

Why I Am Pro-Life, by Bishop William Waltersheid¹

As Catholics, there is a question that each of us must ask of ourselves – “Why am I Pro-Life? I often reflect on and pray about this pivotal question in my life. Here are some fundamental reasons that I can affirm that I am Pro-Life. They are straight-to-the-point, not argumentative, and right from my heart.

1/ I am Pro-Life because I am Pro-Child. Whatever words a person uses to describe abortion – women’s health care, reproductive health care, termination of a pregnancy – the truth is that abortion is the killing of a human being, a child at that. The most vulnerable person of all is a child in the womb who is cannot speak up and ask for help or defense. Because the unborn child is tiny and weak, he or she cannot fight off the one who is seeking to end his or her life. However, the child not yet born, is absolutely a son or daughter created in the image and likeness of God. Each child has been given specific gifts by God to live a life in which he or she gives and receives love. No one has the right to deny a person this gift of life, this child is to be embraced and loved.

2/ I am Pro-Life because I am Pro-Science. Scientific research has provided ample evidence that the unborn child is a separate person from the moment of conception. Each child is a distinctively different and separate human person from the mother who carries this tiny person in her womb. The unborn child has a distinct genetic structure (DNA). Every cell in the mother’s body has a set of chromosomal characteristics that is entirely distinct from every cell in the baby’s body. The unborn child may have a different sex (mothers, who are female, may carry a male or female child). The unborn child frequently has a blood type other than the mother’s. The unborn child can be of a different race from the mother. The unborn child can die without the mother dying. The conception of a child in a mother’s womb begins a process that culminates in its leaving the mother’s body to live its’ own life. No organ or part of a woman’s body can do this. The tiny human person in a mother’s womb may not be killed at the whim or decision of another. The vastly improved quality and accuracy of ultrasound of unborn children shows that there is no doubt that these are human persons who have inherent dignity, worth, and the right to live. Just ask a mother or a father who sees for the first time the ultrasound of their unborn child. They have no doubt that this is a child. Most often their heart is filled with love and the desire to love this child to birth. Science has confirmed my commitment to be uncompromisingly Pro-Life.

3/ I am Pro-Life because I am Pro-Woman. There is a lie propagated today claiming that abortion is health care for women and that abortion is the answer to the challenge of a pregnancy in the difficult situations in a woman’s life. The absolute opposite is the truth. Abortion does not provide a cure or health care for women. Rather, abortion degrades women, treating their fertility as a defect or a disease. Abortion enables men to objectify, use and then leave women with no support or true love when they need it the most. Abortion never empowers women. Instead, it violates them physically, emotionally, and spiritually. They often suffer the rest of their lives from shame, guilt, and emotional pain. Abortion contributes to lives of rejection, depression, anger, and feelings of worthlessness for women. This allows them to be further objectified and exploited. Abortion has nothing to do with health for women. It is cold, heartless, and destructive. Who has recounted this to me? Women themselves, over and over again. I am Pro-Life because I cherish and respect women too much to allow them to be so hurt.

4/ I am Pro-Life because I am Pro-Justice and Pro-Mercy. Every single human person is entitled to equal protection under the law. The most fundamental of human rights is the right to life. If a person is denied the right to life, then no other right has any meaning or purpose. We must not be elitist or discriminatory. All people have the right to live, not just those who are already born. Just because a person is tiny and hidden, that person must not be denied this most fundamental right to live. We are called to recognize that the mercy of the Father has come to us in Jesus, who was conceived in His Mother’s womb and was born as a tiny child. After we have received this mercy in Jesus, who forgives, heals, and saves, we must pour out this mercy, especially to the

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weakest and the most vulnerable—certainly among these are women in challenging pregnancies and preeminently those who are tiny, weak, and voiceless—the unborn in the womb. Because I am Pro-Justice and Pro-Mercy, I defend the lives of the unborn and their mothers.

5./ I am Pro-Life because I am Pro-Culture and Family. In those countries in central and Eastern Europe which were dominated for decades by Communist ideologies espousing the policy of abortion on demand, there is a severe demographic problem. They are plagued by death rates that significantly exceed their birth rates. If this trend continues, it is estimated that they will not survive past 2080. Their demographic winter has been largely impacted by the millions of babies aborted over the years. Some countries that are currently Communist, such as mainland China, Cuba, and North Korea, are in disastrous straits for the same reason. Countries in Western Europe that have embraced a radically materialistic, secularized way of life in which abortion is embedded as a common practice—such countries are challenged with prospects of the same bleak future. Abortion strikes also at the heart of the nuclear family, betraying the fruit of marital love, a child that gives hope and life for the future. Untold damage has been done to the nuclear family as well as the culture by abortion. We must reject abortion, because we want our Christian culture and our families to continue making contributions to global peace and well-being. We may cry out God asking, “Why do you not send, O Lord, someone to find the answer to cure, cancer or to prevent the next pandemic? Why do you not send someone who can solve the problem of violence in the Middle East or in Ukraine?” The answer from heaven may be, “I did, but you aborted them?”

6./ I am Pro-Life because I am Pro-Love. Our Lord said, “Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (Jn 15:13). I believe that just as Jesus Christ laid down His life for all of us, I am called as a Catholic, as a priest and as a bishop, to lay down my life for my unborn brothers and sisters and for their mothers. I will never stop advocating for them until God calls me at the end of my earthly life, because He has loved all of us and has called us to love as He desires. For in the end, it is love that is victorious, not violence and killing of the most vulnerable.

Please embrace and promote the Church’s constant teaching on the Gospel of Life. Please support the Pro-Life groups that do such selfless and empowering work in our diocese. I encourage you to get involved in their work and to support them through volunteering. A few of them are:

40 Days for Life: www.40DaysForLifePittsburgh.com

- Nikki Bruni: (412) 926-9413 or nbruni@40daysforlifepgh.com

Sidewalk Advocates for Life: www.SidewalkAdvocates.org

- Andrew McCauley: (412) 403-1809 or andrewSAFLPGH@protonmail.com

Walking with Moms in Need:

- Diocese of Pittsburgh (412) 456-5646 or Deacon Frank Bursic (412) 793-4511
- For a good example of parish website content, visit Saint Aidan’s website:
- <https://www.saintaidanparish.org/walking-with-moms-in-need>

People Concerned for the Unborn Child (“PCUC”):

- Executive Director Nikki Bruni: nbruni@40daysforlifepgh.com
- www.pcuc.org – for links to local pregnancy medical centers, housing, and other services to help the parents of unborn babies, before and after birth

My dear brothers and sisters, pray and fast for the end of abortion, for unborn children, for the support of expectant mothers, and for the strengthening and the revitalization of family life.

Our Lady, Mother of the Creator and Author of All Life, pray for us!

Most Reverend William J. Waltersheid
Auxiliary Bishop of Pittsburgh