

President's Message

You will read a report in this newsletter about the 2013 March for Life weekend. It was truly exciting. Never in my memory have we received such an overwhelming positive response at a set of events. While in the past much of the anti-abortion movement has seemed not very positive, and often overtly negative, towards some other life issues, this seems to be changing. Those in the pro-life movement, particularly the youth who are our future, seem so much more open to the CLE message than they were even a year or two ago.

So this is a time of great opportunity for CL. However, we also realize we currently lack the resources – both material and human – to take full advantage of the opportunities we now have. We need your support in order to build for the future. We need our supporters to give as generously as they can and point us to sources of seed money for the future – such as foundations that might be receptive, religious orders with large endowments, and individuals blessed with large material resources who would like to invest their money in a better future for all. We also need people to spread the word in their localities and constituencies, provide a CL presence at national conferences in your area or areas to which you are going, and volunteer to help us with any special skills you have.

You can let me know at president@consistent-life.org, by phone at 866-444-7245, or at our mailing address about your suggestions for seed money for the future and the ways you can help further the cause.

Let's work together to increase respect for the dignity and value of all human life.

-Bill Samuel, President

Consistent Life's annual report for 2012 will be available on our website and by request.

In Memoriam: Mary Krane Derr



Consistent Life lost a great and long-time friend last year, when Mary Krane Derr died suddenly on November 30th, 2012. She was only 49 years old. Mary was best known for her prodigious scholarship on the historical roots of feminist opposition to abortion, providing practically all of the research for the “Yesterday” section of her co-edited book *ProLife Feminism: Yesterday and Today*. She served for a time on the Consistent Life Board of Directors, was on our Advisory Board, and was co-founder, with Jen Roth, of member group All Our Lives. A feminist pro-lifer who specialized in effective dialogue with pro-choice activists, Mary was also a tireless and effective advocate for the rights of the disabled, being a person with disabilities.

ProLife Feminism: Yesterday and Today is available in hardback and paperback from the publisher Xlibris or from amazon, and also on Kindle and Nook and other e-book formats. Mary's group All Our Lives can be found online at <http://www.allourlives.org/>. *Continued on page 3...*



(l-r): Stephen Zunes, Rachel MacNair, and Mary Krane Derr at The Progressive magazine's 100th Anniversary Conference. Tabling there was quite an adventure, and Mary went to sessions to bring up consistency points as well.

CONSISTENT LIFE MEMBERS... CONSISTENTLY CHANGING LIVES.

Reflections on 2013 March for Life

By John Whitehead



CL Board members (l-r) John Whitehead, Lisa Stiller, and Tony Masalonis participate in the "For Peace & ALL Life" gathering at the 2013 March for Life.

Consistent Life usually participates in the annual March for Life, during which huge numbers of people gather in Washington, D.C., in January to protest abortion in the United States. This year, however, the March weekend of January 24th-26th was an unusually full and busy one for CL, including not only participation in the actual March on Friday, January 25th, but also a presence at the March for Life Exhibit Hall and at both the Students for Life of America National Conference and the Cardinal O'Connor Conference on Life, as well as a meeting with our friends from *Life Matters Journal* to discuss future plans for consistent-life-ethic activism. It was an exhausting but truly exhilarating three days.

The March for Life Exhibit Hall was at the Hyatt Regency in Washington. CL, along with a multitude of other pro-life organizations, had a table in the Exhibit Hall on Thursday, January 24th, and Friday, January 25th. While there, we were able to distribute literature and other materials, sign up new subscribers to our weekly e-newsletter *Peace & Life Connections*, and engage March attendees in conversations about our work and the consistent life ethic.

During Friday's pre-march rally on the National Mall, CL participated in the "For Peace & ALL Life" gathering of consistent-life-ethic-oriented groups coordinated by *Life Matters Journal*. Participants in the gathering included CL member groups All Our Lives, Democrats for Life, Feminists for Life, and Secular Pro-Life. After the march from the Mall to the Supreme Court's environs, several CL members met for a discussion with college students and others. Among the topics discussed were ways of making CL appealing to college students and other young people.

