



Our Witness Matters

by The Rt. Rev. John Guernsey, Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic

Editor's Note: This sermon was preached Friday, January 18th, 2018 at the Morning Prayer and Worship Service prior to the March for Life in Washington DC.

“And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.”

That was John the Baptist who leaped in his mother's womb. And it's vitally important to note that the unborn John is being called in God's Word, a “baby.” In the original Greek of Luke's Gospel, it is *brephos*. And that same word is used in the very next chapter to describe the baby Jesus after his birth. Chapter 2, verse 16: “And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, *brephos*, lying in a manger.”

And years later, during Jesus' ministry, that same word, *brephos*, is used for the children Jesus blessed. Luke Chapter 18, verse 15: “Now they were bringing even infants to him that he might touch them.”

Luke, the author of the Gospel, was a physician, and he knew what a baby was, born or not yet born.

Today we're here to pray and worship God, the author of life, and to celebrate his precious gift of life itself. But we're also here to lament before God the devaluing of life in our culture, and to join in public witness, calling our nation to turn away from the culture of death and return to upholding the preciousness of life.

Friends, in the midst of a death-embracing culture, our witness

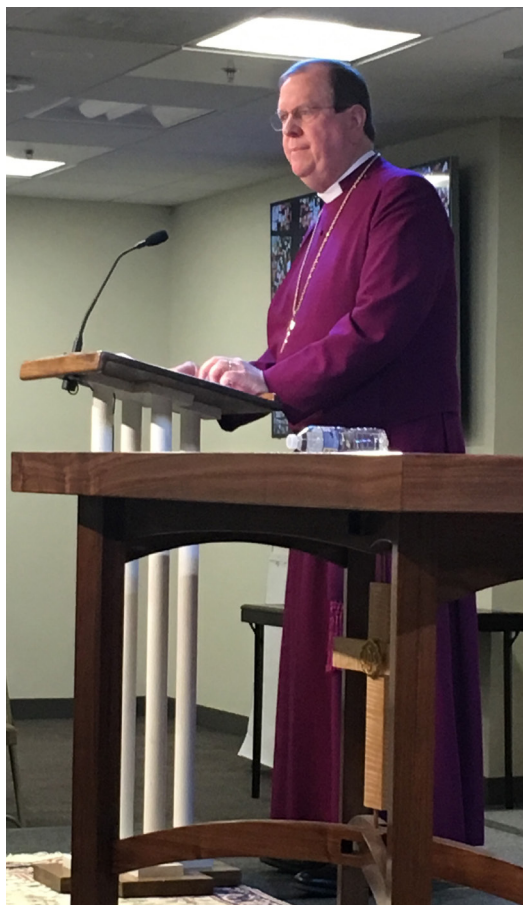
matters.

Last summer CBS News reported that, in Iceland, Down Syndrome has been almost entirely eliminated, not because they've cured it, but because, through the mandatory availability of testing, parents are opting to eliminate through abortion nearly all the children who have it.*

In Baltimore, pro-life ministries were targeted by City legislation that demanded they display government signs on the walls of church-owned property stating that they “do not provide or make referrals for abortion or birth control services.” The City only targeted pro-life facilities, because, of course, they did not require abortion clinics to post signs saying they did not offer adoption or prenatal care.

The Center for Pregnancy Concerns is an extraordinary pro-life ministry in Baltimore, headed by fellow Anglican Carol Clews, of Church of the Resurrection in Lutherville, Maryland. The Center for Pregnancy Concerns filed suit against the Mayor and City of Baltimore for the right to continue to serve in a way that respects women and the Center's mission, and they won. After seven long years in the courts, a Federal Appeals Court ruled in favor of the Center for Pregnancy Concerns, stating that people “should not be forced by the state into a corner and required essentially to renounce and forswear what they have come as a matter of deepest conviction to believe.”

Friends, our witness matters.



Con't. on page 2

Con't. from page 1

At the same time, we are seeing tremendous pressure from the culture of death at the end of life over assisted suicide and euthanasia.

We are ministers of love and compassion and healing for those who are in great pain, physically, emotionally, spiritually. But suicide is not the answer.

