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EDITORIAL

For many people the term Pro-life has a very restricted connotation. For them it refers to anti-abortion activity and is associated with activist groups in certain parts of the world. A Pro-Life stand promotes everything that concerns life, from the moment of conception to its natural end. It concerns not only the span of life but also its quality, promoting the fullness of life. As such it works towards the enhancement of all that is good and fighting all that poses a danger. It involves protecting the right of every person, including protection from injustice of every kind and all forms of discrimination. It seeks to ensure equal opportunity and respect for the dignity of each person.

Evidently, with such a scope, Pro-Life work has to be the concern of every responsible member of society. At RFLI, such concerned persons strive to involve, challenge and animate others through group discussions, film screenings, seminars, workshops, lectures, print media and organising intercollege/school competitions on Pro-Life issues.

We invite you to join us actively in this mission by your presence, prayers and contributions.

Love life...Be Pro-Life...

Olinda Timms

Let Christmas happen in your hearts!

It is Christmas again! It is a celebration of a birthday! It is God, who is ineffable becoming human - one among us. His name is Emmanuel (Mt.1:23). It means God-with-us. It is an assurance and a sure affirmation that God is deeply in love with humanity and that he is in favor of human life which is nurtured in

the womb of a woman, Mary his blessed mother. Blessed is the womb that bore Him. "On entering the house, (the wise men) saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage." (Mt. 2:11)

No one can easily overlook or separate the courageous act of Mary the Mother of God from the great feast of Christmas. We admire her faithful acceptance of God's great plan of salvation for all humankind. In this context, she truly becomes a model for all who want to promote life at all stages, according to God's plan and his ways. Although, the feast of Christmas is one day, the spirit can be carried out in each one's life

during the entire year. It is a challenge. It is a decision. It is the need of the hour too. As the world has moved very close to modern technology and scientific innovations dominate we need to keep in mind that human life is more precious and sacred. The true spirit of Christmas is to preserve human life and to revere it at all stages and at all times. In a world of "Happy Holidays" and "Season's greetings" banners and wishes, let us not forget this true meaning of Christmas. Let Christmas happen in our hearts and in our homes.

We, at the RFLI greet each one of you a very Happy Christmas and a joy-filled New Year. We also assure each one of you of our support and help in the promotion of the Culture of life. Together with each one of you, we also look forward to an increased effort in our Pro-life mission. "Do not be afraid a saviour is born for us who is the Messiah, the Lord" (Lk.2:10-11). He is with us not only now but be sure till the end of time.

Fr. Antony P.Rajan C.Ss.R.



MEN AND WOMEN ARE UNIQUE...

(Excerpt from Mother Teresa's message for the World Conference on Women in Beijing, 1995)

"...I do not understand why some people are saying that women and men are exactly the same, and are denying the beautiful differences between men and women. All God's gifts are good, but they are not all the same. As I often say to people who tell me they would like to serve the poor as I do, 'What I can do, you cannot. What you can do, I cannot. But together we can do something beautiful for God.' It is just this way with the differences between women and men.

God has created each one of us, every human being, for greater things to love and be loved. But why did God make some of us men and others women? Because a woman's love is one image of the love of God, and a man's love is another image of God's love. **Both are created to love, but each in a different way. Woman and man complete each other, and together show forth God's love more fully than either can do alone.**

That special power of loving that belong to a woman is seen most clearly when she becomes a mother. Motherhood is the gift of God to women. How grateful we must be to God for this wonderful gift that brings such joy to the whole world, women and men alike! Yet we can destroy the gift of motherhood, especially by the evil of abortion, but also by thinking that other things like jobs or positions are more important than loving, than giving oneself to others. No jobs, no plans, no possessions, no idea of 'freedom' can take the place of love. So anything that destroys God's gift of motherhood destroys His most precious gift to woman the ability to love as a woman.

God told us, 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' So first, I am to love myself rightly, and then to love my neighbour like that. But how can I love myself

unless I accept myself as God has made me? **Those who deny the beautiful differences between men and women are not accepting themselves as God has made them, and so cannot love the neighbour. They will only bring division, unhappiness and destruction of peace to the world. For example, as I have often said, abortion is the greatest destroyer of peace in the world today, and those who want to make women and men the same are all in favour of abortion.**

Instead of death and sorrow, let us bring peace and joy to the world. To do this, we must beg God for His gift of peace and learn to love and accept each other as brothers and sisters, children of God. **We know that the best place for each child to learn how to love and to pray is in the family, by seeing the love and prayer of their mother and father.** When families are broken or disunited, many children grow up not knowing how to love and pray. A country where many families have been destroyed like this will have many problems. I have often seen, especially in the rich countries, how children turn to drugs or other things to escape feeling unloved and rejected.

