



# PRIESTS FOR LIFE

Assisting God's people to respond to the evils of abortion and euthanasia

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[www.priestsforlife.org](http://www.priestsforlife.org)

Number 5

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## The Many Ministries of Priests for Life

### Healing After Abortion

[www.RachelsVineyard.org](http://www.RachelsVineyard.org)  
[www.SilentNoMoreAwareness.org](http://www.SilentNoMoreAwareness.org)

### Clergy Training

[www.PriestsforLife.org](http://www.PriestsforLife.org)  
[www.DeaconsForLife.org](http://www.DeaconsForLife.org)  
[www.SeminariansForLife.org](http://www.SeminariansForLife.org)  
[www.MissionariesoftheGospelofLife.org](http://www.MissionariesoftheGospelofLife.org)

### Ecumenical Outreach

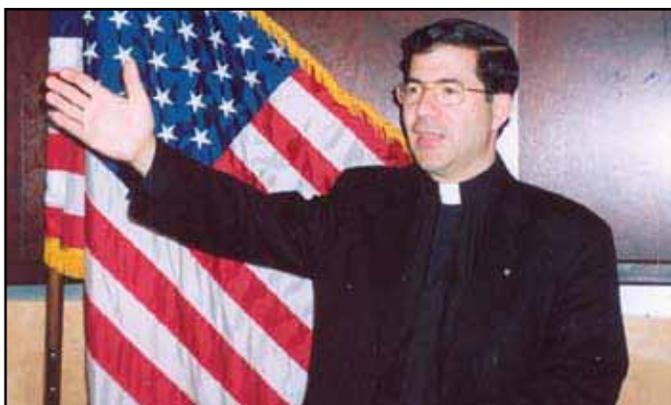
[www.GospelOfLife.com](http://www.GospelOfLife.com)  
[www.LifeOnTheLine.com](http://www.LifeOnTheLine.com)

### Youth Outreach

[www.AbortionAborted.org](http://www.AbortionAborted.org)

### Washington DC Outreach

[www.NPLAC.org](http://www.NPLAC.org)



*Fr. Frank Pavone, National Director, Priests for Life*

## Ten Easy Steps to Voting with a Clear Conscience

*Fr. Frank Pavone, National Director, Priests for Life*

[The following article contains excerpts from Fr. Frank's booklet "Voting with a Clear Conscience." You can order the full version on the order form on page 4, or go to [www.PoliticalResponsibility.org](http://www.PoliticalResponsibility.org).]

### 1. Vote!

The first step toward voting with a clear conscience is to make sure you actually vote. The General Election Day for 2006 is Tuesday, November 7.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church says, "Submission to authority and co-responsibility for the common good make it morally obligatory ... to exercise the right to vote" (2240).

To make sure you are on the road to fulfilling that duty, you need

to keep a few things in mind:

a) Make sure you are properly registered to vote. At [www.priestsforlife.org/states](http://www.priestsforlife.org/states), we have a list of the states and the voter registration deadlines. If you have moved since the last election, you are probably in a different district. To be sure, contact your local Board of Elections. You certainly don't want to arrive at the voting booth on Election Day only to find that you're not registered!

b) Absentee Ballots. Think ahead, and if you are going to be out of town on Election Day because of work, vacation, family responsibilities, school, military service, or some other reason, get an absentee ballot well in advance and fill it out! Likewise, if you are homebound or in a nursing facility and will not be able to get to the polls, don't let that make you lose your vote! Obtain an absentee ballot right away!

c) Early Voting. Some states allow early voting. (To see if yours is one of them, visit [www.priestsforlife.org/states](http://www.priestsforlife.org/states).) This means that even if you are going to be in town on Election Day, you can vote within a specific period of time *before Election Day*. If your state has early voting, then *vote early!* This will minimize the risk

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**This newsletter is available by email, along with a bi-weekly column written by Fr. Frank. Subscribe free of charge at [subscribe@priestsforlife.org](mailto:subscribe@priestsforlife.org).**

# Ten Easy Steps to Voting...

(Continued from page 1)

of unforeseen obstacles arising on Election Day, like illness, car trouble, bad weather, unexpected family or work obligations, or just forgetfulness.

d) Bring your voting decisions to prayer. Pray for wisdom and guidance, clarity and strength as you consider the candidates in the light of the principles explained here. Pray for the inner freedom to do the right thing in the voting booth.

## **2. Know the candidates.**

You can vote with a clear conscience if you *know for sure ahead of time where that candidate stands* on the issues.

## **3. Reject the Disqualified.**

Suppose a candidate came forward and said, “I support terrorism.” Would you say, “I disagree with you on terrorism, but what’s your health care plan?” Of course not. Similarly, those who would permit the destruction of innocent life by abortion disqualify themselves from consideration.

