**Let There Be Life**

Saint Cletus Respect Life Apostolate Newsletter #1, October 2021

 We meet the third Wednesday of every month in the Parish Hall

“**If you want peace, work for justice. If you want justice, defend life. If you want life, embrace truth—the truth revealed by God.” ---Saint Pope John Paul II**

 With this first issue the Saint Cletus Respect Life Apostolate is launching its newsletter to keep parishioners informed on what the Catholic Church has taught on Life issues over the millennia, what is happening nationally and locally regarding Life issues in the Church and government, and what our own St. Cletus Respect Life Apostolate is doing. Our plan is to be informative but concise, manageable, and easy to read with our newsletter not exceeding two pages. Our hope is that you will be moved to do further reading, to pray on these issues, and perhaps to find some way you can be involved in these most pressing matters of our day. Without the right to be born and to live, there are no other rights.

**I. From the Teaching of the Early Church**

 “There are two ways, one of life and one of death, and the difference between the two ways is great. The way of life is this: first you shall love God who created you; second, love your neighbor as yourself. Whatever you would not wish done to you, never do it to another. . . . You shall not use potions. You shall not procure an abortion, nor destroy a newborn child (*from The Didache or Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, 1, 1-2; 1A, 2.* The Didache is an early church catechetical handbook. It may be from as early as 80 AD). Clearly the Church condemned abortion and infanticide from its earliest days.

**II. From the St. Cletus Respect Life Apostolate**

 We have commissioned artist Natalie Schloss of Studio 5, Foundry Arts Center to paint an original portrait of St. Gianna Beretta Molla to be hung in the back of St. Cletus Church. St. Gianna was an Italian pediatrician, surgeon, wife, and mother of four children. In her fourth pregnancy she was found to have a tumor in her uterus. The doctors recommended a complete hysterectomy which would have killed her baby. She allowed the surgery only on the condition that no harm come to her baby and that the child’s life be given preference over her own. Gianna brought her fourth child, Gianna Emanuela, safely into the world, but post-operative complications took St. Gianna’s life at the age of 39. She was canonized by St. Pope John Paul II in 2004. St. Gianna Mola stands as an amazing model of Christian family life, self-giving even at the cost of one’s life, and courageous belief in the sanctity of the life of unborn children. This is why we felt so it important to bring attention to her life and holiness at a time in our culture when human life, especially of the unborn, is under relentless attack from politicians, judges, and the media.

 You have noticed the statue of St. Joseph in the sanctuary of church the last few months. Pope Francis declared 2021 the Year of St. Joseph, the foster father of Jesus. In honor of St. Joseph and his holy role as husband of Mary, earthly father to Jesus, and protector of the family, the Respect Life Apostolate thought it fitting to place our beautiful statue of St. Joseph in the sanctuary of the church for 2021. Fr. Benz agreed and so the statue was moved and will remain in its current location through the end of the year. St. Joseph, pray for us and for the strength and holiness of families.

 **III. Locally**

 2021 marks the 40th Anniversary of Birthright in St. Charles, MO. St. Charles Birthright has provided pregnancy testing, professional counselors, collaboration and medical services with OB/GYN professionals including ultrasounds, community services to obtain insurance, health care, housing, and clothing, and when needed assistance with medical, rent, and educational costs. Their work has been so crucial to thousands of area women and their babies over these four decades. These are folks who don’t just talk the talk about pro-life; they walk the walk. Our Birthright can be reached at: Birthright St. Charles

2125 Bluestone Drive

St. Charles, MO 63303

636-724-1200

**IV. State and National: capital punishment**

The recent execution of Mr. Ernest Johnson in Missouri once again brought our attention to the problem of capital punishment. Pope Francis revised the Catechism of the Catholic Church in 2018 on capital punishment to state that, “the death penalty is inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person” (CCC 2267). As the St. Louis Review editorial (Oct. 11-17, 2021) stated: “The death penalty contributes to the culture of death. To be truly pro-life means to uphold the sacredness of every human life, from conception until natural death.” Mr. Johnson should have faced a severe penalty for his terrible crime, but surely we can do better than the death penalty which crushes life and

the chance for repentance and reform. When any human life is

deemed worthy of being discarded in society, every human life

is placed in jeopardy.

