, and your vote, to speak on behalf of these unborn babies. And let us pray for those who work on the front lines saving lives, such as those who work at crisis pregnancy centers, and support them in whatever way we can, whether that be providing financial support, holding a diaper or baby clothing drive in your congregation, or volunteering your time and service.

Stand fast, people of God! You are free in Christ Jesus. Cherish your freedom. But also use that freedom to come to the aid of those who are being stripped of their God-given rights and annihilated. As Galatians 5:25 says, “If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.” We do live by the Spirit. Thanks be to God, who has poured out the free gift of the Spirit on us in Holy Baptism! Now, let us “keep step with” the Spirit, shored up by His Word and Supper, so that we can fight against apathy, and use our time, talent and treasure for the sake of this glorious cause. Help us, dear Lord, to defend the sanctity of human life, especially for the most defenseless — our precious unborn babies.

The Rev. Paul Clark is the pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church, Fowler, Mich., and president of Lutherans For Life of Michigan.

“That is why we must persevere
— virus or no virus — in the
battle to defend the lives
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Advocacy in the Public Square

PRESIDENT TRUMP SIGNED an executive order in September requiring that all babies born alive, including those who were born prematurely or after an attempted abortion, would receive medical care. “We give thanks to God that medical care will be provided for infants born alive no matter the circumstances of their arrival. Meanwhile, in our vocations as citizens, we continue to advocate to bring an end to abortion,” notes Deaconess Tiffany Manor, director of LCMS Life Ministry.

To learn more about the confession of faith in the public square and to take informed action on sanctity of life issues,

as well as religious freedom and all the cultural issues that pertain to it, visit lcms.org/social-issues/free-to-be-faithful and the Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty at LCRLFreedom.org.

To contact the president and other elected officials, please visit:

- usa.gov/elected-officials
- senate.gov/senators/contact
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The LCMS Minnesota Districts have prepared a Lutheran voter information guide available for download here:
mnsdistrict.org/s/2020-Lutheran-Voter-Information-Guide.pdf