But when families are strong and united, children can see God's special love in the love of their father and mother and can grow to make their country a loving and prayerful place. **The child is God's best gift to the family and needs both mother and father because each one shows God's love in a special way.** The family that pray together stays together, and if they stay together they will love one another as God has loved each one of them. And works of love are always works of peace.

So let us keep the joy of loving in our hearts and share this joy with all we meet. My prayer for every woman whom the Beijing Conference is trying help, is that each one may be humble and pure like Mary so as to live in love and peace with one another and make our families and our world something beautiful for God."

Source: Voices for Life 1999.



RELIEF

Youth Perspective on being *Pro-Life*

For someone who is about to tie the knot, being Pro-Lifers is all about an attitude that is life giving and what life has to offer completely! Simply put, it is accepting and respecting life in all its varying shades and sizes from conception until natural death. And it is not just life that we are dealing with here, but any vice that degrades the quality of life and impedes its overall growth.

For long, youth have been told that being Pro-Life means being anti-choice, dreaming in vain about sexual abstinence and chastity. It matters little to youth if an act is morally or ethically right or wrong in the eyes of another. The act needs to be judged on a personal level based on individual conviction rather than the view of a Pro-Life crusader.

As youngsters, embracing such a noble cause and developing a Pro-Life attitude is painstakingly difficult. Avenues to indulge in different forms of vices like pornography are readily available, young men and women don't mind 'doing it' and it is politically incorrect to speak against homosexual lifestyles.

Can the youth be completely blamed for this? We don't think so.

Is there hope for today's youth? Sure, plenty of it.

To begin with, what we will need is a radical change of perception, starting with our attitude towards life coupled with a healthy dose of understanding of our bodies as something beautiful, worthy of love and respect. Only when we realize that each of us are precious in the eyes of God can we hope to build a Culture of Life.

Ms. Sandra Rebello and Mr. Sunil Thomas

The Importance of being *Pro-Life*

The term Pro-Life in its narrowest sense means being anti-abortion; it is, in today's jargon the antithesis of pro-choice, and the battle rages on between the two lobbies. Pro-Life however, is about all that Life encompasses. I personally feel channels like National Geographic and Planet Earth project a vibrant Pro-Life attitude, provided they value human life as the most precious resource God created.

At the core of the Pro-Life calling are two universal, timeless principles: unconditional respect for every human person and the inseparable duty to uphold their dignity as precious and unique members of the human family.

Pro-Life crusaders then, can never afford to feel that they are doing anyone a favour by retrieving someone's dignity. Crusaders in Pro-Life organisation tend to cry 'hoarse', often using questionable means to achieve their goals.

The Pro-Life crusader is called to live the pronouncement of Jesus: "Don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing". This implies that one can be Pro-Life by example, without ever belonging to a movement.

Pro-Life is a worldview, a belief system that is committed to upholding the sanctity of all Life. The Pro-Life apostle must therefore be of even temperament, respecting differences without compromising one's unconditional belief in the goodness of all Life, however disillusioning and depressing.

-Dr. Barbra Naidu

CATHOLIC DOCTORS URGE **BAN ON ABORTION DRUG**

Sydney, Nov. 17, 2005 (CNA) - Australian Catholic doctors are backing a number of MPs in their efforts to maintain a ban of the abortion drug Mifepristone (RU486), which is being dubbed "human pesticide."

The doctors are warning of the health risks, such as haemorrhaging and the added dangers this poses for women living in rural areas without easy hospital access, reported the Catholic Weekly.

They also oppose the drug on the grounds that it is an abortifacient. Dr. Brigid Vout, executive officer for the archdiocesan Life Office, is concerned about the drug's health risks, despite Australian Medical Association endorsement of it as "safe and effective." She also opposes it on moral grounds, saying that no child should be aborted.

Health Minister Tony Abbott said he refuses to give the drug the green light due to advice that the drug poses too many health risks, reported the Sydney Morning Herald. However, there is mounting pressure on the Prime Minister to allow a conscience vote on the issue.

