

The Lamp



United States Association of Consecrated Virgins

June 2, 2013
Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and
Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi)

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES ASSOCIATION OF CONSECRATED VIRGINS:

Volume 18, Issue 2

June 2, 2013 Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ
(Corpus Christi)

After the multiplication of the loaves, Jesus told the crowd, "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him" (John 6:56). Blessed Marmion, in his beautiful book, *Christ the Life of the Soul*, comments on this text (pp. 263-5).

He notes that abiding means we share in Jesus' Divine Sonship. From this, Marmion draws three conclusions. First of all, this means that we more clearly accept as true what Jesus tells us. At Jesus' Baptism in the Jordan River, the Father told us to listen to him. When we abide with Jesus in Communion we are more able to wrap our minds around that truth and embrace it. Of course, this listening to Jesus and adhering to his message must also lead us to Communion. We would not receive Communion very fruitfully if we did not believe. Nonetheless, the act of faith in receiving the Body of Christ helps our intellect to engage more openly with what Jesus teaches, especially the hard sayings of the Lord.

Secondly, our abiding through Communion means that our wills are conformed to the will of Christ. This recalls the Wedding at Cana where Mary instructs us to do whatever he tells us. This is particularly valuable for all consecrated virgins. The espousal to Christ leads one to be espoused also to Christ's will, his interests, his desires. For example, if Jesus desires that all be one, the life of the one who abides in Christ's Body and Blood is a life which seeks unity and not division. Marmion adds, "the bride is never more pleasing to the bridegroom than when she relies only upon his wisdom, his power, his strength, and his love. In thus giving food to love, this heavenly Bread vivifies our will" (p. 264).

Finally, abiding through Communion with Christ makes us move beyond thinking and willing and into doing. We are filled with zeal and the Holy Spirit. Thus our abiding in Christ in Communion really is also an abiding of Christ in us. We can with St. Paul say that "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (Galatians 2:20). And Christ is not just sitting around. Christ is active and always giving himself away and thus we are giving ourselves away to the Father and to our brothers and sisters. Marmion concludes: "This is the dream of the soul: to make only one with the Beloved. Communion, in which the soul receives Christ as Food, brings about the realization of this dream by transforming it, little by little, into Christ" (p. 265).

My dear sisters, may our next Eucharist and every one after that be the deepening of this abiding in Christ, even as he has invited us into such a relationship.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Earl Boyea
Bishop of Lansing

Inside this issue:

Something Ancient, Something New	2
Council News	3
Anniversary Reflection	4
President's Journal	5
Election News	6
Life Corner	8

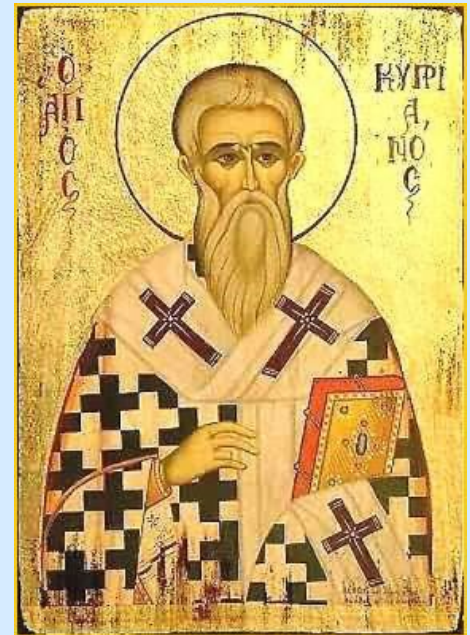
Special Points of Interest:

- Upcoming Events
- Consecrations
- Conference
Announcements

The Virginal Vocation in Occidental Literature

In this article we continue to explore the teaching of the Fathers of the Church on the gift of virginity and the virtue of chastity in the lives of consecrated virgins. In a particular way we begin to look at certain of the occidental literature and note the Fathers' solicitude for the conduct of virgins. That early occidental literature includes Tertullian (160-225), Saint Cyprian (200-258), Saint Ambrose (340-397), Saint Jerome (347-420), and Saint Leander of Seville (534-600 or 601). This article focuses on the writings of Saint Cyprian. Just after his episcopal consecration in Carthage (North Africa) in the year 249, he wrote the treatise, *On the Mode of Conduct of Virgins*, in which he taught in his culturally strong yet sweet manner about how Christ's spouses are to behave. (Cfr. Francisco de B. Vizmanos, SJ, *The Christian Virgins of the Ancient Church*, BAC editors, Madrid, Spain, 1949 second edition 2009).

