

## Priests for Life Celebrates 25 Years: 1991-2016

### Mother Teresa and the Pro-life Movement: Preparing for her Canonization, September 4

Fr. Frank Pavone, National Director

September 4, 2016 will bring the canonization of Mother Teresa of Calcutta. Because of her care for the weakest human lives, and her outspoken defence of the poorest of the poor - the children yet in the womb - she, together with her contemporary, Pope St. John Paul II, should be considered a patron saint of the pro-life movement.



In 1994, Fr. Frank Pavone visited with Mother Teresa at her Motherhouse in Calcutta, India.

I was privileged to know them both personally, and to have them bless and encourage my own pro-life ministry of Priests for Life.

My interaction with Mother Teresa came shortly after I took leadership of Priests for Life. I asked if I could visit with her in Calcutta, and spent a week with her in June of 1994 discussing the new ministry I was leading, and the direction of pro-life strategy overall. Two events that had occurred shortly before our visit shaped our conversations.

*Continued on page 3*

### Let Us Send You A Third Class Relic of Pope John Paul II!

Priests for Life is pleased to announce that we are distributing, **free of charge**, prayer cards in honor of Pope St. John Paul II. These cards are Third Class Relics, because they have been touched to the First Class Relic of his blood, which we have in our chapel here at Priests for Life.

Our ministry at Priests for Life has been deeply inspired by Pope St. John Paul II. Fr. Frank Pavone knew him and worked

under him in Rome at the Pontifical Council for the Family. Order your third class relic prayer card at [Priestsforlife.org/Relic](http://Priestsforlife.org/Relic) today while supplies last and spread the word!



Prayer Card in honor of Pope St. John Paul II being touched to the First Class Relic of his blood, which we have in our chapel here at Priests for Life.

At the link above you will also see video of the ceremony in which Cardinal Stanislaw Dziwisz entrusted the first class relic to Fr. Frank and Priests for Life, as well as its letter of authenticity.

### Guidance for the Election

The following may be useful as guidance for those who are unsure of how to vote - or even whether to vote.

Unless Jesus and the Blessed Mother are on the ballot, we are always going to be choosing imperfect candidates. In this life, everything - including politics - is a messy mixture of good and evil, of virtue and sin, of truth and falsehood.

At the same time, there are always differences that can be found between the candidates. When we feel like one is just as bad as the other, that must not become an occasion to lose interest in the process but rather an occasion for focusing even more effort on learning the positions of the candidates. These candidates need to focus on distinguishing themselves from their opponent. You can be sure there are things they have said and done to highlight the differences, and so one is always going to be closer to our values and viewpoints than the other.

In evaluating this, we look also at the differences between the parties that those candidates represent. Each party is an entire universe of philosophies, ideologies, causes, positions, and

*Continued on page 2*

people. Each party is a whole army of people who are going to surround and advise the candidate, and fill many positions of influence if that candidate is elected.

For instance, in the case of the presidential race, we have to ask what kind of people this President would nominate to serve on the Supreme Court and the other federal courts. We have to ask what direction they lean towards on the most fundamental issues of life, religious freedom, marriage and family - and again, what direction their party leans on those issues. Remember, it is not just that the candidate shapes the office; the office also shapes the candidate, and so does the party and its prevailing positions. What kind of people would this President, furthermore, appoint as Surgeon General, Attorney General, Secretary of State, Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, and so many more?

We have to be patient with ourselves and with the process, and carefully choose the person and party who are closest to our values, starting with the most important issues. As the US Bishops stated again at the end of last year in their document "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship," our discernment in voting does have a starting point:

*"Decisions about political life are complex and require the exercise of a well-formed conscience aided by prudence. This exercise of conscience begins with outright opposition to laws and other policies that violate human life or weaken its protection. Those who knowingly, willingly, and directly support public policies or legislation that undermine fundamental moral principles cooperate with evil" (n. 31).*

Voting is a moral obligation; participation in the political process is a virtue. The US bishops have written, "We encourage all citizens, particularly Catholics, to embrace their citizenship not merely as a duty and privilege, but as an opportunity meaningfully to participate in building the culture of life. Every voice matters in the public forum. Every vote counts" (*Living the Gospel of Life*, n. 34)

Even when we conclude that whichever candidate wins will do damage, the analogy of the runaway train may help us. Imagine that you are at the controls of a runaway train and you cannot stop it. But imagine, too, that what you can do is to change the track that it is on. At the end of one track you know it will kill a large number of people, and at the end of the other track, a small number of people.

What do you do?

2 Obviously, you do not want it to kill anyone. But you cannot stop the train. In this case, you obviously would change the train to the track where it is going to do the least damage. You are not choosing to kill anyone - the death and destruction are beyond your intentions and beyond your ability to stop. But you are able to decrease the damage. By changing the train to the track where it will do less damage, you are not choosing evil; you are choosing to limit evil, and that choice is a good. Yes, the guidance here is simple: it is the difference between certainty and doubt. Very often elections present us with the choice between a candidate we know we don't want and an

alternative about whom we are not sure.