A biological perspective of Life...

If one looks at the origin of an individual from a biologic viewpoint, a striking fact is obvious. Among millions of sperms that are trying to fulfill their destiny, only one (or two if twins result), succeeds in its mission. In other words, as I sit writing this, I am very glad it is I who am alive and celebrating the journey of life. Against very high statistical odds, I succeeded; yet I know it could easily have been someone else!

Thinking thus, I am at once exhilarated as well as humbled. While I know that some external force or supreme intent caused me to be born, I am now in some control of my destiny, doing what I can do to enrich my own life and that of others with me. Of course, I mean spiritual enrichment and not merely a financial one. Yet, somehow, we seem to be drifting from this pristine aim and purpose of life in general. Conflicts between countries for imagined boundaries is one major example of disrespect for life. The other is that of extinguishing life in its earliest stages. Who knows who it is that we are destroying? It could well be a thinker of the future, or a philosopher who gives solace to millions. He or she could be a religious leader or a healer of sick souls. With no thought to these considerations, we allow destruction of early lives, even as we use the killing fields to annihilate young men and women in the name of war.

Yes, it is indeed a war in the context of causing death of the foetus, an unfair war with no chance of survival for the weak. I do hope respect for life assumes increasing momentum and becomes a roaring river, washing away the errors of commission we have condoned so far, and so unfairly.

Dr Om Prakash - St Martha's Hospital, Bangalore.



From time immemorial Hindu families have lived in a joint family system, which has acted as a nurturing grounds through which respect for life and Pro-Life values has been taught to every member of the family. Customs and traditions practiced and transferred from generation to generation ensured that these values weren't lost but were, in fact, preserved and lived.

The Vedas are the source of all Pro-Life messages and for a Hindu it provides all the inspiration needed to build a Pro-Life value system. The people of old mastered these texts and its messages and lived according to it. Parents passed on this lifestyle to their children and they to their children and so on...

Among the Vedas the Rig Veda is considered the Bible for Hindus. In this book we find a close similarity to the teachings of Jesus. Our ancestors certainly didn't have degrees but were well educated in Sanskrit, the language of the Vedas, and hence followed its teachings. The Vedas say that children are a gift from God and it wasn't unusual to find 14-16 children in a family and each of them had enough of wealth and education to live happily. Spacing of birth was practiced in a very logical and respectful way between husband and wife who separated from each other for six months after confinement. In spite of the number of children, both mother and child kept good health. The love that each one has for themselves and others is admirable. The mother and other female members of the family educated the girl about being a woman and the father together with the other male members of the house did the same for the boy. Teens are taught to channelise their energies and beauty into something positive.

Even today we find many Hindu families who are Pro-Life especially those who devotedly follow the Rig Veda. Role models in the family transmitted knowledge of self-awareness and self-esteem from one generation to another as an inheritance; through which the individual lived their lives to the fullest.

Dr. Chandrika Menon

RELIEF

I'd like to say...

I sincerely congratulate you on the excellent articles and thought provoking news that you bring out in RELIEF. There is a great need for this and you are filling it.

Dr. Marie Mignon Mascerenhas
International Federation for the Right to Life

The information that I received from these days have really changed my life...that night I prayed to God for every child till now that was killed...I pray that Sister might carry her mission to every school.

Participant

I have learnt abortion and I promise to strongly go against it. I've learnt how to restrain from sex by thinking that it a gift from God and to practice self-control. Thank you for everything that I've learnt.

Participant

Pro-Life NEWS

Maternal Mortality Not Helped By Condoms

In a new UNFPA document, their annual report on maternal mortality worldwide reports that the most important means of reducing maternal mortality is adequate medical care. This report contradicts their long time strategy of claiming that contraceptives and abortion will reduce maternal mortality. Even though it admits this fact, the UNFPA still insists

that the use of contraceptives would save mothers' lives.

"Abstinence Works Every Time"

This quote from President Bush sums it up and more proof keeps coming. Here is one from The Journal of Adolescent and Family Health. It reports on men and women who were virgins at age 18 who were followed and interviewed 20 years later.

Compared to those who were not virgins back then, these folks had half the risk of divorce. They had completed more education, their earnings were higher (20% more), and they had fewer teen pregnancies. This was an analysis of more than seven thousand men and women and obviously points toward the fact that abstinence in teenagers certainly can predict a person's success and well being in their middle year.

