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## *Mother's Day Edition - 2014*

*Guided by a commitment to the sanctity of every life, the Pro-Life Union fosters a cohesive vision and strategy for a Culture of Life in Greater Philadelphia. Our beliefs are incarnated in the context of the family and through service to those making the choice for life.*

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*John Stanton (1927-2014)*

## **Contemplating “Choice”** - by Marybeth T. Hagan

Abortion is a subject that most of us would rather not think about or discuss. It's too touchy a topic, too personal. So why raise this issue on Mother's Day of all days? Nothing flies in the face of all which is good about motherhood more than misguided rationalizations that ending a developing infant's life benefits mother or baby. Like a work of art, a born baby is the sum of his or her developmental parts.

***As we believe and recite, God is the “maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.” But a mother is His instrument in bearing and delivering the ultimate masterpiece – a baby at birth.*** My thoughts on this contentious matter didn't always run this route. I paid little attention to the

abortion controversy until pregnancies taught me a thing or two about fetal development and maternal loss. The morality of abortion was the last thing that I wanted to contemplate as I saw my 12-week-old unborn daughter's delicate profile and tiny limbs on an ultrasound machine screen back in the late 1980s. But I did, despite myself. Miscarriage of another baby at four months, followed by a medical procedure made me seriously consider other women's lingering or delayed pain after losing babies to abortion. When I searched for concrete answers as to why abortion is so sensitive a subject beyond the obvious – the intentional halting of a developing baby's beating heart – I found explanations in psychotherapist Theresa Burke's book *Forbidden Grief: The Unspoken Pain of Abortion*. “Abortion touches on three central issues of a woman's self-concept: her sexuality, her morality and her maternal identity. It also involves the loss of a child, or at least the loss of an opportunity to have a child,” wrote the founder of the world-wide post-abortion healing ministry Rachel's Vineyard. “Women lose an element of their essence when they choose abortion. Naturally, the loss of this inherent and transcendent quality causes pain, not gain,” Burke added. A male friend opened my eyes to the fact that being a partner to abortion also deeply troubles some men. At the March for Life, guys bearing signs that read “I regret lost fatherhood” confirmed that my pal was not alone in feeling remorse for not defending his child's right to life. It's complicated, as people seem to say or post online a lot these days.

Decades ago, one of my closest female friends told me the secret of her abortion. Although I wondered how this might affect such a loving person psychologically, I never asked. I did not know how. We tried to solve many of human nature's riddles in our conversations, but we never really spoke of her abortion until I began writing about the subject in the early 2000s. This normally assertive woman let her then fiancé talk her into the abortion, she said. She did not know why. She never told her beloved mother about the pregnancy or the abortion. We cried together when she whispered that her since-deceased mom never had the chance to know her grandchild and that this baby would have been on the way into adulthood by now.

Most of us know or love someone who has had an abortion. Sometimes we don't even realize this because it's extremely difficult to talk about abortion. “Four in 10 unintended pregnancies end in abortion” in the United States, reported the pro-abortion Guttmacher Institute. Four in 10 equals a whopping 40 percent. There have been 56,405,766 abortions since legalization in 1973, according to the National Right to Life. That's a whole lot of missing children and parents without them. Abortion statistics, and stories of maternal and paternal post-abortive regrets like those of my friends and others, speak volumes about the insidious and long-term effects of this plague on our houses and our nation. A populace that celebrates Mother's Day contradicts itself in accepting or promoting legal abortion. If we really hold motherhood dearly, then abortion is too wrong to be a right.



## Your Right to Know

The American Association of Pro-Life Ob & Gyns is launching a series of press releases to inform women and the public about the real physical complications that may result from an abortion. Dr. Donna Harrison, the group's director, rightly questions why the government fails to warn about the health risks of abortion, which is an elective medical procedure. Abortion is immutably linked to premature births, yet many women are not told about this risk and the general public is, in many cases, unaware. We applaud the efforts of the AAPLOG for their tenacity and courage in demanding that their colleagues and the government speak the truth about abortion. Women deserve the facts regarding abortion so that they can make informed decisions about their reproductive health and protect their unborn children from an industry built on their destruction. For more information on the Association, visit [www.aaplog.org](http://www.aaplog.org) or call (202) 230-0997.