But you don't have to be certain about how every choice or action of your candidate is going to turn out. If they lean in the right direction, if there is a probability or even a possibility that they will do the right thing and make the right choices, that is better than the certainty of someone who will make the wrong choices. When faced with the choice between a certain evil and a possible good, you choose the possible good.

## Pray with us for Life

PrayerCampaign.org is our prayer website. Visit there often for prayer campaigns, intentions, and resources.

July intention: That world leaders may understand that freedom depends upon the protection of life.

August intention: That pro-life activists who pray at abortion facilities may have courage and perseverance.

August 7-15, 2016: Assumption Novena for Life

August 28-Sept 5, 2016: Novena in Honor of Blessed Mother Teresa

We have to remember, too, that our vote is not meant to make us feel good. It is meant to influence society in the right direction by helping to get people into public office who will help to make that happen. A vote is not an opinion poll about what we think about the candidate. It is a transfer of power. And it is a gamble. God does not always give us clear, predictable choices. He expects us to use good judgment. And good judgment helps us to avoid evils that are certain, and increase the possibilities for good.

So the bottom line is that we should not skip an election; we should vote. Sometimes we may think that we are doing wrong by voting for either candidate. But we have to consider the fact that we influence the election whether we like it or not. Skipping a vote also influences the election, because it takes a vote away from the better of the two candidates.

So don't sit out the election. Go and vote, and help change the train to the best available track!



Janet Morana participated in the March for Life Canada in May 2016 and spoke on Parliament Hill on behalf of the Silent No More Awareness Campaign.

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Continued from page 1

One was the speech she had given in February at the National Prayer Breakfast in Washington, DC. She spoke in the presence of President and Mrs. Clinton and Vice-President and Mrs. Gore. It was an unforgettable moment, as this short, humble woman proclaimed to those in power that abortion "... is a war against the child, a direct killing of the innocent child, murder by the mother herself. If we accept that a mother can kill even her own child, how can we tell other people not to kill one another?... Any country that accepts abortion is not teaching its people to love, but to use any violence to get what they want. This is why the greatest destroyer of love and peace is abortion."

These direct and irrefutable words, spoken to those who wield the highest political power, should serve as an example today of how the People of God need to prophetically challenge both those who hold and seek elected office.

I told her what an impact the speech made on the pro-life community. "Many of the American people loved your speech," I said. She responded, "What about the rest of the American people?" She then gave me a typewritten copy of the speech, and a homework assignment to spread it far and wide, which Priests for Life has been doing ever since.

The other event we discussed was that President Clinton had signed in May of 1994 the "Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances" bill, which made it a federal crime to peacefully, physically obstruct access to the door of an abortion mill. When I explained this new law to her, she looked at me and said, "Father, if we had laws like that here in India, I would have been thrown in jail many times! Here I go to the places where abortions are done and I take the women by the arm and say, 'Come with me; we will help you and your child!'"

Another striking moment was when she brought me to one of her homes in Calcutta where prostitutes lived whom she had rescued from life on the streets. She showed me the blankets they had made. She was glowing with joy and admiration as she said, "Look, Father, at the good work these women have done." Her vision of people's goodness was not obscured by any evil they may have done.

She loved the priesthood, and after hearing me speak about Priests for Life, she sought and obtained an immediate audience with the local bishop so that the three of us could talk about how to establish it in India. Later she wrote me saying, "I hope many priests and deacons will join Priests for Life." Indeed, the whole pro-life movement draws strength from Mother Teresa, as together we seek to save the lives of the poorest of the poor, and free all people from the poverty of thinking we can abort them.

*You are invited to join in an ongoing Novena of Prayer in honor of Mother Teresa from now to her canonization. Visit [www.PrayerCampaign.org](http://www.PrayerCampaign.org), where you can download the prayer and leave us your own comments about how Mother Teresa's life and example has inspired you!*

## Too Non-Partisan for our Own Good?

The release of Fr. Frank Pavone's book *Abolishing Abortion* (2015, Thomas Nelson Publishers), was timed for this election year. It contains prophetic and honest analysis of how the institutional Church is sometimes its own biggest obstacle in making a difference in public policy, by placing on our parishes and pastors unrealistic and totally unnecessary restrictions. The book quotes many diocesan memos, one of which stated, "It is clearly the policy of the Diocese . . . that neither it nor its employees will engage in any political activity which seeks to support or discredit any political party or candidate. Each incorporated parish would be wise to adopt this or similar policy to avoid placing its tax exempt status at risk" (p. 117).

The book explains at length why this is not going to make any parish lose its tax exempt status. And more fundamentally, the book goes on to state,

*"As should now be obvious, sweeping generalizations like this subvert the mission of the Catholic Church or any church. How can this prohibition against 'supporting' or 'discrediting' a party or candidate be reconciled with a church's clearly stated obligation and divine mission? That mission has been articulated in documents like the Second Vatican Council's Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, or the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, to pass moral judgment on matters related to politics. That mission calls on Catholics to submit to the critical light of the Gospel the positions that various political parties and candidates take on issues of consequence. ... The alternative is to disconnect Church teaching from real life" (p. 118).*

Don't miss out on the message of this book - for you and for your pastor - as this election approaches! Order copies at [www.AbolishingAbortion.com](http://www.AbolishingAbortion.com).