The last leg of the weekend's activities came on Saturday, January 26th, when CL had an exhibit table at the Students for Life conference at the Marriot in Bethesda, Maryland, and CL Board member Lisa Stiller attended the O'Connor conference at Georgetown University in Washington. CL Board member Carol Crossed spoke briefly at a leadership workshop of university student organizations at the Students for Life conference. She discussed strategies to create broader participation in the students' groups by connecting with student groups working against war, hunger, and capital punishment. Leaders of campus pro-life groups lined up to talk to Carol after her brief presentation.

Participating in the March for Life is always inspiring for me—meeting so many people committed to protecting unborn life is the perfect antidote

to the discouragement we can easily feel. What made this year's March and related activities especially inspiring was the strong presence of consistent-life-ethic-oriented groups and the extraordinarily positive response CL received from so many attendees. Hundreds of people signed up to stay in touch with CL at the March for Life weekend events. Very few people were critical of us or our message and many people were sympathetic or even enthusiastic. This response encourages hope for future efforts to combine defense of the unborn with defense of human life in other areas.

Women's Convocation: Grace on the Margins

By Lisa Stiller

I had the very fortunate opportunity to attend the Women's Convocation in Bellevue, Washington, on April 12th and 13th. The conference was put on by the Intercommunity Peace & Justice Center, which was founded in 1991 as an ecumenical nonprofit whose mission is to address peace and justice issues in the church and the world. The conference speakers and workshops addressed the idea that those on the margins are also God's children and discussed how we can start viewing all of humanity with dignity and grace, including those so often without a voice.

Conference speaker Valarie Kaur, born into a Sikh family, said her awakening to her call to work for justice and equality came after 9/11 as she watched the Sikh and Muslim communities become targets of hatred and violence. She embarked on a project of collecting stories of hate and violence that were the result of the 9/11 attacks, bringing the stories "out from the margins." Kaur's journey eventually led her to Christianity.

"Being in the margins does not mean you are alone," Kaur said. She has spent the rest of her life advocating for people caught in an unjust justice system. She said she found that when you start working on the margins and gain a voice, you move towards the center and your voice becomes heard.

From a consistent-life-ethic perspective, one of Kaur's comments gave me some food for thought. She mentioned reproductive rights as one of the justice issues she believes need to be addressed. Turning to the woman sitting next to me, I addressed my concern about Kaur's support for abortion and was pleasantly surprised to hear her emphatically say that we need to do more to fight for those who are truly on the outmost margins--the unborn.

Sister Helen Prejean was the closing speaker, addressing her work on the margins with inmates on death row. Prejean spoke about the culture of the American South while she was growing up, and how "separate but equal" was a part of that culture. A retreat in Indiana focusing on social justice was "an awakening" for her. "Jesus preached good news to the poor and that they would be poor no longer," she said. That's when she realized she had to get involved with working with the poor. She saw that there was a high incidence of poor minorities in prison and realized the relationships between poverty, race, and violence.

Is justice killing the ones who killed to make parents and family feel justice is served? Prejean asked. There is another way, "something healing that does not involve vengeance," she said. The gospel teaches us to be on the side of the victim's families and the perpetrator. "We're called to love both sides."

Prejean said that grace is something that happens in the present. If we give people the chance to reflect, by engaging them through a steady dialogue, they will get it. Our use of the death penalty gets to the "very heart of who we are as a society," she said. The gospel teaches us "values of love, rather than hate."

Prejean concurred with Valarie Kaur about her work with those on the margins: “Being thrown on the margin has brought me to the center.”

I also staffed a Consistent Life table at the conference. Most attendees were Catholic women. I was pleasantly surprised and encouraged that most people who spoke to me were very supportive of efforts to include anti-abortion advocacy in discussions of social justice. Most recognized that our support for all life was the way to show grace to all, especially those on the margins.

Haiti: Three Years after the Earthquake

[Bob and Adele Della Valle-Rauth, from Consistent Life member group Pax Christ-Virginia, share their experiences in Haiti this past winter.]

Adele and I went on a mission to Haiti from December 5th to 14th. Adele has been involved with Haiti since 1980, and I have been involved since 1987. Between us we have missioned there more than 60 times. The earthquake Haiti suffered on January 12th, 2010, has been called the most destructive natural disaster in modern times.