# ProLifeOBIGYNS



## Our Lady of Guadalupe Project

The American Academy of Sacred Arts has resolved to continue the work started by their founder, Sr. Paula Beierschmitt, who passed away last September. Sister Paula hoped to have a perfect bronze replica of the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe — patroness of the Americas — placed prominently and permanently on the façade of the Carto Funeral Home at 220 South Broad Street. Our Lady of Guadalupe is an inspiration to pro-life people all over the world who pray to her to stop the crime of abortion, which has ended the lives of 56 million children in the United States.

Sister Paula was a great friend to the Pro-Life Union. She volunteered her time to pray and witness at area abortion facilities. She also proudly marched in the St. Patrick's Day Parade with us each year. To learn more about Sister Paula, her work and the image, please visit [www.aasacredarts.com](http://www.aasacredarts.com).

## Pro-Life Pride

Show your pro-life pride with a Choose Life Plate. For a one-time charge of \$44 (\$24 to PennDot and \$20 to a pregnancy center), you will be showing the beautiful message of Life to thousands of people, and funds will be distributed to pregnancy resource centers and homes in Pa. Visit [www.pachoose-life.org](http://www.pachoose-life.org) or call 610-585-0324.

## Real Friend to Women

We salute the PA Family Institute for their recent effort to spread the truth about Planned Parenthood. Visit [www.pafamily.org/notplannedparenthood](http://www.pafamily.org/notplannedparenthood).



## Upcoming Events

☆ **Generation Life** will hold its **3rd Annual Banquet** on **Sat., June 21st** at the Plymouth Country Club. Join them for a night of celebration. For tickets and sponsorship opportunities, visit [www.generationlife.org](http://www.generationlife.org).

☆ **Pro-Life Summit and Mass** to be held on July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2014 at the Archdiocesan Pastoral Center. The summit topic will focus on the life-saving work provided by the Real Alternatives Network and our area crisis pregnancy centers. For details and information visit [www.phillycatholiclife.org](http://www.phillycatholiclife.org).

☆ **Save the Date** – On September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2014 the “[Walk for Life](#)” will be held in Center City at Love Park. Participants will join in a short walk beginning at 3:30pm followed by a Rally with national and local speakers focusing on the dignity of Life. The event will precede the annual Archdiocesan Respect Life Mass.

## Member Organization Spotlight

Member Organizations assist the Pro-Life Union of Greater Philadelphia in developing and implementing a shared vision for building a Culture of Life in our community.

The Pro-Life Union has been blessed by a lengthy partnership with Guiding Star Ministries (GSM), and has supported them with monthly donations since 1992. GSM is a home for pregnant women and their children, a safe haven for women who seek an alternative to abortion. The mission of GSM is to provide shelter to these women and their children and to educate them so that they may have a successful, healthy pregnancy, while creating a home that is structuring, nurturing and supportive. The staff provides counseling, parenting classes, group meetings, case management, and a nurturing faith-based environment to help the residents work towards achieving total independence and becoming productive members of society.

Help support GSM in their ministry, in changing the lives of these women and children. Donations to support the work of GSM may be made to the Pro-Life Union or directly to GSM. Visit their website at [www.guidingstar.org](http://www.guidingstar.org) to learn more about their program and how you can help!

### Help Sponsor a Mother and Child at Guiding Star!



- \$25 per month buys diapers
- \$50 per month buys food
- \$100 per month pays for transportation
- \$1,000 per month covers the cost of housing a mom & child

## The Pro-Life Union of Greater Philadelphia

The Pro-Life Union is privileged to have served the Greater Philadelphia Area for over 30 years and we have been tremendously blessed by committed supporters. Our organization seeks to engage the culture on the right to life in the public square, but we never allow ourselves to lose focus on the women and children hurt by abortion.

We reach women considering abortion through our Pregnancy Hotline and sidewalk counseling efforts at abortion facilities, and provide tangible help and support so that women are empowered to choose life. The member organizations we financially support ensure that mothers can choose life and help them meet their needs. Guiding Star Ministries joyfully walks with women as they make the choice for life.

The PLU remains involved in outreach, education and public affairs. By sharing the pro-life message with others through our newsletter, brochures and our website, we ensure that the pro-life community has the tools it needs to defend life in the public square, in the workplace or even in our own families. The Pro-Life Union sponsors public events in order to raise awareness about abortion and human dignity and offers training and materials for those interested in sidewalk counseling. The relationships we have built with leaders in government, religious institutions, community organizations and the business community are invaluable to building a culture of Life.