## The Catholic View: New Episodes To Begin!

EWTN viewers will be treated to a sixth season of counter cultural conversation and spiritual insight as *The Catholic View for Women* debuts brand new episodes beginning August 10. The show airs on EWTN at 11 p.m. ET on Wednesdays, and at 10:30 a.m. ET Fridays.

Co-hosts Janet Morana, Teresa Tomeo and Astrid Bennett Gutierrez are all back on set for a provocative season that takes on rejecting pornography and embracing chastity; the damage caused by the sexual revolution; same sex attraction and more. For additional information on the new shows visit [TheCatholicViewForWomen.com](http://TheCatholicViewForWomen.com).

## Day of Remembrance for Aborted Children will be observed Sept. 10

The fourth annual *National Day of Remembrance for Aborted Children* will take place across the country on Sept. 10. Priests for Life sponsors the day along with the Pro-Life Action League and Citizens for a Pro-Life Society.

Pro-life groups and individuals organize prayer services at 49 gravesites of aborted babies across the country, and at dozens...

Continued on page 4

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Continued from page 3

...of other memorial locations in the 50 states. In its inaugural year in 2013, memorials were organized at more than 100 locations. So far this year, services are planned at 69 sites.

*"Abortion is not an abstraction. Praying at the grave of an aborted baby helps people to face the reality that abortion is violence, and helps us all to heal from its wounds,"* Fr. Frank stated.

To find a memorial or to find out about organizing an event, go to [www.AbortionMemorials.com](http://www.AbortionMemorials.com).

## Supreme Court Gives Priests for Life A Victory

In an unexpected move, the U.S. Supreme Court on May 16 sent all seven cases involved in *Zubik vs. Burwell* - including *Priests for Life vs. HHS* - back to the lower courts for resolution.

The Court also vacated the lower court rulings against the challengers, and told both the petitioners and the government to come up with the kind of solution that they already indicated to the Court was possible, namely, that contraceptive coverage continue to remain available, but without the complicity of the religious groups who are the employers.

Priests for Life, as an organization, along with individual petitioners National Director Father Frank Pavone, Executive Director Janet Morana and Alveda King, has vowed since filing one of the earliest lawsuits against the mandate back in 2012 that no matter what the consequences, the ministry would not obey the mandate.

*"We look at the May 16 order as a victory,"* Father Frank said. *"Without saying so in as many words, the Court recognized that the government had overstepped its authority with this mandate. We look forward to finally coming to a resolution that does not interfere with our right to practice our faith."*

## Civil Rights for the Unborn

On June 16, 2016 Civil Rights for The Unborn (CRU), the African American Outreach of Priests for Life launched the new ministry logo along with a summary of the vision and mission of the program. This launch took place during our annual "Juneteenth" activities ([Priestsforlife.org/africanamerican/juneteenth.aspx](http://Priestsforlife.org/africanamerican/juneteenth.aspx)).

Another important calendar date for CRU is August 28, when the annual observances surrounding the "I Have a Dream" speech, which CRU Director's uncle, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered in 1963. CRU has also been promoting our "voter awareness, education and activation" program throughout 2016. For more information, visit [PoliticalResponsibility.com](http://PoliticalResponsibility.com)

Evangelist Alveda King, Niece of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., serves Priests for Life full-time as Director of its African-American outreach.

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

## Featured Products

### Election Toolkit

Get active in this year's elections with these important resources! We will send you an Election Toolkit for \$30 (including shipping) containing one of each of the following products.

- *Abolishing Abortion* by Fr. Frank Pavone explores biblical, moral, historical, and legal reasons Christians belong in the public square and challenges both churches and individual Christians to full engagement.



- *10 Responses to Pro-Abortion Politicians* brochure answers the worn-out arguments often used by pro-abortion politicians.
- *Voting with a Clear Conscience* brochure explains the Catholic citizen's moral obligation to vote and take an active role in the nation's political process.
- *A Study Guide to the US Bishops' document Living the Gospel of Life: A Challenge to American Catholics*.
- *Church and Politics: Are We As Restricted As We Think?* Priests for Life and the Ave Maria School of Law co-sponsored a symposium for clergy and attorneys. These symposium papers will give pastors a broader understanding of the law in this area, and assist them to fulfil their mission with greater confidence.
- *Election Prayer for Life* Prayer Card



Find more great Pro Life products at [ProLifeProducts.org!](http://ProLifeProducts.org)

Order at [ProLifeProducts.org](http://ProLifeProducts.org) or use this order form and mail in the enclosed envelope to

**Priests for Life, PO Box 141172, Staten Island, NY 10314**

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Send \_\_\_\_\_ Election Toolkit(s) (#3650) at \$30.00 each (including shipping) for a total of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_ **Total Donation** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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