Moses, Elijah, and Jonah all asked God for assisted suicide. They all wanted God to take their life, but God said no each time.

And yet all around us the pressure is intense and increasing on the elderly and vulnerable to take their own lives.

Consider what has happened in Oregon, the first state to legalize assisted suicide. Oregon native Randy Stroup had prostate cancer and was on Medicaid. The State of Oregon refused to authorize chemotherapy. However, Oregon offered to pay for his assisted suicide. "It dropped my chin to the floor," Randy Stroup told the media. "[How could they] not pay for medication that would help my life, and yet offer to pay to end my life?"

When an Oregon man admitted he had, "assisted," his disabled brother-in-law, Patrick Metheny, by administering the lethal drugs, the Oregon attorney general's office responded that this slide from suicide to homicide may be necessary to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The supposed "right to die" often, perhaps inexorably, becomes a duty to die. In Canada, where assisted suicide has been permitted for just a year, the pressure on the vulnerable is already evident. Catholic scholar George Weigel recounts his experience in the Canadian church he attends in the summer. Three elderly members of that church had recently been diagnosed with cancer. The first thing each of them was asked after being told their diagnosis was, "Do you wish to be euthanized?"

As bioethicist Wesley J. Smith, one of the outstanding speakers at yesterday's Summit, has written: "Once one accepts the premise that suicide is an acceptable answer to the problems of human suffering and ennui, there are no boundaries that will hold for long."

Wherever assisted suicide is legalized, purported safeguards are shown to be inadequate and even weak protections are methodically taken away. In 14 years, the Netherlands and

Belgium have gone from euthanizing terminally ill adults, to euthanizing chronically ill adults, to euthanizing physically healthy adults who have lost the will to live, to euthanizing children.

Roe v. Wade came as a stunning blow that most pro-life folks did not see coming. But there's no way we can say we didn't see the horror that is coming with assisted suicide and the rapid slide into involuntary euthanasia of those deemed unworthy to live.

My great fear is that some of our elderly parishioners and some of our teenagers will succumb to the culture of death

and kill themselves before our churches have gotten around to addressing the lies of assisted suicide. We must preach and teach our people of every age that they are precious. They are of infinite worth because they were bought with the life of the Son of God offered for them on the Cross.

We go forth today to declare our commitment to our Lord and to His precious gift of life. But it's not about us, weak as we appear to be in the face of the forces arrayed against us. It's about Jesus and the power of His transforming

love. As Paul declared to the Church in Corinth,

"We have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you... So we do not lose heart."

Our witness matters. Our prayer matters. Our commitment matters.

May our gracious God strengthen and encourage us as we witness and pray and work this day and always for the sanctity of life. Amen.

** Editor's Note: Women in Iceland are offered prenatal screening tests, and physicians are legally required to notify women about their availability. However, these screenings are entirely optional. 85% of women opt to take the test.*



Morning Prayer and Worship Service, Falls Church Anglican, Falls Church, VA

Prior to coming to work for Anglicans for Life, my husband and I produced a video magazine for the packaging industry called Packaging Matters. The purpose of the monthly video magazine was to highlight innovative packaging methods that helped manufacturers sell their products. We called it Packaging Matters because every company that seeks to sell its products understands that how a product is packaged influences the consumers' desire to buy it and directly impacts the success or failure of the product.

Something matters because it is important, significant, or of consequence.

Once I started working for Anglicans for Life, I often joked that I went from believing that packaging mattered most to realizing that life mattered more than anything else. The reality is that what matters to us is what we spend our time, energy, resources on, and give our attention to.

So, when Bp. Guernsey was preaching during the Friday Morning Prayer and Worship Service we held prior to the March for Life at the Falls Church Anglican in Falls Church, Virginia, and he used the phrase "our witness matters," it immediately stuck a cord with me. That simple phrase "our witness matters" speaks volumes about the importance of what we do and say as followers of Christ.

As human beings made in God's image, people matter to God. Jesus died for people's sins, because people matter to God. Our witness in this world matters, because people matter to God. If God is willing to go so far as to sacrifice His Son for people because they matter to Him, shouldn't they matter to us, too?