Reconstruction costs have been estimated at \$14 billion—not the highest dollar amount for a natural disaster, but the loss of life was more than 318,000, along with countless injuries and amputations. Over the last three years, international donors have given \$1.6 billion in relief and \$2 billion in recovery. Much of it has gone to pay costs for the United Nations troops now occupying Haiti. In 2010, UN member countries pledged \$9.9 billion but little cash has resulted.

Haitians and many others, including the US Congress, are now asking, “Where is the money?” We saw some 12’x16’ structures being built in housing developments on our way to the city of Ench. According to a lawyer friend, Bill Quigley, who with Amber Ramanaushas has done research on the money questions, 7,000 of these structures are being built a month. At that rate it will take six more years to house the half million people still in tents. So far, of 1,490 building contracts issued by the United States, only 23 have gone to Haitian companies. As one who has missioned to Haiti for many years I would say that is not very empowering, sustaining, or even fair.

The primary goal of this mission was to relate to the three Haitian outreaches of our parish church: the Salesian Sisters in Croix des Bouquets and Port-au-Prince; SAKALA, a “Center for Community and Peace” located in Cite Soleil; and Melissa’s Hope, a small orphanage in Port-au-Prince. In addition, we planned to visit Ench, located 70 miles northeast of Port-au-Prince, to reconnect with friends of many years.

The road between Ench and Port-au-Prince has changed. What was once an old road that allowed speeds of only 10-15 mph and was replete with 5-8 inch rocks, deep potholes, and no bridges is now a super highway allowing speeds of 50-60 mph, featuring two lanes with guardrails in the mountainous areas and bridges over the streams. While it used to take 6-8 hours to reach Ench, it now takes only two hours. The new road, National Route 3, is the result of a \$200 million dollar grant of the European Union.

In Ench, we met Brother Piet van Kampen from Holland, who belongs to the Missionaries de Scheut, a Belgian Order. He has spent 49 years in Haiti, mostly in Ench, directing a school for auto repair, welding, furniture building, and carpentry. He himself designed many of the Haitian schools and, he humorously told us, latrines and outhouses. At heart he is also a great philosopher. Brother Piet told us, “Many people who come to Haiti want to feel good and some do good” but warned, “don’t ever tie what you give to your expectations. You will fail.” Adele and I have found that to be so true.

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From “Pro-Every Life, Pro-Nonviolent Choice”
ProLife Feminism: Yesterday and Today

It’s been said that if men got pregnant, abortion would be a sacrament. On the contrary: if men got pregnant, pregnancy would be treated as the sacrament; abortion would be considered blasphemy against their sacred bodies and lives and those of their children; and pregnant humans would finally, finally receive the alternatives they deserve instead of what one social activist calls, from bitter experience, the “choice” between “abortion or else.”

From “Activism throughout the Centuries”
Chapter 13, *Consistently Opposing Killing*

A woman-affirming CLE . . . is nothing entirely new. The ancient past holds some intriguing hints of such a CLE, even though today they are not always easy to read. History, after all, is written by the “victors.” In many times and places, aspirants to respect for all life have proved deeply challenging to entrenched social hierarchies, incurring every sort of negative reaction, from ridicule to execution and getting struck from the historical record.

From “A Lost Source of Strength and Power:
The Long Feminist Tradition of Nonviolent Response to Crisis Pregnancy”
Chapter 1, *Swimming against the Tide: Feminist Dissent on the Issue of Abortion*

The present-day war over abortion leaves the distinct impression that we may not affirm women’s full personhood, especially their sexual well-being and their capacity as moral agents, without dismissing unborn children as clumps of insensate tissue. Nor may we affirm the right of unborn babies to live without trivializing the suffering that pregnancy can occasion in women’s lives or, worse, proclaiming that they deserve such suffering for their sexual “wickedness.”

Like the purported “choice” between abortion and childbirth itself, this side-taking is forced by a (so-called) civilization stuck in violent “answers” to difficult, complex matters of social justice. It mutilates the intelligence and compassion of those who see no other way to deal with the abortion issue. Even worse, it leaves the root causes of abortion untouched.