Papal Backing For Pro-life Activists

Vatican, Nov. 16 (CWNews.com) - Pope Benedict XVI offered his strong support to pro-life activism during his weekly public audience on November 16.

At a time when Italy is caught up in a heated debate about experimental use of the abortifacient drug RU-486, the Holy Father greeted a pro-life group that was in attendance at his public audience, saying that they were "writing new pages of hope for the future of humanity."

The Pope recognized the presence of about 50 young members of the Italian Movement for Life among the 22,000 people attending his Wednesday audience. The Movement for Life is dedicated to helping women find alternatives to abortion, and the Pope praised them for their "attentive activities in support of women and families." This weekend the group will hold a conference in Florence on "the freedom not to abort."

RFLI PROGRAMMES AT A GLANCE – October & November, 2005

DATE	PLACE	SUBJECT	No. OF PARTICIPANTS
01-02/10	Nava Spoorthi Kendra, Holy Ghost Church, Bangalore	Pro-Life Retreat for the youth based on the papal Encyclical Evangelium Vitae.	40 youth
1/10	Valsao, Goa	You are Precious.	13 Teachers
4/10	Panjim, Goa	Effects of contraception.	350 persons
4/10	Majorda, Goa	Effects of contraception.	30 persons
4/10	Christ College for business management	Emotionally Dependant addiction, Human Sexuality.	650 Students & Faculty
5/10	St Peter's Seminary	Cellbacy And Sexual Addiction.	500 Seminarians & Faculty
6/10	St Martha's College of Nursing	Broken Sexuality, Definition of Deviation, What is God's plan for Sexuality, Pastoral care for Sexual strugglers.	400 Students 300 Staff
6/10	St Martha's College of Nursing	Circle of Healing Prayer.	
7/10	St Joseph's College of Commerce	Broken Sexuality, What is God's plan for Sexuality.	120 Students
7/10	St Joseph's College of Commerce	Broken Sexuality, What is God's plan for Sexuality.	125 Students
8/10	Family Welfare Centre:	Marriage Preparation.	46 persons
###	Jayamatha College, Palaghat	Pro-Life Issues, NFP & Abortion.	475 ladies
17-19/10	St Thomas Apostolic Seminary, Kottayam, Kerala		
20/10	Krupa Pro-Lifers, Changanacherry	Culture of Life vs Culture of Death.	58 Deacons
20-22/10	Fatima Retreat Centre	Culture of Life vs Culture of Death. Substance abuse, Alcoholism, HIV/AIDS & Addiction.	16 persons
22/10	St Charles Girls' High School	Preciousness of Life, Chastity, Self-Esteem	20 persons
23/10	Bhavani Parish Church, Doty	Pro-Life Issue.	137 Students Std 9
24/10	Pro-Lifers of Colmbatore	Pro-Life Issues.	42 persons
24/10	Gulabi Girls' High School	Preciousness of Life, Chastity, Self-Esteem, Human Sexuality & Sexual Behaviour, HIV/AIDS	12 persons
29/10	Arvi Parish, Vellore	NFP & Pro-Life Issues.	150 Students
30/10	Raja, Goa	Preciousness of Life.	125 persons
31/10	Tivim, Goa	Chastity & Preciousnes of Life.	50 persons 65 persons

School Cul-Fest

The High School Cultural Feste was conducted by RFLI on Saturday, 12th November at St Francis Xavier's Girls' high School. Around 800 students from various Schools participated with a lot of zeal and enthusiasm. It was very encouraging to see the students compete on Pro-Life themes and fight for it!

Rev Sr. Louisa Sebastian sjt Principal of St Francis Xavier's Girls' High School inaugurated the Cultural Fest with the lighting of the lamp.

Students took part in various competitions like elocution, creative writing, extempore, skit, collage, sketching/painting, group song and group dance.

The Feste culminated with prize distribution by Mr. Philip Cheriyan of Transworld Radio India.



