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### All Life is Sacred

Catholics are taught that all life is sacred, because God has created every human being in His own image and likeness. For God says, “Let us make man in our own image, according to Our likeness...” (Genesis 1:26). From the very beginning of time, therefore, each and every human being has been created with human dignity and free will, and reflects God simply by existing. We are taught this, and we believe this, but we may not often wonder what we would say if we were questioned or faced with an argument that contradicted our beliefs.

Picture this: you and a friend are talking. She says that she needs to tell you something, and she knows that she can trust you, because you have always been there for her. What follows shakes you inside as a million thoughts rush through your head- she has just told you that she is pregnant. She never meant for it to happen, but it did. She is going to have an abortion and that should deal with it. She does not want anyone else to know, because she does not want to risk any more embarrassment or shame. I can definitely say that I might be tempted to automatically admonish her for thinking that an abortion would help. I might want to tell her that she cannot have an abortion, because it would hurt her. Our inclination in such a circumstance might be too critical.

An abortion would in fact hurt her, but stepping out of the situation, I think my advice would be much more influential for her and the baby if I gave her a calm, positive response. I would start off by telling her thank you, because I was glad that she could trust me with such a delicate matter. Then, I would proceed to ask her why she had decided to have an abortion, rather than giving birth to the baby and taking on the amazing role of a mother. One objection that she might make would be that

“she is not ready to be a mother”. I would tell her that her parents, family, and I are all here to help her. I would tell her that, although this situation seemed difficult, God would bring something great out of it. I would tell her that there are other options, too, such as adoption. I would take this approach, because it seems that people who are in such circumstances do not reply as positively when criticized, scolded, or reprimanded. I would be straightforward and kindly tell her that I do not support abortion, because I believe it is ending a life, but I would also ensure her that I still love her and I will not abandon her. I would tell her that God loves her, too, and that He has created the precious child inside of her in His own image. The child belongs to Him, and if she would only give the child the gift of life, God would provide for everything else.

These are just a few examples of what my witness would be to her. I would answer my friend with kindness, love, respect, and support. I would explain to her the negative effects of abortion, and the positive outcomes of giving birth to her child. I would console her and tell her not to worry, because the Lord would sustain her in this time. I would tell her that I would be praying for her and the child, and if she ever wanted to talk or had any other questions, I would always be there for her. In these situations, we must answer with love. “A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger” (Proverbs 15:1). Therefore, in all things, “be on your guard, stand firm in the Faith, live like men, be strong! Let everything that you do be done in love.”

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### Respect Life Essay

Every person's life is sacred and should be treated with respect and dignity. The life a woman carries in her womb is precious, from the moment of conception to natural death. As Catholics, we should always be ready to defend our faith and beliefs, especially on the subject of abortion. Many different people have many different views and opinions, but we are still supposed to respect them and treat them with love as brothers and sisters in Christ.

Saying that you are prolife also means that you are pro woman. At any time in our lives, a best friend could ask us for our help. Your friend did not mean to get pregnant, but she did. She is considering abortion and she asks what you think. So many things are filling her mind. *Why choose life? How will having this baby affect me? Am I making the right decision?* The simple things you say to your friend could impact her, and the baby's, entire life. Reprimanding her and admonishing what she has done will not help. Showing that you care and explaining how every child is a gift from God might help.

Choosing life is accepting and saying yes to God. Having an abortion is avoiding the responsibility and rejecting His priceless gift. Every time an abortion is performed, it is deliberately taking away an innocent baby's life. Most people do not realize what an abortion is. They don't know that, all in a couple months, the fetus had formed arms, legs, a head, and its heart is already beating.

I would tell my friend about the fetus in her womb. *Is it alive? What makes it alive?* When the baby starts to practice breathing patterns for the first time, it is in the womb, about eight weeks after conception. Genesis 2:7 says, "The Lord God

breathed life-giving breath into his nostrils and the man began to live.” As soon as the baby takes their first breath, they are alive.