Tributes

Feminists for Life

Perhaps no one was more responsible than Mary for revealing our rich pro-life feminist history. . . . In 1998 Mary attended FFL’s Pregnancy Resource Forum at her alma mater, the University of Chicago. She recalled her own pregnancy while she was a student and the pressure to abort. (Mary faced significant health issues.) By then Mary was a trained counselor herself. She told the Forum panelists that the best thing other counselors can do when telling a woman that she is pregnant is to let her take some time to absorb the news adding, “Once you are pregnant you are changed no matter what you choose. Counselors should ask the woman ‘What would be the best outcome for you and your child?’—then help her achieve that dream.” Her then ten-year-old daughter, Sarah, was at her side. I share that story at the close of every Pregnancy Resource Forum I moderate.

We will honor Mary by continuing to share the pro-life feminist history that she so carefully researched for us to enjoy today. . . . May she find the peace she consistently advocated for others.

Pro-Life Alliance of Gays and Lesbians

It is with a heavy heart that I must report the passing of one of PLAGAL’s biggest supporters within the Pro-Life Movement. Mary Krane Derr passed away suddenly on November 30th and the news of her death is just now reaching most of us. Mary wrote the booklet Pro-life and Proud: Vignettes from Queer History for PLAGAL to pass out at pride events. . . . She was a major supporter of nontraditional proliferators and will be missed.

An Open Letter on Human Rights and Abortion

Dear Fellow Human Rights Activists:

I think any endorsement of abortion rights to be a mistake, for two reasons: Endorsing abortion rights causes further harm to already oppressed women, particularly in the developing world. And endorsing abortion rights hurts our important work for human rights in general.

(1) If a woman is dominated by others, the freedoms she is given will be exercised against her by those who dominate her.

We all know that many women are simply unable to effectively negotiate the terms and conditions of their sexual interactions and reproductive choices due to pervasive discrimination, coercion, and violence against them. Unfortunately, legalization of abortion provides those coercers with another weapon that they can use against the women they dominate.

In other words, abortion rights may truly be liberating for powerful women whose careers cannot easily accommodate children, for women who are truly free to choose without outside pressures and for whom the opportunity costs of children are very great. Polls indeed show that such women overwhelmingly support a right to abortion. By contrast, poorer women, even in the United States, are the group most hostile to abortion. Why would they want abortion available if it's only going to result in a boyfriend, a parent, a husband, or an employer coercing them (even by violence) to forego one of the few satisfactions they have in their oppressed lives, the love of a child? Or just think how the availability of abortion can facilitate raw sexual exploitation: a college student told me once: "I'm really pro-choice, but you can bet I tell my boyfriend I'm 100% pro-life." She knew that the option of abortion could easily make him less careful. (Consult the great feminist thinker Catherine MacKinnon for more on the effect of making abortion a "privacy" right. She points out that it is precisely in women's private lives that male dominance is most extreme.)

The developing world is much, much worse for most women. Except for a tiny elite segment of women (which unfortunately may be the only non-male presence at international conferences set up to propose new laws) abortion hurts women because it empowers husbands, sweatshop owners, and pimps to use them with impunity. The rule is very simple: those who make real-life choices for women are the real rights holders, regardless of who may have the formal legal right to make decisions.

(2) No organization can proclaim complete support for Human Rights if it endorses abortion.

As a teacher of comparative law, I can tell you the right to life of the fetus is explicitly protected by a number of international treaties and national constitutions. Fundamental rights to abortion are recognized far less extensively.

I'm not saying that only a few nations permit abortion. Many do. But very few treat it as a basic human right. Abortion is permitted simply because the legislature of the nation has decided to pass such a law, but that law could be repealed tomorrow without violating any treaty or constitution. Nowhere in Europe (with the possible exception of abortion for severe health reasons in Italy) is there a clear constitutional right to abortion, to my knowledge. But various countries' constitutions or constitutional court decisions contain a right to life. Germany is one. The unborn child has a constitutional right to life throughout pregnancy there, recognized twice by the Constitutional Court in lengthy decisions in 1975 and in 1993. (Do not rely on the over-simplified report that Germany does not punish abortion in the first 12 weeks, as long as the pregnant woman has undergone solidly pro-life counseling and has waited three more days to think it over. That is true, but the Court's reasoning is that the counseling will save more unborn lives than threats of punishment. Strange as it may seem to us, abortion goes unpunished in Germany in furtherance of a fetal right to life, not of a maternal right to abortion.) And why does Germany care about unborn life? The answer given by the Court is that to permit abortion is to head once again down the path to devaluation of individual human life followed by the Nazis. When we proclaim a right to abortion, according to German human rights doctrine, we are attacking life, the most basic human right of all, and following again that dreaded path.