I am grateful that Bp. Guernsey and the Anglican Church in North America's College of Bishops believe their witness for life matters. Did you know that every year, for the last six years, at least a dozen different bishops join Anglicans for Life at the March for Life in Washington DC, Ottawa, ONT,

and the Walk for Life in San Francisco, CA? A host of other ACNA Bishops write articles, preach, and provide pastoral care related to the sanctity of life in parishes across the province.

I am praying that their witness will matter to you too. I am asking the Lord to use their witness for life to inspire *your* witness, recognizing that, individually and collectively, our witness matters both to God and our fellow human beings, especially those most vulnerable to being killed, devalued, and denied dignity.

But I was also saddened by the reality that we didn't have any clergy, bishops, or laity representing other arms of the Anglican Communion in North America. I pray folks were there, and we just didn't know or connect with them. Please remember all Anglicans and Episcopalians are invited to join Anglicans for Life in the national and local Sanctity of Life events held in January and May (Canada).

Another exciting development to come out of this year's March for Life events is a plan to develop a youth event Thursday evening after the Summit, which is scheduled next year on Thursday, January 17th the day before the March for Life In Washington, DC, on Friday, January 18th. With support from the Bishops, AFL will partner with the Young Anglicans, a ministry of the ACNA, to bring youth together for an evening of discussion and celebration around the Sanctity of Life. We will also once again be holding a Life Symposium on Friday evening, January 25th, before the Walk for Life in San Francisco, on Saturday, January 26th.

I pray you will start talking with your fellow parishioners, clergy leaders, and youth leaders about attending next year's events. Put these dates on your calendar, and join us in celebrating, protecting, and honoring life – because OUR WITNESS MATTERS!

For His glory,

Deacon Georgette Forney

Deacon Georgette Forney

FOLLOW ANGLICANS FOR LIFE ON SOCIAL MEDIA!



www.twitter.com/Anglicans4Life
www.twitter.com/regretabortion



www.facebook.com/AnglicansforLife/
www.facebook.com/regretabortion/



www.youtube.com/AnglicansforLife
www.youtube.com/SilentNoMoreCampaign

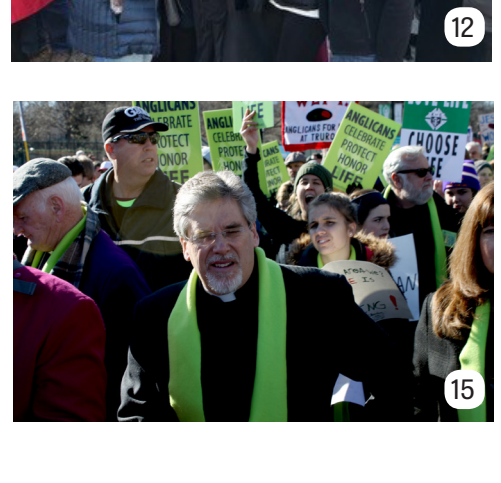
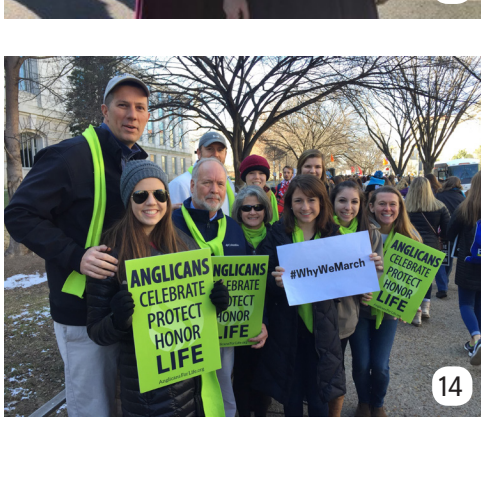
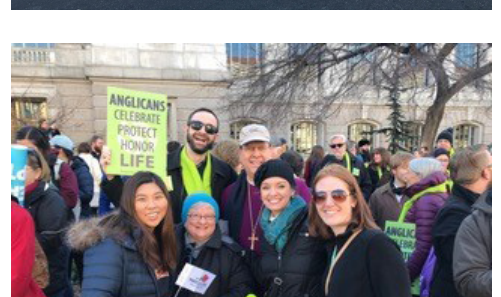
Anglicans for Life is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, supported by churches, individuals, & foundations. Your contributions allow AFL to uphold the biblical principles of Life. Please use the enclosed envelope to make a donation!

