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**Knights and Dames of Malta Pro-Life Mass**

Pope John Paul II Cultural Center  
Washington, DC  
January 2, 2008

A few weeks ago, after the College Football regular season ended, Tim Tebow, an outstanding player from the University of Florida, was presented with the Heisman Trophy in New York. I'm sure his parents had many reasons to be proud of their 6'3", 235 lbs. son but one was more important than all the others. The parents revealed that when Pam, Tim's mother, was just a few months pregnant she contracted a serious infection which persuaded her doctor to advise her that it would be in her best interests to abort the baby. She, backed up by her husband, refused and some months later delivered a perfectly healthy boy. We are grateful for their witness to life as I'm sure Tim is grateful for the life they gave him.

Incidents such as this prompted Dr. Brian Clowes (Human Life International e-Newsletter, Vol. 1, 96, Dec. 14, 2007) to construct an unusual study on the demographic impacts of abortion based on the distribution of professions and careers in the U.S. as reported in the 2007 census. These figures were matched to the nearly 49 million legalized abortions in our nation since 1972. He estimated that because of abortion, the US has lost:

- 12 other Heisman Trophy winners (to stay with our introductory story of Tim Tebow)
- 2 US Presidents
- 7 Supreme Court Justices
- 102 US Senators and 589 Congresspersons
- 31 Nobel Prize laureates
- 328 Olympic medalists
- Almost 135,000 physicians & surgeons
- Over 392,000 nurses
- well over a million teachers
- 6,852 priests and over 11,000 sisters and, of course, almost 25 million men and 25 million women!

This Mass, one of many in this nation today, is organized to mark the anniversary of the Roe v Wade decision. The annual March for Life will further emphasize the fact that we desire our nation to protect the unborn rather than preside over their destruction. We have in many ways perverted nature by ensuring that the womb has become the most dangerous place for the unborn child. We have allowed the cynical and barbaric procedure known as "partial birth abortion" – cynical, because at the very moment the child is ready to face the challenges of the world where we, in God's providence, hope and love and dream, it's life is terminated, we might say, "execution-style." This is all in the name of the all-American sounding phrase, PRO CHOICE, a contradiction in terms if there ever was one because no choice is given to the unborn child. For nine months the child has experienced a steady growth preparing itself for life

outside the womb and if it could articulate its greatest need it would surely scream, "I want to live."

I became an American citizen the hard way: I studied for it. I well remember the stirring words of the Declaration of Independence, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness...." I often wonder what happened to this resounding proclamation in support of "Life."

Whether or not, Roe v Wade is ever reversed, our greatest task is to restore the CULTURE OF LIFE to this country. We must reconvince ourselves and our families and our institutions that life is sacred and that life is always sacred. We must change the minds and hearts of those who are indifferent to this debate or who think that some so-called "right to privacy" gives them the right to destroy the lives of others. In the history of this great country it is not unknown that the rights of others have been curtailed or denied but eventually justice has prevailed. Yesterday's national holiday, that of Martin Luther King, Jr. is a stark reminder of this fact. We must never give up, we must never be silent as long as the rights of the unborn are trampled upon. But it must not just only be our voices of protest: we have to generate a vast tsunami of support from the millions of others whose minds and hearts must be convinced that life is paramount.

Can it be done? Of course it can! I can readily understand those who are tired of the fight and even the few who have concluded that the cause is hopeless. But let me tell you something.

I once thought that in my lifetime that firstly, the fall of Communism; secondly, a man on the moon; or thirdly, a semblance of peace in Northern Ireland , would never happen.

But they did: these things happened –

It may interest you to know that Father Frank Pavone, the National Director of Priests for Life and who has devoted his whole priestly life to the cause of the unborn, recently penned a long article for Human Life Review with the optimistic title Ten Reasons Why We're Winning. The battle may be a long way from being over but his Motives of Credibility, as he calls them, are a wonderful boost to those who are weary from their support of this noble cause. His article is available on the internet and I urge you to read it just as I would urge you to read, cover to cover, the Bishops' latest edition of Forming Consciences For Faithful Citizenship and I advise that you do so before the major parties select their candidates for all the national state and local elections to be contested in November. Let's make sure we know what our principles are before we are inundated by the hype and the endless publicity cleverly crafted to capture our support.

Martin Luther King, Jr., right here in Washington , articulated his dream that one day African-American citizens would enjoy the civil rights accorded to whites in this country.

Maybe we can also dream that the day may soon arrive when boasting that one is pro-choice will be seen for what it really is, namely, a vote to permit the elimination of our unborn citizens, the most vulnerable segment of our community and those whom we are privileged to protect. Let us restore the culture of life!