The regional human rights treaty for the Americas, the American Convention on Human Rights (Pact of San José, 1969) explicitly proclaims "Every person has the right to have his life respected. This right shall be protected by law and, in general, from the moment of conception." [Art. 4(1)]. It also emphasizes that "'person' means every human being" [Art. 1(2)]. Thus we see that the unborn child is recognized as a person with a right to life from the moment of conception. When it comes to legal protection of that right, it is true, the signatory states have a little flexibility (presumably to deal with any clash with the mother's equal right to life) because of the words "in general." But this is not phrased as a limit on the right itself, but only as a permitted (but not required) minor exception to the legal enforcement of that right. Do we really want to proclaim a right that violates the core of a major human rights treaty? Do we want to say from now on: "We're for many recognized human rights, but we're opposed to others"?

It is true that the Protocol to the African Charter endorses a very limited right to abortion—the first such treaty in the world to do so. This is quite ironic, however, since Africa south of the Sahara may be the most anti-abortion part of the globe. A Pew poll, for example, found that 64 percent of Nigerians and a whopping 81 percent of Kenyans said women should be stopped from having abortions (as opposed to only 32 percent of Americans, according to Pew). How much does that Protocol represent the African peoples as opposed to representing NGOs and other elites? Do we want to be part of what may well be an example of shoving elite Westernized interests down the throats of Africans?

Lastly, and most simply, the Human Rights movement has long had one clear message: human dignity. We have proclaimed that rights are not just for the strong, or just for citizens, or just for non-criminals, or just for adults. We have always said that just being human is all one needs to have human dignity and human rights. But no one seriously doubts that the unborn offspring of two humans is also human. So if we endorse a right to abortion, we are saying that merely being human and alive is no longer enough for dignity and rights. We will either have to make a deep change in our self-understanding and abandon our foundation in the dignity of simply being human, or else constantly face the charge of hypocrisy from many opponents and erstwhile supporters—the sort of charge leveled at Thomas Jefferson for proclaiming that all persons "are created equal" while he held onto his slaves.

For the two reasons I have explained above, I believe it to be highly unwise for our Human Rights movement to endorse rights to abortion. In seeking to benefit powerful elites, such rights harm many of our most vulnerable sisters in the developing world. And they clash head-on with the internationally recognized human right to life of the fetus and even with our own foundation in universal human rights.

Sincerely,

Richard Stith J.D.(Yale), Ph.D.(Yale)
Professor of Law
Valparaiso University School of Law
Board member, Consistent Life

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The tremendous challenges in Haiti are primarily due to the nation's history, which is so different from that of the United States. Haiti still suffers terribly from a history of slavery under France and a series of oppressive dictators who were under the thumb of international powers.

Haiti's main problem today is the economy. The jobless rate is estimated at 70-85 percent and the United Nations lists Haiti as the third hungriest country in the world. The people live in a survival economy. Cheap, subsidized US imports have ruined the agricultural industry, the backbone of the country. History continues to treat Haiti badly into the third millennium except for brief humane responses to natural disasters and hurricanes, as in 2010. Their great sense of hope derives from a profound faith in God and from seeing that others, especially us *blancs* (whites), care about them.

On our second day in Haiti, we missioned to SAKALA Center for Community and Peace in Cite Soleil, the poorest, most densely populated slum in Haiti and perhaps the world. We saw Daniel Tillias, 35, the Director of Pax Christi Haiti, who welcomed us with great joy. With us were Adele's brother Jim DellaValle and his son Jason, 25, both in Haiti for the first time. The children of SAKALA just flocked around Jason, who was rapidly learning Haitian Kreyol. Daniel gave us an overview of the "Tap-tap Garden," which provides food for the community and the neighborhood, including an adjacent tent camp made up of the elderly and handicapped children. Tap-taps are glorified pickup trucks used for transportation in the city: they are covered, with benches inside and a rear step for access. People tap on the side to get in and get off. The garden is named after these vehicles because of the many discarded tires filled with rich topsoil and growing vegetables.