This treatise of *De Habitu Virginum* (*The Conduct of Virgins*) speaks to the reader of today with the same vividness and intimacy as in his own time: "Now I want to approach all of you virgins who are explicitly in my care because of the excellency of your being virgins." Saint Cyprian was not only the Ordinary the virgins obeyed but the Father who took care of them (*De Habitu Virginum*, C. 3: PL 4,443 quoted in Vizmanos, page 90-91). Saint Cyprian scolds the virgins who "having chosen to guard firmly their continent state, later are unfaithful. They have committed the crime of adultery, not against just any husband, but against Christ." In a pastoral exhortation, Saint Cyprian says: "The virgins are the flowers from the seed of the Church, the glory and ornament of the grace of the Spirit, a happy family, a whole and incorruptible work of praise and honor, the image of God that responds to the sanctity of The Lord, the most noble of Christ's cohort" (St. Cyprian, *De Habitu Virginum* quoted by Alvarez Gomez, Jesus, C.M.F., *La Virginidad Consagrada, Realidad Envangelica o Mito Socio Cultural*, Madrid, Spain, Theological Inst. for Religious Life, 1977).



Saint Cyprian of Carthage

In his time the correction for virgins who were unfaithful was the penalty of excommunication, from which they were released only after a long time of penance. But St. Cyprian's most significant contribution on behalf of the virgins was to exhort them to avoid any risk of conduct that might be contrary to their virginal state. Vizmanos (1949) wrote about the serious difficulties faced by Saint Cyprian in the Church Dioceses due to the conduct of some virgins that resulted more from inexperience and naivety, rather than any directly evil intent. Some of the virgins had begun to live together with ascetic males and St. Cyprian was concerned that even when they observed their vows of virginal continence, they put themselves at risk and were a source of potential scandal for others.

In order to overcome such risks in a virgin's life, Saint Cyril worked hard to establish interactions among the consecrated virgins and to develop a spiritual circle of virgins to live among the same community of the faithful in which they belonged. Some of the virgins kept the social status of their families but at the same time supported one another in order to dress as consecrated virgins, to participate with their wealth in the works of charity, and to practice an ascetic life. Saint Cyril transformed them with the stronghold of the ascetic life so that they embraced a life of prudence in their witness as consecrated virgins in the midst of the community of faithful. (Cfr. Vizmanos, Second Edition 2009, page 92).

Perhaps we might think with joy that Saint Cyril was the Bishop who promoted the first "Association of Virgins" for the Church of North Africa! Then, as now, the virgins were encouraged to assist one another to live out their lives of consecration in the midst of the world.

Council News

Current council members and officers are:

Judith M. Stegman, President, 2013 – 2015; Diocese of Lansing

Magalis Aguilera, Member-at-large, 2013 – 2015 (appointed **Vice-President** thru 2015); Archdiocese of Miami

Nicole Bettini, Treasurer, 2011 – 2013; Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis

Mary Kay Lacke, Member-at-large, 2011-2013 (appointed **Secretary** through 2012), Diocese of Steubenville

Florence Sundberg, Member-at-large, 2012-2014, Archdiocese of Hartford

Team Announcements:

Membership Team: **Magalis Aguilera** notes that many have renewed membership in the USACV for 2013. Registration forms were mailed or emailed in early March to members and friends. Forms are available now on the USACV website. We appreciate your renewals!

Formation Resource Development Team – **Mary Kay Lacke**:

USACV Publications Status Report:

The USACV has distributed, mostly by sale, over 200 copies of *An Introduction to the Vocation of Consecrated Virgins Lived in the World*, which is Volume One of our new series *ORDO VIRGINUM: The Restoration of the Ancient Order of Virgins in the Catholic Church*. At this time we are still developing an online store for our USACV website – we look forward to being able to accept credit card payments for this book as well as the audio recordings, printed information packet, and other educational materials that are available. Feedback from those who have read Volume One is most positive. Order forms are available at www.consecratedvirgins.org.