I would approach my friend with kindness and show that I would always be there for her. I would help her and her baby whenever she needed me. She should know that the priceless gift in her womb is not hers to take away from the world. God sent the baby to her and hoped she would accept the child with love. “Children are a gift from the Lord; they are a reward from Him.” Psalm 127:3

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## RESPECT LIFE ESSAY

“If a friend told me that she wanted to have an abortion, what would I say/do to help her to choose life?”

Since I am only twelve years old, if I heard that a friend of mine had an unplanned pregnancy and wanted to have an abortion, I would not be able to drive her there, but could offer places where she could go. One of the places is the Pregnancy Resource Center, Birthright, which offers love, support, and friendship to women going through hard times such as this. Birthright, as advertised on their website, is: “free, non-judgemental, and confidential, and is located right in Manchester, on 247 South Main Street. Other places, such as “Option Line” have 24-hour contact centers, and their top priority is to “ reach, rescue and renew women who are abortion-vulnerable”.

The Year of Mercy just ended, so I would not want to pass judgement on her, but I can explain to her that all human life is sacred and that as Pope St. John Paul II says, “ the direct killing of an innocent human being is always gravely immoral..” If my friend was still not certain, I would also offer Adoption resources, which at least offer the baby a chance at life.

Although I may not be able to change this particular girl’s mind, I have done things with my family that might have a positive impact on people like her. We have all prayed outside of Planned Parenthood and have participated in the March For Life, where hundreds of thousands March for the end of abortion. I have also made signs promoting life, and have participated in Breakfasts for Babies, bake sales, and peaceful, prayer vigils at our former parish as well. All of these attempts were to educate people about the sanctity of life, and to hopefully prevent abortions.

I think that the main, and most important thing I can do is to pray. I can pray for my friend, and for the little child that is growing inside her; that she can choose the right path for her child, that is the path of life!

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### RESPECT LIFE ESSAY

Every day hundreds of babies are born. Every one of them is unique, one may be colicky or another may have jaundice. They all have one thing in common, a soul. It is what makes us human. It is what causes us to unite and be different all at the same time. The reason being; a soul is a gift from God not from our parents. A great way of knowing that babies are a gift from God is in Jerimias 5:1 when he says, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you" (Catholic Online). Every person should know that any gift from God; should be treated with the up most respect. However not everyone recognizes the fact, that a baby is precious and a gift from God. Therefore they have no problem in killing God's Gift through the process of abortion. According to the Abortion Counter there are about 38 million abortion this year, this translates to about 94,000 abortions a day (Number of abortions...). Even worse is the fact that the numbers just keep growing. It is so sad to see that a gift from God is being treated this way. For the reason that we are hurting God's gift of life, we should refrain from abortion. .

Most people do not give much thought as to the process of abortion. It may be in part because our society is so desensitized. Further, we make it so easy to take a couple of pills, contingent that the mother to be is between 2-12 weeks along. And voila the fetus is gone!

Not all abortions are the same. There are seven different types of abortions (Types of Abortions...). As most methods may not hurt the mother, they all kill the unborn baby. The most cruel abortion method is Hysterectomy Abortion as described by Advise & Aid which is a pregnancy center says, "This is the removal of an unborn child by cutting open the abdomen and uterus, and killing the unborn child prior to removal" (Types of Abortions...). Even the pregnancy center calls this killing. As you can see this method is much different from the other however the outcome is the same, death. This just truly shows that if people are desperate enough they will do anything, even kill.

Some people have the misconception that it is fine to have an abortion during the first couple of weeks because the “baby” is not there. That is not true, a lot of women who experience pregnancy have shared that their bodies have changed even during the first week of conception. They become more sensitive to smell and taste, but the most obvious symptom is fatigue (Lee). This just shows that the miracle of life does not happen without signals. A different point of view of how a baby lets you know that it is alive and growing. I like whenever you pet a cat it purrs; telling you it likes being petted. It works the same way with a baby but without the need to pet it. A woman who has not the desire to be pregnant may not feel that way. However she must keep in mind what is said in 1 Corinthians 10:13 “... You can trust that God will not let you be put to the test beyond your strength...”( Catholic Online).