A financial statement is available upon request.

405 Frederick Avenue Sewickley, PA 15143-1522 412-749-0455

Info@AnglicansforLife.org

AnglicansForLife.org





16



17



18



19



20



21



22



23



24



25



26



27

Picture Key

- #1 - 5 Feature moments from Summit 2018: Mobilizing the Church for Life!
- #6 - 7 Capture Morning Prayer and Worship prior to boarding buses to the March for Life in Washington DC
- #8 - 22 Highlight our Witness for Life at the March for Life up Constitution Avenue!
- #23 - 28 Share the enthusiasm of everyone attending the Walk for Life in San Francisco
- #29 - 30 Inaugural Life Symposium



28



29



30

The Patient Pro-Life Work of Touching Souls

by The Rt. Rev. Dr. Todd Hunter, Diocese of Churches for the Sake of Others

Abortion has touched my life deeply in ways that, for personal reasons, I cannot share in a public forum. In addition, as a pastor for 40 years, I have known many men and women working through the profound suffering associated with abortion. I recount that history not to present myself as an expert—I am not—but to set before you my experience and sincerity on the matter.

To be perfectly honest, I've never stood outside an abortion clinic or felt called to participate in protest marches. My passion is soul care for those affected by abortion. For 2014, the last year reported, a total of 652,639 abortions were reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). That number represents hundreds of thousands of additional people affected by abortion: boyfriends, parents, grandparents, siblings and friends.

I believe my calling is to those human hearts, not asphalt streets; to pastoral care, not legislation or politics—as important as they can be. Anti-life in its various forms comes from heart issues: treating persons as challenges to be solved, or issues to deal with. Abortion at the beginning of life, euthanasia at the end, and when we seriously need to get our own way, murder in between. These are issues of the heart. Legislation and social comment are not totally impotent, but neither are they determinative. The real root is the thinking and behavior that depersonalizes the practitioner and de-humanizes the persons so thought of (born or unborn). Most dehumanizing rationale comes from the need to control outcomes and therefore uses various forms of attack or withdrawal. Again, those are heart-born habits.

Obviously, there are legislative aspects of abortion, euthanasia, the death penalty, and other issues of life. And where there is legislation there are politicians, supreme court justices and lobbyists of all kinds. Many of these people are sincere public servants. But I've observed that abortion—and increasingly euthanasia—are political footballs thrown around to score partisan points. Some Christians are called to participate in that scrum. I honor and respect them.

I'm well aware, however, that behind the "life" issues of many kinds, real women and men are suffering—guilt in their hearts, grief in their minds, shame in their emotions, and disquiet in their souls. These are the grounds on which a fierce spiritual battle is waged. I want to make the pastoral case for persons over ideology; persons over partisan politics; persons over elections—even persons over abstract theology. I want to honor those who sit with troubled persons, who enter into their lament. I want to make it "okay" for those like me to

do their work in the quiet of spiritual conversations. I'm not seeking to create an "either/or" but to set forth a "both/and" depending on one's calling, gifts and context.

Don't get me wrong: I'm grateful for those in the '90s who did their best to raise awareness of this crucial cultural issue through radio and television preaching and protest marches. I applaud the Pro Life movement for growing and maturing over a generation, becoming increasingly positive and hopeful in its various interactions. The movement deserves a great deal of credit for the fact that abortion is declining sharply. The latest report from the Center for Disease Control shows a drop in abortions over the last eight years to a now historic

low. Late term abortions are also becoming fewer, as more abortions than ever are performed before 8.5 weeks gestation.

I am also grateful for the witness of the Anglican Church in North America in acknowledging the sacredness of life in our founding Canons. I support the work of Anglicans for Life, the life-affirming ministry that helps us as a Church care for a culture that has dehumanized life, and witness to the gift that life is.