RELIEF

PROGRAMMES HELD FOR THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER



DATE	PLACE	SUBJECT	No. OF PARTICIPANTS
03- 05/11	Benaulim, Goa	Preciousness of Life, Sanctity of Life, Abortion	42 Students
6/11	Coonor, Tamilnadu	Marriage Preparation.	74 persons
9/11	Christ Junior College	Preciousness of Life, Respect For the Unborn, HIV/AIDS	240 Students
###	Baldwin women's Methodist College	Understanding Adolescence, Peer Pressure, Influence of Media, Electronic Media	300 Students
16/11	Mount Carmel College	Self-Esteem, Adolescence, Human Sexuality	300 Students
16/11	Baldwin women's Methodist College	Human Sexuality and Sexual Values	190 Students
18/11	Betalbatim, Goa	You are Precious, How to study better	20 Students
19/11	Cuncolim, Goa	You are Precious, How to study better	94 Students
19/11	Cuncolim, Goa	Working for God	19 Aspirants
19/11	Cuncolim, Goa	God's Love	250 youth
19/11	Baldwin women's Methodist College	You are Precious, Human Sexuality & Sexual Values	200 Students
19/11	Mount Carmel College	You are Precious, Human Sexuality & Sexual Values	200 Students
22/11	Bangalore Community College	Preciousness of Life, Human Sexuality & Sexual Values	100 Students
26/11	St Ignatius High School, Bhothapodi, Doty Diocese	Pro-Life Issues.	180 Students
25/11	Ressurrection Parish, Bangalore	Pro-Life Multi-Media presentation and Exhibition	3800 Parishioners
26/11	St Euphrasias' High School	Preciousness of Life, Human Sexuality and Sexual Values	188 Students Std 10
26-27/11	Benaulim, Goa	My mission in Life (Retreat)	55 persons
30/11	Mount Carmel College	Appreciation of your body, Self Esteem, Adolescence	290 Students

The Respect for Life, India is a non-profit, secular organisation of people from all walks of life, united in a common goal - which is to promote life in all its stages - from conception to natural death, and to act against all that would lessen human dignity.

RFLI believes that every human is precious and unique in the eyes of God and the human family.

The association is concerned with issues like **Abortion, Child Labour, Drug Addiction, Alcoholism, Suicide, Battered Wives, Dowry Deaths, the Plight of the Disabled, Euthanasia and AIDS.**

For more information, call 22246806, or write to us at the address given overpage.

Pro-Life NEWS

Indian girl's one-rupee suicide

A 12-year-old Indian girl committed suicide after her mother told her she could not afford one rupee - two US cents - for a school meal.

Sania Khatun lived with her mother in a village north of Calcutta under a tarpaulin sheet provided by the state. Sania normally ate nothing at school but on Friday saw classmates eating rice and asked for one rupee. Her mother scolded her and when she returned from work found her daughter hanged from the ceiling with a sari.

"She wanted just one rupee... but her mother could not give her the money due to poverty," government official Nakul Chandran Mahato told the Reuters agency.



A new publication!

Respect For Life India, Bangalore has published a compilation of the talks and proceedings of the 11th Asia-Pacific congress on Love, Life and Family that was held in Bangalore last November.

It is an excellent Pro-Life resource book useful for those involved in all aspects of family Life and Education. For Details contact the RFLI office.

**Rates: Book: Rs. 100/- + postage Rs. 25/-
Audio CD: Rs 100/- + Postage Rs 50/-**

Also Available: Sex talk with kids and teens: Rs. 190/- + postage Rs. 50/-

Also make use of the **Help Card** on the Reverse

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NOTICE BOARD

This could be your last issue of RELIEF ... if we do not hear from you.

There has been an increasing demand for the RELIEF Newsletter among the youth in Bangalore.

In order to widen the circulation and maximize its impact given the resources on hand, we need to know definitely whether you enjoy and would like to continue to receive this periodical. We expect a positive response from you in the form of a phone-call, e-mail, letter or post-card, failing which, this will regretfully be your last newsletter from us.

Thank you for supporting us and propagating this cause.

CONTACT US.

Subscription Rates

Editor. 1-year Rs 50/- 2-year Rs 95/- 3-year Rs 140/-

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Love Life, be Pro-Life

I read about a man who called his wife from an airport pay phone. When he had used up all his coins, the operator interrupted to say that he had one minute left. The man hurriedly tried to finish his conversation with his wife, but the line went dead. With a sigh, the man hung up the phone and started to leave the little telephone cubicle. Just the phone rang. Thinking it was the operator wanting more money, the man almost didn't answer. But something told him to pick up the phone. Sure enough, it was the operator. But she didn't want more money. Instead she had a message for him. "After you hung up, your wife said she loved you, the operator said, "I thought you'd want to know"

Barbara Johnson



Please mail us your queries

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Tear here



BOOK - POST

To

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