Mission group relating with the people of Cite Soleil, the most impoverished location in Haiti.

Daniel gathered a rather large group in the Community Center and asked us to share ideas for peace in the world and thoughts on nonviolence. The children were extremely attentive as I related a history of Pax Christi International and pointed with pride to Daniel. I emphasized the importance of reconciliation and forgiveness because they live in an area that has been characterized by the United Nations and other outsiders as filled with crime, violence, and gangs. In addition, I stressed the importance of nonviolence, the pivotal philosophy of Pax Christi, and also held up to them the heroes of Haiti who stood up to the oppression of slavery and gave their lives for freedom. Adele asked them who was their favorite peacemaker, to which one young boy quickly responded "Gandhi." It was clear that peace was being sown in the hearts of these children sitting on wooden benches in this very bare room under a single large sign: "If we have no peace it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other." The quotation is from Mother Theresa.

Before leaving, I asked Daniel if he would guide us by auto through Cite Soleil, which is approximately 1 square mile. As we did, he proudly pointed to the home he grew up in. We met and shook hands with the mayor, who was delighted to see us. We also passed the wide-open sewer that originates at the power plant and then stopped at the waterfront of the Bay of Port-au-Prince, where the black Creole pigs were foraging on mounds of garbage. I found tears welling up as I thought about the terrible dwellings people are forced to live in because of a poverty filled with misery, especially compared to the richness across the bay and ocean in the United States. Once again I had to ask

myself "Why?" We went back to the half acre called SAKALA and bid *orewva* (farewell in Kreyol) to Daniel, some of the staff, and the children. That night at reflection time Jim said "I feel humbled." Indeed, we all felt the same.

The next day, we went to the Salesian Sisters Provincial House in downtown Port-au-Prince, which houses an orphanage of about 40 girls. We also visited Melissa's Hope, an orphanage of 18 children, 14 with special needs, some of whom are paralyzed and in wheelchairs. Mostly local mothers care for them.

As our mission ended, I questioned, as I often do, why so many people have to live in such miserable, dreadful conditions, with no safety nets, while 1-2 percent of people in Haiti can live the rich, sumptuous life. Daniel's project, the Salesian Sisters, and Melissa's Hope are examples of survival due in part to missionaries like Brother Piet Vampen and other people who believe we are all sisters and brothers. I reflected on my good friend Father Gerard Jean-Juste, who died a couple years ago and who often said, "We must learn to share." He also admonished, "ballots not bullets" – a reference to Haiti's nascent democracy, still plagued, after all these years, with unrest and uncertainty. Going to Haiti opens one's eyes to the struggles and hopes of a developing nation. It's what keeps Adele and me going again and again.

Where Violence Begins *By Rachel MacNair*

The planetarium presentation, as usual, was beautiful. Yet there was a disquieting aspect to the language used. Stars were "dying." Why not "being transformed"? These stars did something in a "desperate" attempt to prevent this. How can an inanimate object be desperate? One star taking material from another star was "cannibalizing."

The animation of the solar ray was as wonderfully dramatic as fireworks. Yet it was described as violent. It was doing what it was supposed to and not hurting anyone. In fact, it was most definitely doing the opposite – it was life-giving. We couldn't be alive if the sun didn't do this.

Why all the battle language? It's a violent perspective on what are not violent phenomena. Why not an analogy to cooking instead? They could be "giving the recipe for making a black hole."

We could suggest this is a male vs. female way of looking at it, but that's unfair to men, most of whom spend more time cooking than battling.

It reminded me of the Babylonian creation myth in which the god Marduk kills the dragon Tianmut, she being his own mother, and divided her body to make the earth and sky. This violence is a common feature of the mythologies of imperial cultures. When violence is entangled in the very core of governing, with war and execution, torture and genocide, infanticide and feticide, then violence is also entangled in the very creation of the universe. It's natural. It need not be avoided; rather, it's celebrated as glorious and heroic.

We don't generally see stars as gods in our culture, but the planetarium show was treating them as beings with feelings and intentions just the same. Creation of new things was narrated with the language of destruction – as would be expected from a philosophy that sees the world through a violent lens. This is not science. Giving such a lens a scientific topic doesn't turn it into science.