If you are called to the street, to legislation, to enforcement or to the legal system—we rightfully honor you. If you are called to the patient work of the cure of souls, you too have a place in this abortion debate. Why? Because in the end it is not mere social debate, it is personal lament.

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Todd Hunter is the founding bishop of The Diocese of Churches for the Sake of Others and founding pastor of Holy Trinity Anglican Church in Costa Mesa, CA. He is past President of Alpha USA, former National Director for the Association of Vineyard Churches and author of Christianity Beyond Belief: Following Jesus for the Sake of Others, Giving Church Another Chance, The Outsider Interviews, The Accidental Anglican and Our Favorite Sins.

Todd holds a Doctor of Ministry degree and serves as an adjunct professor of evangelism, leadership in contemporary culture and spiritual formation at George Fox University, Fuller Seminary, Western Seminary, Vanguard University, Azusa Pacific University and Wheaton College. He has been a Distinguished Lecturer at several institutions of higher learning. He has written articles for study Bibles, dictionaries and encyclopedias as well as for key publications such as Christianity Today, Charisma, Outreach and Ministries Today.

Todd and his wife Debbie, have two adult children, and live in Costa Mesa, California.

Anti-life in its various forms comes from heart issues: treating persons as challenges to be solved, or issues to deal with.

God Sees Her

by The Rev. W. Ross Blackburn, AFL Board Member

Recently over lunch I was speaking to a friend, a woman who has given herself to what we might call the issues of life, particularly abortion and euthanasia/assisted suicide. Speaking of our culture's knee-jerk rejection of suffering, she mentioned that she wished that she had known that God would be with her during her own suffering as an unwed and pregnant teenager, so that she would not have felt the need for an abortion. Which got me thinking about Hagar in the book of Genesis.

Hagar's is the first crisis pregnancy recorded in the Bible. While there is much left unsaid, her circumstances (which can be found in Genesis 16) appear to be as follows. She was a household servant, used sexually at the behest of Sarah her mistress, so that she might bear a son for Sarah and Abram. Whether Hagar was willing or pressured is left unsaid, but her pregnancy causes strife within Abram's household. Bearing a child conceived in adultery, Hagar treats Sarah lightly, and Sarah responds in jealousy and harshness. Hagar flees. Finding a spring of water in the wilderness, she sits—pregnant, homeless, and alone. The passage does not even say that she cried out to God. Perhaps she did not know she could.

But the Lord comes to her with a word of encouragement, that her child will have a future, albeit a difficult one.

Genesis 16:13
"Truly here I have
seen him who looks
after me."

Interestingly enough, the Lord says nothing further of Hagar's own future. Rather, refusing to give Hagar hope for an easy life, he calls her to walk a difficult road—to return to Sarah and to submit to her. Yet Hagar obeys. Why? Because

she now knew something she had not known before. God saw her. Even though submitting to Sarah would be difficult, and even though her son would have his share of troubles, she now knew God was with her. And apparently that was enough. She even calls God by her own special name, not just because of who God was, but because of who God was for her: "So she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, "You are a God

of seeing," for she said, "Truly here I have seen him who looks after me" (Gen 16:13).

I asked my friend how she thinks she might have responded had she heard as a pregnant teenager that God would walk with her through her confusion and suffering. She wasn't entirely sure, since she had never heard about a God who sees, and further a God who saw her—unwed, lonely, fearful, and pregnant—and loved her. Although she now knows what she wished she had known then, her abortion is past, and the question is moot. But for many others—women unwed, lonely, fearful, and pregnant, who don't know there is a God who loves them and who sees them—it is not.

In Memory

Anglicans for Life joins

*Roseann Zerby
in honoring the memory of
Ashley Delyne.*

*Gail Brown Miller
in honoring the memory of her brother,
David MacGregor Brown.*

*Holly & David Greening
in honoring the memory of
Ruth Banks*



OUR WITNESS MATTERS



405 Frederick Avenue, Sewickley, PA 15143-1522
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Sewickley, PA
PERMIT 24

