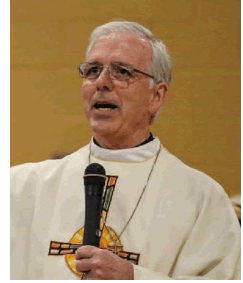


RESPECT LIFE FOR OUR CHURCH & OUR MARIANIST FAMILY LET US STAND TOGETHER!

by Timothy M. Kenney SM

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Our church invites us during the month of October to *celebrate life* and to *be life* for each other. This is an invitation for all of us as Catholics and as Christians to reflect on the many “life issues” that face our country, our world, and our Marianist Family. All of us as gospel people must choose our level of involvement and educate ourselves around the complex “life issues” of our day:

- racism and the many forms of discrimination
- the elderly and the chronically ill
- the undocumented and refugees
- the incarcerated
- sexism
- the poor
- domestic violence
- the unborn

to name but a few “life issues!”

I often remind myself of the beautiful quote by Helen Keller who had to face her own “life issues” when she stated, “...*alone, we can do so little, together we can do so much.*” Our Marianist Family has so much potential when we act together, when we stand together through our institutional ministries *and* through our own internal structures that provide us with opportunities to be change agents for tomorrow. As a Family we need to talk with one another much more about our gospel values and how we can and do make a difference now and in the future.

One “life issue” that I have tried to face over the years is my own commitment to *stand up for the unborn*. I have attended many lectures and presentations on fetal development, studies of the brain, and on the issue of abortion. The conversation around abortion and the pain so many young people go through is not an easy one. These conversations and some of my own personal experiences have enabled me to find ways to help our young people to take a stand for life and to hear the call to be **Generation Life!** Indifference is one of our greatest enemies. There are many young people today who want to hear the call of the Old Testament prophets to “Choose Life!” I have personally done this in a number of ways:

- by creating educational programs for our young people on the importance of life;
- by bringing teenagers together for dialogue and prayer;
- by inviting students to participate in the national “40 Days for Life” program;
- by praying in silent protest in front of Planned Parenthood clinics;
- by participating in the annual March for Life where hundreds of thousands of people march in Washington, DC to stand together;
- by visiting Holocaust museums and engaging in conversation with survivors of concentration camps;
- by giving 600 boys a baby bottle and challenging each of them to fill it with loose change and money to help purchase an ultra sound machine;
- by making over 700 wooden crosses and creating a cemetery for the unborn during the month of November;
- by encouraging people not to condemn and not to cast stones but to find ways to help a person who has an unplanned pregnancy and to grow in compassion;
- by exploring alternatives that will help a young person to keep their child rather than terminating the pregnancy and taking the life of the unborn.

What an awesome witness it has been to see so many young people come together, who choose not to stand on the sidelines and embrace the enemy of our day called “indifference” but to stand together and desire to be a part of the conversation!

The Catholic Church and the Marianist Family need living authentic witnesses, people of life and integrity to stand up for gospel values and to speak to the “life issues” of our day. We must be intentional and act with moral integrity. I am very hopeful and enthusiastic as I look to the future.



Students from Vianney H.S. (St. Louis) taking part in the annual March for Life in Washington, DC
Fr. Tim Kenney on knees in front