The most important asset to our organization is people. We need others to help us spread the message of life. Please contemplate becoming involved in one of these ways:

- Our Memorial Cross Program
- Respect Life Representative at your Church
- Participate in Saturdays for Life

### Saturdays for Life

Please consider making a commitment to pray at an abortion facility. This activity is a powerful witness against the injustice of abortion. As long as abortion facilities remain open, the pro-life community will be there to reach out to mothers. Our faith and our humanity demand that we make one last plea to save women from the tragic decision of abortion.

If you have never prayed outside of an abortion facility before, and you do not know what to expect, we assure you that the time spent praying and giving witness is a time of amazing grace. A coordinator has been assigned to each Saturday and Sidewalk Counselors are present. Please commit to one Saturday this year. Don't stand on the sidelines while the greatest assault on human dignity in our time is taking place on the streets of our cities and towns. Contact us to learn more!

## Adoption and Possibility *by Anne Hinnegan*



I have been blessed to be a part of the Pro-Life Union for 28 years. I have told my story to very few people. The compassion that I've experienced in the pro-life movement has made me realize that my experience is not one to be ashamed of, but one to share. About six months ago, in an impromptu moment, I told my mentor and good friend, John Stanton, my adoption story.

At 16, I found out that I was pregnant. I felt alone and embarrassed and was terrified to tell my parents, but when I finally did, they reacted in the sweetest of ways and I knew they loved me unconditionally – flaws and all. Abortion never occurred to me, but in the seventies, it was still taboo to be 16 and pregnant. My mom found a home for unwed mothers in Florida, and while it was hard to leave my friends and family, it was comforting to be with girls that were facing the same situation and the same big questions. Some of these girls chose to parent, while others chose adoption. I wanted the baby to have what I had growing up: a big loving family and a mom and dad who would love her unconditionally.

On May 15<sup>th</sup>, 1977, a baby girl came into this world. I chose not to see her because I didn't want to waver in my adoption decision. But, my mom held her and told me that she was beautiful. I moved back to Pennsylvania and met and married my husband in 1983. We are blessed with three extraordinary sons, the joys of my life. All these years later, I can see clearly how parenting would have taken me on a different path. I don't think my husband and I would have met and I wonder if my boys would have been born. Adoption allowed me to live the life God had planned for me. It opened the door for my marriage, my sons and my involvement in the pro-life movement.

I became involved in the pro-life movement after my second son was born. I understand the fears, anxieties and concerns of women facing unplanned pregnancies. It is a blessing to be part of an organization that helps women choose life for their children and it is especially heartwarming to hear about other women who selflessly give the gift of life to a couple through adoption.

I often think about my daughter and wonder if she is now a mom herself or maybe a musician like her birthmother. Many years ago I surrendered her to the Lord and I pray that she is happy and healthy and the joy of her parents' lives. I'm grateful that adoption allowed her to experience life and God's plan for her.

I was so excited when Ryan Bomberger agreed to be our guest speaker at the 2014 Stand Up For Life Dinner. Ryan was adopted as a child and today is an outspoken advocate for the unborn and the gift of adoption. Ryan's message will resonate with all of us, but those of us who have been touched by adoption will be especially proud.

## Save the Date!

Our annual *Stand Up For Life Dinner* will be held this year on Sunday, November 23<sup>rd</sup> at the Philadelphia Sheraton. Our guest speaker this year will be Ryan Bomberger. Ryan's biological mother was raped, yet courageously chose to continue her pregnancy, giving him life. He was adopted as a baby and was raised in a loving, Christian family of 15, with siblings of varying ethnicities. Ryan founded the Radiance Foundation, which brings to light the staggering rate of abortion in the Black community, as well as the subject of adoption.

The Dinner gives us a chance to gather with pro-lifers for a night of fellowship and fun. Ticket prices are \$60 per person. A table of ten will be discounted to \$550. Student tickets are just \$40.

There are various ways to support our annual Dinner. Contact us for more information and consider sponsoring a student, placing an ad in our attractive Program Book or joining us for the evening.



**Ryan Bomberger**  
Radiance Foundation

*Support the Pro-Life Union of Greater Philadelphia's mission through a secure, recurring online monthly gift. Visit [www.rally.org/prolifeunion](http://www.rally.org/prolifeunion) to learn more, meet other supporters, and share our work with others.*