If a politician cannot respect the life of a little baby, how is he or she supposed to respect yours?

## **4. Distinguish Policy from Principle.**

Most disagreements between candidates and political platforms do not have to do with *principle*, but rather with *policy*. For example, it is a basic principle that people have a right to the safety of their own lives and possessions. That’s why we have to fight crime. We don’t see candidates campaigning on opposite sides of that principle, with some saying, “Fight Crime” and other defending “The Right to Crime.” Instead, there is agreement on the principle, but disagreement on *the best policies to implement the principle*.

But when a policy dispute involves questioning whether people deserve that protection in the first place, *the policy is the principle*. To allow abortion, which is the killing of a human child in the womb, is to break the principle that every human life deserves protection.

## **5. Weigh other issues properly.**

There are many issues that have to be considered in elections, but *not all have equal weight*. Once voters have disqualified those candidates who violate fundamental principles, they need to look at the wide spectrum of issues affecting the proper care of human life and promotion of human dignity.

In particular, capital punishment and the waging of war are troubling to the consciences of many voters. The Church clearly urges us to avoid both, but also teaches that at times, both activities can be morally legitimate. Take, for example, what Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (now Pope Benedict XVI) wrote in a letter in July 2004: *“Not all moral issues have the same moral weight as abortion and euthanasia. ... While the Church exhorts civil authorities to seek peace, not war, and to exercise discretion and mercy in imposing punishment on criminals, it may still be permissible to take up arms to repel an aggressor or to have recourse to capital punishment. There may be a legitimate diversity of opinion even among Catholics about waging war and applying the death penalty, but not however with regard to abortion and euthanasia”* (Letter to Cardinal McCarrick, n.3).

The bottom line, in other words, is that support for war and

capital punishment do not automatically or necessarily violate fundamental moral principles; support for abortion and euthanasia always do. Therefore, supporting these latter policies is worse.

## **6. Keep your loyalty focused on Jesus.**

When you vote, you say something about where your loyalties are. There is nothing wrong with being loyal to a candidate or to a political party. But there is something very wrong if your loyalty to either is stronger than your loyalty to Jesus Christ. Ask yourself, *“Is there a position that my party can take that would prevent me from voting the party line?”* Framed in another way, the question is, *“Is my loyalty to the Christian faith stronger than my loyalty to any political party?”*

## **7. Remember, the Party Matters.**

Voting with a clear conscience also means that you consider how the outcome of the election in which you vote affects the balance of power. In other words, elections do not only put *individual candidates* into power; they put *political parties* into power. And it is not only the candidates who have positions. So do the parties.

## **8. Distinguish “choosing evil” from “limiting evil.”**

What happens if two opposing candidates both support abortion? Then just ask a simple question: *Which of the two candidates will do less harm to unborn children if elected?* This is *not* “choosing the lesser of two evils.” *We may never choose evil*. But in the case described above, you would not be choosing evil. Why? *Because in choosing to limit an evil, you are choosing a good.*

## **9. Support the candidate with more than your vote!**

Additional activities include donating to the campaign, volunteering for the campaign, handing out literature for the candidate, making phone calls and visits on the candidate’s behalf, sending emails, using yard signs and bumper stickers, and praying for the candidate.

Elections, after all, are not contests between two candidates. They are contests between two teams. And it is the team that has more active members doing all these things that, in the end, will bring in the most votes.

## **10. Mobilize as many other voters as possible!**

Each of us has one vote, but each of us can mobilize hundreds, even thousands of votes.

As Election Day draws near, focus on the “low-hanging fruit.” Remember, the numbers are what counts. You have a limited amount of time to try to garner as many votes as possible. It’s much like going into an orange grove, with the goal of gathering as many oranges as you can in a limited amount of time. It doesn’t make sense to expend time and energy climbing to the top of the trees to get the oranges there when you can get many more that are within arm’s reach with much less time and energy. Reach for the low-hanging fruit!

So it is with elections. Rather than spend hours trying to convince one person to vote the right way, spend that time and energy reminding dozens of people – who are already in agreement with you on the issues – to get out and cast their vote. Don’t go looking for the personal victory of catching the “hard to get” voter. Go catch the easier ones and bring the candidate to victory!

(Continued on next page)

If you can take the day off on Election Day, do so. Spend the day contacting people by phone and email, reminding them to vote. Maybe a friend needs a ride to the polls or someone to watch the children while they go to vote. If you call a friend in the morning to remind him to vote, call him again later to verify that he did so!

Having done all this, rejoice in a clear conscience, and trust the Lord to bring about the victory for a Culture of Life!