In the introduction I mentioned that every person and unborn child has a soul and how we know that it is a gift from God. The best analogy for this is from my youth minister, Brandon, when he said babies DNA comes from his/her mom and dad, but those are just character traits. God is the one who gives the baby the ability to feel love, hatred, compassion and the ability to choose right from wrong. That is why a baby truly is God’s Gift.

Today, many women look at their life from a very narrow perspective of a job carrier, their fashion, their bodies, just to name a few. They view those things as their center of their lives. Unfortunately, they view a baby as an unsightly accessory that would alter their lives not for the better. A baby would impact the material life style, to some women this seems like the end of the world. In the eyes of the world, Our Mother had the not so perfect mother-to-be experience. Mary had many struggles once Gabriel told her that she was pregnant. At that time, to be pregnant and not married, meant that she is very likely to be stoned to death. She would have lost her family and her friends; because back then you do not want to be affiliated with someone who is pregnant and not married. She would have to stay almost all the time in doors so that no one would see that she is pregnant. At that moment Mary was scared but did the one thing that a lot of women forget, she trusted in God. She knew that, God had a plan. And then she was married to Joseph that is when everything changed, for the better.

Next time you or someone you know goes to have an abortion think of how you are not only hurting the baby but also God's gift. And even though you do not notice a belly, there are changes that point to God's miracle of life. Whenever you think of a baby, think of how the baby is a gift from God not a curse.

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## RESPECT LIFE ESSAY

If a friend told me that she wanted to have an abortion, to help her choose life I would remind her that God has a plan. Everything happens for a reason, and though you may not mentally or physically be ready for what life has in store for you, God is there to help you. Sometimes life surprises you, but He knows that you are ready for this, even if you do not think so yourself. Some people unfortunately are not able to bare children of their own, so you should not take that ability for granted. Events that may seem like a mistake in this moment could quite possibly turn out to be one of the greatest parts of your life. But if you choose to stop in the middle of that journey, you will never know. Perhaps you feel like you're not financially ready, that you're too young or don't want to raise the child alone. But we cannot see the future, and we are completely unaware of all of the amazing possibilities that can come of your life by choosing life. It's probably going to be a long and scary journey, but most things are. Through God and the Holy Spirit, anybody can find the strength and courage to persevere and do what they know is right. As long as you believe in yourself, with the help of your friends, family and God, you can go through with the pregnancy and bring a wonderful human being into this world.

JACINTA HOGAN

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## RESPECT LIFE ESSAY

Every human, both born and unborn, has the right to life. This right is given by God at the moment of conception, when the soul enters the body. No human has the right to deprive another human of this right because it is a God given right. Every human is given this right making all humans equal.

This right is extremely important because it means that unborn babies within the womb must be treated with the same dignity and respect as people outside of the womb. Pregnancy at times may seem inconvenient; however, a mother has a duty to uphold the right of her child. Abortion is a common procedure in which an unborn child is murdered in the womb. Abortion is unjust because the baby's God given right is being taken from him or her by people.

Inconvenience is no excuse for death. For example, if a man were to be blocked from his route to work due to a peacefully planned assembly, he cannot deprive the people of their right to peaceful assembly due to his inconvenience. He must find another route. If a mother does not want to give birth to her baby, there are other options for her. If the mother has an illness or disability, has a tough living situation, or is financially challenged, then the child can be put up for adoption or placed in the care of a relative. If the mother wants to raise the child but has difficulties, there are organizations and people who can help her support the child.

However difficult a situation may seem, God will not abandon his people to make unjust decisions. God would not give humans the right to life if it was an impossible right to protect. This right to life is given to all people at the moment of conception. Since this right is given by God, no person or government has the right to take a life. Abortion is the most

unjust way to kill a human because the child is unborn and has had no time to live on its own in the outside world.

We as humans have the duty to protect the lives of all peoples.

NATHAN KEARNEY

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### **CHOOSE LIFE**

If one of my friends told me that she wanted to have an abortion, I would immediately ask Jesus to help me find the best words to use to communicate my thoughts and feelings in a gentle and loving way. My words need to come from the Holy Spirit.