The Formation Resource Development Team is working simultaneously on the next two volumes of the series. While the volume on virgin saints is progressing, there are certain sections on Our Lady and on several other saints that are still “works-in-process.” The FDRT has turned its attention to a much-needed volume on discernment and preparation for consecration, and ongoing formation. Based on input received, **Mary Kay Lacke** is in the process of completing a detailed outline for this volume, to assist the various writers with their work on sections for which they are responsible.

Upcoming issues of *The Lamp*:

September 8, 2013 Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

December 12, 2013 Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe

February 2, 2014 Feast of the Presentation and World Day of Consecrated Life

May 31, 2014 Feast of the Visitation

Please submit articles and announcements no later than 10 days before the scheduled publication date.

Hosting U.S. Convocations: Consecrated virgins are welcome to submit proposals to host a national convocation in your area of the country – please see guidelines available on the USACV website, or contact **Judith Stegman** at judithstegman@ocvus.com. We are grateful to **Carolyn Blaszczyk** for finding a Pennsylvania site for our 2014 gathering – more details will be forthcoming! Proposals for hosting the 2015 convocation site are due by December 1, 2014.

2014 National Convocation of United States Consecrated Virgins

July 28 – August 1, 2014

Malvern Retreat House,

Malvern, Pennsylvania,

Archdiocese of Philadelphia

Upcoming events:

2013 National Convocation of United States Consecrated Virgins

July 10-14, 2013

Mundelein Retreat and

Conference Center

(Chicago area)

Registration forms available on the USACV website. See article on page 7 for more information.

2013 National Information Conference

July 30-August 2, 2013

Bethany House

at St. Francis Retreat Center,

DeWitt, Michigan

(Lansing area)

Registration forms enclosed and available on the USACV website. See article on page 7 for more information.



Consecration Anniversary Reflections

Consecration anniversary stories: We look forward to once again publishing consecration anniversary reflections in the next issues of The Lamp. If you are celebrating a 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, or plus! Anniversary in 2013, please share a reflection! These articles are most popular among our readers as they give a personal look at the lived experience of consecrated virgins.

In this June issue, we have one reflection to share from Carol Lankford, who celebrated her 15th anniversary of consecration in 2011.

Carol Lankford, Diocese of Jefferson City (Missouri), consecrated July 10, 1996

There was never a time in my life, from the earliest of memories, that I did not know that Jesus is God, only begotten Son of the Eternal Father. His **grace**—so amazing, so divine!

As a young adult, in the midst of devastating health issues—following an *initial* period of deep hurt and disappointment in Him because of the same—Jesus became my very best Friend. And then, to my great surprise, I fell in love with Him. I wasn't sure if this was "okay"—that is, to fall in love with Him, to fall in love with God. So I asked Him, and came to understand, that not only was it "okay," but good, and holy, and pleasing to Him. And to my even greater surprise, I knew that He was in love with me!

As time unfolded, I felt invited to belong exclusively to the Lord, by making a private vow of virginity under the guidance of my spiritual director. Though primarily private, this was a very significant commitment made *forever*, and with *great joy*.

Eventually, Jesus let me know He wished me to be consecrated to Himself according to the consecration described in Canon 604. At first, I was hurt by this request—following my private vow, it was so unexpected. This initial response, this "hurt," might seem rather strange, but somehow in my heart I felt that perhaps He thought I had not taken my vow seriously and questioned my love for Him. I wept bitter tears and asked Him to explain the "why" behind this new request.

The answer was significant, and gave me a clarity that remains with me always. His answer was threefold: He said that He wanted me to be consecrated to Himself in a *public* way; for this purpose I needed a very special and particular grace; and there was only one way in which I could receive this unique grace—and that was at the hands of my local Bishop in the ceremony of reception of the Consecration to a Life of Virginity for Women Living in the World. With this question answered, His love for me assured, and my understanding deepened, I pressed forward to learn everything I could about the consecration and eventually approached my Bishop.

According to the Book of Revelation, a virgin is one who "follows the Lord wherever He goes"—obviously not just describing a spatial, external, relationship, but a union of hearts, of wills. Physical virginity, in this relationship, is

an outward sign of an inner reality—"virginity of heart," a Marian "womb-like receptivity" of the Word that is a means of spiritual fruitfulness for the world. Indeed, each "yes" given in consent to the Lord is really only a *very tiny* participation in that perfect "Yes" given by the Virgin Mary, which bore perfect Fruit, Jesus Christ Himself. Mary received—indeed conceived—the Word by the power of the Holy Spirit. I was acutely aware of my *great need* for a very particular grace, given by the Holy Spirit, to live this life, this continual "yes" to God—and I was confident to seek and receive it through the mediation of the Church, through the consecration to which He was leading me.