The Babylonian myth was the one I thought of because it was countered by a group of the empire's conquered people. They came up with a story of creation where gods didn't battle each other because there was only one God. The stars were not gods, but useful items. The process was orderly, logical, and *peaceful*.

The story told by the rebels is the one most familiar to people nowadays; millions of people have it in their homes and it's recited frequently all over the world as the first chapter of Genesis in the Bible. The Babylonian empire, on the other hand, is long gone, its myths only known to some. Ancient nonviolent activism made an enduring change.

Yet the impetus of seeing things through a lens of violence being at the core of the universe is still with us, and academics who themselves spend more time cooking than battling nevertheless find erudite ways of using violent metaphors. If all the lethal violence we oppose starts in the thinking process before it makes its way to gory reality, we need to pay attention to opposing it even at the stage of simple language.

**PEACE AND LIFE CONNECTIONS
SIGN UP TODAY !!!!**

This weekly email publication contains brief notes, including action suggestions, news of events past and present, notifications of resources available, and relevant quotations.

www.consistent-life.org/weekly.html

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Consistent Life

OUR MISSION

We are committed to the protection of life, which is threatened in today's world by war, abortion, poverty, racism, capital punishment and euthanasia.

We believe that these issues are linked under a 'consistent ethic of life'. We challenge those working on all or some of these issues to maintain a cooperative spirit of peace, reconciliation, and respect in protecting the unprotected.

OUR PURPOSE

We serve the anti-violence community by connecting issues, building bridges, and strengthening the case against each kind of socially-approved killing by consistently opposing them all.

DISCLAIMER

Consistent Life is a network of groups and individuals who agree on our mission statement and join together in working for the consistent life ethic. While some member groups focus on a particular strategy, the Network's Board supports all non-violent strategies to protect the unprotected, whether education, legislation, civil disobedience, prayer, or service. Although as an organization we do not necessarily endorse all viewpoints expressed in our newsletter—we recognize that there is a diversity of views within our constituency on many topics—we appreciate all points of view on how to advance the consistent life ethic.

MEMBER GROUPS & SUPPORTERS' ACTIVITIES, 2012-2013

Member Groups and Endorsers of Consistent Life did a huge amount of work for peace, justice, and life last year. We can present only a small selection of their great works in this report.

NEW MEMBER

The Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters became a member group of Consistent Life. This group is a multicultural community of religious missionary women living together and supporting one another and their ministries. They are concerned with aiding victims of violence, poverty, and abuse, with special concern for women and children.

MEMBER ACTIVITIES



Catholic Workers participate in the "For Peace & ALL Life" gathering at the 2013 March for Life.

Friends Witness for a Pro-life Peace Testimony (FWPPT) sent a representative—CL Vice-President Rachel MacNair—to the Friends World Conference of Quakers, which was held on April 17th-25th near Nakuru, Kenya. FWPPT had a literature table with consistent-life-ethic-themed materials. Rachel reported that most Africans who came by were remarkably enthusiastic, and she received requests for books from African and Latin American attendees.

All Our Lives joined National Advocates for Pregnant Women in a court brief opposing imprisonment for women who use illegal substances during pregnancy. The brief points out that this can cause fear in pregnant women and lead them to undergo abortions. It urges substance-abuse treatment rather than imprisonment.

Feminists for Life of America held its 40th Anniversary Reception Tuesday, July 3rd, in Alexandria, Virginia. President Serrin Foster reported briefly on highlights of the year and future plans. Vice-President Sally Winn and Feminists for Life speaker Joyce McCauley-Benner shared their individual stories and spoke about the impact of their work.

Democrats for Life of America held a Town Hall Meeting at the Democratic National Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina, the week of September 3rd. Their discussion was on "The Big Tent: Can You Be Pro-Life in a Pro-Choice Party?"

Evangelicals for Social Action and Sojourners were major underwriters of "Evangelicals for Peace: A Summit on Christian Moral Responsibility," which met at Georgetown University on September 14th. CL Board member Rob Arner attended. CL Endorsers Glen Stassen, David Gushee, and Jim Wallis gave presentations.