After lots of prayer, I would sit with my friend and share with her. First, I would explain how sacred human life is. Sacred means that it belongs to God, it is his property. God gives us the gift of life, so only he can take it back from us. God alone is Lord over life and death. Every child from the moment of conception on has a right to life. If my friend chose to have an abortion, not only would she be killing the child, but she would also be killing "herself." She would suffer significant emotional guilt and stress for the rest of her life. Also, having an abortion would be contributing to society's sad culture of death and would be breaking the 5<sup>th</sup> Commandment (Thou shall not kill) . I know it would be very difficult for my friend to hear these things, but abortion is not a topic to tip-toe around. I would need to speak the TRUTH to her and show her the LIGHT.

I would also share with her the many services and options available to help her. Catholic Charities, Birthright, and any Catholic Priest would be great people to talk to. They would help counsel her and provide her with the resources necessary during this uncertain time. I would offer to go with her to these places as a support. If my friend was unable to raise a child emotionally or financially, she could put the child up for adoption. This would make a family who cannot have their own child very joyful.

Finally, I would emphasize the power of prayer. I would tell her that everything in life happens for a reason. And all things work together for good. Praying to Mary, the Mother of Mothers, will help her find the good in all of this. I would pray this prayer with her, "Dearest Mary, I look to you now for the help of your maternal love. You understand my trials as an expectant mother. You bore Jesus in your womb. You know the doubts and anxieties that beset me; you know the bodily suffering I endure. Like you, may I turn all these sorrows into joy. You overcame anxiety by a loving trust in God; you overcame doubt by gentle resignation to his will. Your motherhood lifted your mind above earth and kept it close to God. So speak to Jesus now with me, beloved Mother, as I seek prayerfully to learn to bare the trials of motherhood with joy." (Mothers' Manual) With lots of love and prayer, I am confident that my friend will CHOOSE LIFE.

END

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## RESPECT LIFE ESSAY

Saint Marks Church is the parish community that I have grown up in, and am now a confirmed member of. As a part of this Catholic community, it is important to pass down and be an example of good moral values to others. Those values include things from simply having good manners to following the Ten Commandments. Another key part of being a Catholic that I am so proud of is our respect for life and the values of life. Life is a gift that is praised in our community, and life is what makes up our community.

Preserving life means not only caring to protect those with voices, but working to protect those without ones as well. From animals to those not on Earth quite yet it is the mission of any Catholic to help those in need. So, if a friend were to ask me what to do in the case of an abortion I would tell them all of the great things my faith has guided me through. Whether my friend is Catholic or not does not matter, as hope and faith course through the veins of every living being. Including those who are not quite on this Earth yet. Talking to my friend and reminding them of all the great features that life has to offer. Also, that everything happens for a reason so that the miracle of life she is about to give is no mistake. Another way to guide my friend to make a pro-life decision would be to relate to someone who has gone through a similar experience. There are many women in the world who have been in a similar situation I am sure, and have chosen to share their story with others. From the internet, to social media, to the television the sources providing pro-life stories could be endless. Lastly, I would tell my friend with confidence to trust in their faith and to choose to hopefully save a life. Life is a gift that only love can grant. Therefore it is the love through friendship, family, and faith that will guide my friend to in the end to not get an abortion.

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## RESPECT LIFE ESSAY

If a friend told me they were going to get an abortion, I would tell them that they are breaking one of the Ten Commandments. Thou shall not kill. This is a commandment that is more serious. Although a baby is not in the world yet, they are still alive. A baby's heart is beating about three weeks into the pregnancy. A beating heart is one sure sign of life.

I would also tell them to think about what could happen if their baby stayed alive. All great people started out as a baby. Their baby could become the next president of the United States, a famous musician, or an artist. They could do something amazing within their life, like save someone else's life. They could rescue pets. None of this will happen , though, if you kill them. Those people will die, because your son or daughter was never born, and will never save their lives. Also, they will not carry on the family name or traditions through the next generation.

All of these bad things will happen, because you decided to get an abortion. Trust God, He will show you the way through this. He will always be by your side. Believe in Him and everything will get better. It may not get better right away, but it will soon.