It was extremely important for me to know that the Church, in accord with our whole tradition, sees this consecration in marital terms. As the fundamental identity of a priest is not function, but *being*... a life lived out "in persona Christi," a re-presentation in time and space of Christ, the Bridegroom—the consecrated virgin's life is lived out "in persona ecclesiae," a visible iconic expression in time and space of the Church, the *Bride of Christ*.

The charism of "*bride of Christ*" is so very significant to my personal identification with this particular consecration—resonating deep and strong within my heart. It is also important for me to say that the words of the apostle Paul taken from 1 Corinthians 15—applied personally to my vocation—ring continually in my heart: "For I am the least"... "not fit to be called"... "but by the **grace** of God." Deo Gratias!

A poem I included on the back of my program for the liturgical celebration of consecration expresses well my journey then and now: *see page 5* →

Consecration Announcements:

United States:

April 8, 2013, **June Baker**, Diocese of Steubenville, at the hands of The Most Reverend Jeffrey Monforton. ↓



Upcoming:

June 1, 2013, **Jennifer Cory Woodcox**, Archdiocese of Santa Fe.

October 26, 2013, **Theresa Prosser**, Archdiocese of Saint Louis.

from the President's journal . . .

A few years ago, **Ann Stitt** sent me a collection of little hand-written papers, each with the name of a gift or fruit of the Holy Spirit. On the great Solemnity of Pentecost each year, I retrieve that collection of papers and spread them on the floor in my home Eucharistic chapel before the tabernacle. The Holy Spirit, proceeding eternally from Father and Son, enkindles fire in the hearts of the faithful and gives gifts to sustain the Christian's moral life (CCC 1830). Each year I find myself more aware of my need for these gifts of wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and holy fear of the Lord, that I might be ever open to His promptings and ready to conform my will to the will of my Divine Spouse. May the fruits of the Holy Spirit, the "first fruits of eternal glory" (CCC1832), be evident in our lives as consecrated virgins dedicated to bearing Jesus to the world as Bridegroom, with a maternal love.

I hope to see many of you at our convocation this summer as we explore together the maternity of consecrated virgins. Bishop Boyea, Sister Joan McGlinchey, and of course our own consecrated virgins are busily at work preparing what we expect will be most enriching days together.

Judith Stegman

More Consecrations

Argentina:

April 30, 2013, **Laura DiMatteo**

France:

July 16, 2012, **Veronique Lefebvre**, Diocese of Belley-Ars.

September 29, 2012, **Patricia Bucaille**, at the hands of the Most Reverend Nicolas Brouwet, Bishop of Tarbes and Lourdes, in the Basilica of the Rosary in the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes.

October 27, 2012, **Blandine Mornet**, Diocese of Nantes.

Carol Lankford continued:

THE LORD OF THE DANCE

Would you like to dance?

I said my yes!

and laid my head upon his chest.

close he drew me

nervous I,

to feel his warmth embracing mine.

nervous and awkward

stumbling, me

trembling hand

weak in knee

I wasn't sure

how to begin

I misunderstood

what was happening.

surrender, said he

and let me lead

just trust and relax

and soon you'll see.

the dance he chose

just right for me

his grace and his movement

guiding me.

I repeated, YES!

let the dance go on

Jesus is leading

yes Lord, lead on.

-Ann Veronica Hohos

2013 Council Elections

Two USACV Council positions, **Treasurer** and **At-Large Representative**, will open January 1, 2014. Details of our governing structure can be found in the organizational statutes and bylaws of the USACV, which are available upon request. In summary, what you need to know for these elections:

Election Process

Written notification of a member's desire to run for an open Council position must be received by midnight on Friday, October 25, 2013. Details of the election process will be announced in the September newsletter.

Position Terms, Descriptions and Responsibilities

Treasurer

Term: January 1, 2014 to December 31, 2016.

Eligibility to run for office (Article III Section D3): Open to any current voting member who has been a member or actively involved in the Association for the two previous years and has the necessary qualifications to carry out the responsibilities of Treasurer.