The National Council of Catholic Women held a conference at Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, on September 19th-22nd. The theme was upholding the sanctity and dignity of human life.

The Susan B. Anthony Birthplace Museum hosted a talk on October 7th by Rachel MacNair on the Quaker roots of Susan B. Anthony and how these informed her activism for women's rights and the rights of others, including children, born and unborn.

Becca Siebenaler marked October, "Respect Life Month" in the American Catholic Church, by hosting a For Life Fair at her parish, Saint Francis of Assisi in San Antonio, Texas, on October 14th. Her aim, she says, was "to try to CONNECT the life issues at my church." The fair featured representatives of ministries that currently work on the life issues, with each issue receiving its own exhibit table. Among the different issues featured were "Environmental Justice," "Marriage and Fertility Awareness," "Choosing Life in the Womb," "Support for Women that Chose Life," "Life Matters for Persons with Disabilities," "Poverty," "Abolishing the Death Penalty," and "Death & Dying." The exhibits were arranged in an order that loosely followed the order of life.

Becca reports, "The event was in conjunction with 'Social Sunday' [and thus had] a captive audience, munching on donuts and coffee. I had a really good response and hope to do it again this October."

CL Advisory Board member Aimee Murphy, who is also Executive Editor of *Life Matters Journal*, explained the consistent life ethic at the Western New York Regional Students for Life conference in Buffalo, New York, on October 20th.



CL Board members Nicholas Neal and Carol Crossed and Life Matters Journal Executive Editor Aimee Murphy, among others, participate in post-March discussion.

MEMBER GROUPS & SUPPORTERS' ACTIVITIES, 2012-2013

BOOKS

CL Endorser Sister Joan Chittister brought out *Following the Path: The Search for a Life of Passion, Purpose, and Joy*. The book offers a vision for decision making about the purpose of one's life at any age. *Following the Path* earned praise from *Booklist*, which wrote "So how can we know what we're meant to do with our lives?" That is the core question, and Chittister spends the bulk of the book sharing stories from those folk brave enough to change course... while offering her own insight on the meanings of happiness and purpose...Essentially, Chittister's slim volume deals with how to lead a meaningful life at any age."

CL Endorser David Gushee and his wife, Jeanie, published a prayer book, *Yours Is the Day, Lord, Yours Is the Night*.

Ron Sider, a CL endorser and president of Evangelicals for Social Action, brought out *The Early Church on Killing: A Comprehensive Sourcebook on War, Abortion, and Capital Punishment*. This sourcebook enables the modern reader to encounter voices from the early Christian Church and to appreciate their consistent stand for life.

LOSSES

The beloved and celebrated **Bishop Walter Sullivan**, retired head of the Catholic diocese of Richmond, Virginia, and former president of Pax Christi USA, died on December 11th. Bishop Sullivan was an endorser of the Consistent Life Mission Statement and a lifelong advocate for peace, justice, and life.

He was also a leader in ecumenism, supporting the foundation of the Virginia Holocaust Museum. He encouraged local Catholics to have a special concern for Haiti. Bishop Sullivan also had a special concern for prison ministry.

PEACE AND LIFE CONNECTIONS SIGN UP TODAY !!!!

This weekly email publication contains brief notes, including action suggestions, news of events past and present, notifications of resources available, and relevant quotations.

www.consistent-life.org/weekly.html

MEMBER GROUP'S FUTURE PLANS

Pax Christi USA is planning a National Conference on June 14th-16th, 2013, to take place at Sheraton Gateway Hotel at the Atlanta, Georgia, airport. Workshops on the death penalty, immigration, and more are planned. The theme of the conference will be "Remembering the past with gratitude, living the present with enthusiasm, embracing the future with confidence and hope."

Des Moines Catholic Worker will begin a new initiative, the Rachel Corrie Project, in 2013. They will send members of their community, trained in nonviolent intervention, to places of conflict and oppression. On returning, they will educate people back home through speeches and writing.

The National Council of Catholic Women plans a national convention on September 25th-28th, 2013, at Marriot Harbor Beach Resort and Spa in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Democrats for Life of America plans a Historic Pro-Life Democratic Summit on September 20th-21st, 2013, in St. Louis, Missouri.

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