## BULLETIN INSERT

### **Ciudadanía (Bishops speak on citizenship.)**

“Animamos a *todos los ciudadanos*, especialmente a los católicos, que consideren su ciudadanía no sólo como un deber y un privilegio, sino como una oportunidad para participar con gran sentido en la *edificación de la cultura de la vida*. Todos los actos de ciudadanía responsable son un ejercicio de gran valor individual. Debemos ejercer ese poder de manera que defienda la vida humana, especialmente la de los hijos de Dios que no han nacido, que son minusválidos o indefensos... Las autoridades públicas que tenemos son las que nos merecemos. Su virtud-o falta de ella-es un juicio no sólo sobre ellos, sino sobre nosotros. Por eso, urgimos a nuestros hermanos ciudadanos que *vayan más allá de la política partidista, que analicen las promesas de las campañas con un ojo crítico y que escojan sus dirigentes políticos según su principio, no su afiliación política o el interés propio.*” (Los Obispos Católicos de E.E. U.U., *Vivir el Evangelio de la Vida*, 1998, no.34)

## Contact with the Mother or Father of your Aborted Child after Healing

*Kevin Burke MSS, LSW and Theresa Burke, Ph.D. LPC  
Pastoral Associates, Priests for Life*



*Theresa and Kevin Burke, Pastoral Associates, Priests for Life*

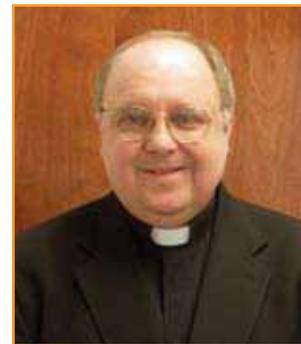
When a man or woman experiences recovery after abortion, one of the fruits of that healing is a desire to share this good news of hope with the mother/father of their aborted child.

Men in particular may feel a special sense of this responsibility if they were manipulative, unsupportive or emotionally abandoned the mother at the time of the pregnancy. They can experience a strong desire to make amends for their failure and reach out to apologize and share healing resources.

*(Continued on page 4)*

## Priests for Life Welcomes Fr. Dennis M. Weber, S.C. to Staff

Fr. Frank Pavone has announced that Fr. Dennis Weber, S.C., has joined the Priests for Life staff on a part-time basis, and will assist in traveling, speaking, and reaching out to other priests to encourage them in the pro-life cause. “We welcome Fr. Weber and are grateful to his superiors for understanding the critical need to allocate resources, including personnel, to the greatest human rights cause of our day. Fr. Weber brings a great deal of insight, pastoral experience, and enthusiasm to the Priests for Life mission.”



*Fr. Dennis Weber, S.C.*

Fr. Dennis M. Weber, S.C., a priest of the Servants of Charity, was born to Francis J. and Elizabeth (Delany) Weber on May 26, 1954 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the second of ten children. Fr. Dennis entered St. Charles Borromeo Seminary of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia in September of 1990.

Fr. Dennis further discerned a call to religious life and entered as a postulant with the Servants of Charity, in Springfield, Pa., in August of 1992. He continued his studies at St. Charles Seminary and received a Masters of Divinity degree summa cum laude, with a concentration in Moral Theology, and was ordained a priest on 22 November 1997. In May of 1998, Fr. Dennis received an M.B.A. degree from Widener University, Chester, Pa. in preparation for his future role as administrator of Don Guanella Village (Springfield, Pa.), a residential program serving boys and men with mental retardation. Fr. Dennis served in this role from January, 1999 to March, 2004 and in March, 2004 assumed a new role as Director of Mission Identity and Integration with the Mental Retardation Services Division of Catholic Social Services of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, a role in which he currently serves.

Fr. Dennis was first exposed to the pro-life movement in 1971 when his father took him to a prayer vigil protest against abortion at Rittenhouse Square in center city Philadelphia. For the most part, his pro-life activities remained dormant until entering St. Charles Seminary where Fr. Dennis participated in prayer before an abortion mill, the March for Life in Washington, D.C., and in the activities of the Helpers of God's Precious Infants. However, his primary pro-life work has been in his ministry at Don Guanella Village in serving persons with mental retardation. It is the recognition of the innate dignity of these persons made in God's image and likeness and the respect due to them that has further enkindled his desire to become more involved and committed to the pro-life movement in saving the unborn and especially in exposing the genocide of abortion of persons with genetic defects, especially persons with Down's syndrome in which the abortion rate is 85-90% for women who chose to obtain a pre-natal test. Fr. Dennis also owes his pro-life commitment to the courageous commitment of his parents and especially of his father who tirelessly fought and prayed against abortion for many years.