Duties (Article V Section E):

To serve as a member of the Council [see duties - below].

To be responsible for the collection of dues, collection of other income, payment of bills and accounting of all receipts and disbursements.

To prepare and submit to the Council an annual budget and financial report.

To prepare and submit financial reports as needed for the meetings of the Council and membership.

To prepare and submit an annual financial report for all members.

To administer the goods of the Association in accordance with these statutes and under the overall direction of the Episcopal Moderator (cf. canon 319 par. 1), and to give a yearly accounting to him.

To faithfully account to the Episcopal Moderator, on behalf of the Association, for the disbursement of contributions and alms which have been collected (cf. Canon 319 par 2).

At Large Representative

Term: January 1, 2014 to December 31, 2016.

Eligibility to run for office (Article III Section D3): Open to any current voting member who has been a member or actively involved in the Association for the two previous years.

Duties (Article V Section A):

To collaborate with other Council members in the governance of the USACV in accord with the provisions of the organizational statutes, with particular focus on the ecclesial objectives (Article II) of the Association.

To make every effort to attend the annual membership meeting and the annual Council meeting held with the Episcopal Moderator. To participate in other Council meetings or discussions as needed.

If serving as the Council representative on a standing committee, to facilitate ongoing communication between the Council and the committee.

If elected as an At-Large Representative, to make every effort to accept an appointment as Vice President (Article V Section C) or Secretary (Article V, Section D), recognizing that some responsibilities of the offices may be delegated to others (Article IV, Section A).

Other Notes – both positions

Council members rely heavily on email to facilitate communication, since we are geographically in all parts of the United States.

The Association's travel budget currently covers accommodations and meals for Council members during the annual Council meeting with our Episcopal Moderator.

Council members also meet quarterly by telephone conference call.



2013 Convocation Announcement

All consecrated virgins are warmly invited to attend the **2013 National Convocation of United States Consecrated Virgins**, to be held **July 10 to 14, in Mundelein, Illinois**. Please contact **Judith Stegman** if you haven't received a brochure and registration form; these are also available on the USACV website. We look forward to exploring our theme, *Put Love There: Consecrated Virgins Bearing Christ's Presence into the World*, in formal presentations as well as in the Thursday and Friday afternoon sessions, which are designed to be great opportunities for those attending to share in a personal way with other consecrated virgins.

On Thursday afternoon we will hear two consecrated virgins witness to their relationship with Our Blessed Mother as mother in their lives. And then we will have a chance to share our own experience, one-on-one, on the same subject – to encourage and support each other in our relationship with Our Lady. On Friday afternoon, two consecrated virgins will witness to their own experience of spiritual motherhood, not just the practical dimension but also the mystical dimension. In response to their witnesses, we will share together as a whole group, similar to the sharing we do on Sunday morning among those who can stay for that informal meeting. The hope of the planning team for the afternoon sessions is that the theme for the Convocation will become realized in deeper dimensions in all of the lives of the conferees and those whose lives they touch.

In the current issue of *The Lamp*, Bishop Boyea gives a glimpse of the inspiration of Blessed Marmion on the Christian life – a glimpse he'll elaborate on through his sessions at the convocation entitled, *Mary, Sharer in the Mysteries of Christ*. This will be a scriptural presentation on how Christ asks consecrated virgins to bear Christ into the world. We are pleased to also welcome **Sister Joan McGlinchey, MSC**, to speak on how the consecrated woman expresses spiritual maternity. Sr. Joan is entrusted with discerning and preparing virgins for consecration in the Archdiocese of Chicago and has served in many leadership roles within her own religious community. **Judith Stegman** and **Mary Kay Lacke** will give presentations on the meaning of virginity and motherhood in relation to the Church and Her witness in the culture; and our Blessed Mother as Virgin and Mother, bearing Christ into the world while on earth and now as heavenly Mother.

Our days together will hinge around times of prayer – Lauds and Vespers and Holy Mass. As well, the schedule provides time for personal prayer, recreation, and conversation among the consecrated virgins attending. Plans are underway for lively and

enjoyable evening recreation times, too, including a Sing-a-long being planned by **Florence Sundberg**.