## Contact with the Mother or Father

(Continued from page 3)

In Rachel's Vineyard, we counsel persons at the close of their retreat to take time to let the healing event unfold while rooting themselves in prayer and continued conversion and spiritual growth before contacting former lovers, family, friends or even public speaking about their abortion and healing. They are advised to seek the counsel of a trusted mentor, spiritual advisor, clergy or therapist to assist this discernment.

As a general rule, we do not recommend that a married person who has experienced abortion healing contact a former lover even with the best of intentions. There are just too many potential problems that can surface. It is a much better to keep the focus on healing the effects of abortion on their current marriage and to deepen the communication, intimacy and trust with their spouse, building on the good fruits of their healing. There are exceptions however, where such contact can be safely made, but this requires serious discernment by husband and wife together with appropriate counsel.

If an individual is single, it is important that they consider the current situation of the former partner. How will contacting this person affect their current marriage and family relationships? After a time of discernment, if there is uncertainty, we recommend that it would probably be best to avoid direct contact. Women especially need to be careful of contacting a former partner if the relationship was dysfunctional or abusive. It would be best to continue the work of personal healing and restoration in Christ, and not open the door to circumstances that could distract and drain from the grace of healing.

If contact is appropriate, the most effective and *least invasive* way to make contact is through a letter or an email. The correspondence can simply share regret for their role in the abortion and how it has impacted their life. Share the good news that healing is available and offer a brochure or website on a resource like Rachel's Vineyard.

*Kevin Burke, MSS/LSW and Theresa Burke, PhD., LPC, are the founders of Rachel's Vineyard, a ministry of Priests for Life, offering nationwide retreats for healing after abortion as well as training for church ministries. [www.rachelsvineyard.org](http://www.rachelsvineyard.org); 877-HOPE-4-ME. For more information on post abortion issues, read *Forbidden Grief – The Unspoken Pain of Abortion* by Theresa Burke with David Reardon; you can order by emailing [orders@priestsforlife.org](mailto:orders@priestsforlife.org) or calling 1-888-735-3448 x237.*

## Prayer Intentions

You are encouraged to remember the following intentions as you pray the Liturgy of the Hours:

### SEPTEMBER INTENTION:

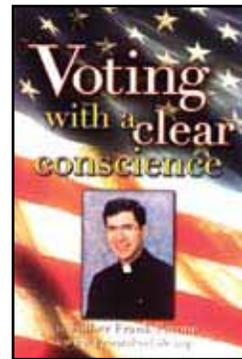
That schools and universities teach the full truth about the abortion issue.

### OCTOBER INTENTION:

That voters may elect pro-life candidates to office.

## Voting with a Clear Conscience

This booklet is a key tool to help yourself and many others to prepare for the November 7 elections. See excerpts from this work starting on page 1 of this newsletter. Order bulk quantities for your parish! The booklet comes with a legal letter indicating it is permissible for Churches and other 501 (c)(3) entities to distribute it without violating their tax-exempt status.



## ORDER FORM

Please mail your order to: Priests for Life P.O. Box 141172, Staten Island, NY 10314 Or fax it to (718) 980-3900 or Email: [orders@priestsforlife.org](mailto:orders@priestsforlife.org)

Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ Voting with a Clear Conscience booklet(s) (#1921) at \$2.00 each or \$1.75 each for 100+ or \$1.50 each for 500+ each, for total of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Additional donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_

STATE/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

I have made my check payable to: **Priests for Life**

I have donated online at [www.priestsforlife.org/donate](http://www.priestsforlife.org/donate)

Please charge my contribution to my credit card:

Card Type: \_\_\_\_\_

Card #: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## Stay Connected with us!

**Subscribe to our Email services:** Information and inspiration every two weeks from Fr. Frank Pavone: [subscribe@priestsforlife.org](mailto:subscribe@priestsforlife.org)

Weekly email with pro-life liturgical resources for priests and deacons: [clergy@priestsforlife.org](mailto:clergy@priestsforlife.org)

**Watch our TV Programs:** Defending Life on EWTN every Friday at 10pm ET (repeated Saturday at 2:30am).

Gospel of Life on Sky Angel's "Angel One" every Monday at 3:30am ET, Tuesday at 2:00 am, Thursday at 8:30am, and Saturday at 7:30pm.

**Listen to our Radio Programs:** Life on the Line is on every weekend on AM stations nationwide. Consult [www.LifeOntheLine.com](http://www.LifeOntheLine.com) for stations and times.

**Come to hear our speakers:** It won't be long before one of our speakers will be near your community again! The schedule of most of the public talks given by our pastoral team is posted on our website at [www.priestsforlife.org/speakers](http://www.priestsforlife.org/speakers).

Please publicize this information in your parish bulletins and pro-life newsletters to assist more people to come into contact regularly with the latest pro-life information!