We thank **Ann Gishpert** for once again coordinating the convocation and for **Nicole Bettini** for her many inspired touches, including designing the convocation brochure. Any candidate for consecration who has both 1) attended a prior USACV-sponsored Information Conference, and 2) been accepted as a candidate for consecration by her Bishop, is invited to attend. Consecrated virgins from any country are invited to attend. We hope you are able to join us!

2013 Information Conference Announcement

The **2013 Information Conference**, held in **Bethany House at St. Francis Retreat Center in DeWitt, Michigan**, will be from **Tuesday evening, July 30, until Friday noon, August 2**. (See enclosed flyer, also available at www.consecratedvirgins.org.) This is an excellent conference for anyone considering the vocation of consecrated virginity lived in the world as well as those assisting others in the discernment process. It is also very helpful for those who are newly consecrated but have not had an opportunity to attend a past Information Conference.

The content of the conference has been modified over the last several years to better address some important dimensions of the vocation. This year's conference will address in a more targeted way two topics that are of special concern to those considering this vocation: 1) Integrated Virginity and the Chastity Required for the Vocation of Consecrated Virginity (**Dr. Magalis Aguilar**); 2) and a concrete description of the implications of the term "Living in the World." These topics, along with traditional talks on the spirituality of the consecrated virgin, the history of consecrated virginity and an explanation of the Rite of Consecration, make for a very rich and beneficial conference.

I invite and encourage any consecrated virgin who is talking to someone interested in the vocation or, even more importantly, helping to prepare someone for consecration, to recommend that the inquirer attend the 2013 Information Conference and to register as soon as possible. It would even be better, if possible, for the consecrated virgin to accompany the inquirer to the conference. - **Mary Kay Lacke**, Team Leader, Formation Resources Development Team

United States Association of Consecrated Virgins

300 West Ottawa Street
Lansing, Michigan 48933-1577
USA

Fax: 253-270-5507

E-mail:
info@consecratedvirgins.org
President@consecratedvirgins.org

● www.consecratedvirgins.org



Reflection on the Solemnity of Corpus Christi and the Consecrated Virgin – [Mary Kay Lacke](#)

There are so many virgin saints that edify me by their devotion to Our Divine Bridegroom in the Holy Eucharist. St. Faustina so often leads me to deep reflection before the tabernacle by her writings in her diary. Here is one brief example that shows me how to be joined with my Beloved in the midst of my day:

Oh, what joy it is to empty myself for the sake of immortal souls. I know that the grain of wheat must be destroyed and ground between millstones in order to become food.

In the same way, I must become destroyed in order to be useful to the Church and souls, even though exteriorly no one will notice my sacrifice.

O Jesus, outwardly I want to be hidden, just like this little wafer wherein the eye perceives nothing, and yet I am a host consecrated to You. (DIARY, #641)



Life Corner

By Florence
Sundberg

When the horrors of Kermit Gosnell's abattoirs were exposed recently, we looked upon the face of evil, the face of the abortion industry. And we must not look away! Whether abortions are carried out in a filthy facility or in a sterile one the result is the same: the baby is dead. As our country disintegrates into moral relativism we see evil being called good and good being called evil. But we must not lose heart! The term 'abortion' has become almost benign but since the exposure of Gosnell's 'house of horrors', we have seen the brutality of abortion and since then have witnessed conversions from strong anti-life positions to strong pro-life positions.

We know that there is human life from the first moment of conception; this is a human being in his earliest stages of becoming. What we differ on is the 'value' of each human life. Many say that value depends on what we can contribute to society. We have choices to make as a society and as individuals. If we choose to value only those who can 'contribute' then we exclude the infant in the womb, the elderly, the handicapped, the mentally challenged. Who will determine which 'contributions' are acceptable? Let us make known that we stand for the sanctity of all human life and reach out our hands and our hearts to pregnant women who are struggling, let them know they are not alone and direct them to a place where they will find help.

So many stood silently by as millions of lives were exterminated during the holocaust. Silence often implies consent. Evil begets evil and those who promote and support the killing of human babies in the womb will then propose the taking of the lives of babies outside the womb - where will it end? William Brennan spoke of the terrible consequences that follow when a nation rejects the sanctity of life ethic: "The cultural environment for a human holocaust is present whenever any society can be misled into defining individuals as less than human and therefore devoid of value and respect."

Let us join in prayer that our nation's leaders and our people will recognize and acknowledge the sacred right to life of every human being, from conception to natural death.