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## March for life brings to mind new beginnings

by Bill Zalot



A woman holds an anti-abortion sign as demonstrators make their way down Michigan Avenue during the sixth annual Chicago March for Life Jan. 16 in Chicago. (CNS/Karen Callaway)

It is 5:45 in the morning and I don't even think the roosters are up. I began the day with reading scripture, meditation and prayer. That was about a half hour ago. We are at the start of a new year. It is an ideal time to reflect on our walk as Christians. I've often used the time leading up to the annual March for Life in Washington, D.C., as a day of preparation for the upcoming season of Lent.

We can use the time to examine our consciences, as well as to confess and repent of our sins, all of which is good preparation for the season of Lent, a time of self-sacrifice. This time around the March of Life is also a time when the poor and less fortunate should be close to our hearts. Are not the poor, the disabled, and the elderly alike the "treasures of the church" for which St. Lawrence died? They are indeed!

Lawrence of Rome's martyrdom took place in 258 A.D. and one wonders if the imperfect babies being slaughter by abortion have a hero in St. Lawrence, a deacon of the early Church; I say they would! He is a role-model for me.

Are you one of those treasures, one of those whom the world can not see as being worth anything? People may make us feel as such, but Lawrence realized "we are all children of God made in His own image and likeness." Therefore, we are to be treated with dignity and as the treasures God formed us to be. We all are formed "from dust and it is to dust we will return." St. Lawrence knew the soul is what makes humans different from all other species God has created. He also knew these less than perfect individuals could help others to encounter Christ in a more personal way.

Do you not think Blessed Mother Teresa or St. Francis of Assisi understood the value of the individuals they were serving? Their legacies tell us they did. They were and still are role-models for all of us. They are Christian heroes for the weak.

Several years ago I wrote a feature on Blessed Margaret of Castello. She was rejected by her parents due to her multi-disabilities. These limitations would make her a prime candidate for abortion if she were conceived today. The noble family she was born into didn't see her worth. According to a biographer "Blessed Margaret's faith and courage inspired others in the community to take pity on her and to help her survive." Despite her sufferings she never lost heart. A biographer put this way:

Discouragement was a word she did not know. She found strength in prayer, in daily Mass, in Holy Communion, and sought help from Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and St. Dominic.



This woman of courage was blind and dwarfed. She became a

Third Order Dominican. Many years ago, before I prayerfully protested in front of an abortion clinic, this woman's life story became my inspiration.

Health issues will keep me from going to; Washington, D.C., for the March for Life. Nevertheless, I can and will spend the day offering the hours I spend in my wheelchair for all the souls whose lives were changed by abortion.

I will also pray that this is a new beginning for them, and that they, and we, find Christ's peace and forgiveness through His mercy. I pray we can forgive ourselves and look to the Crucifix and realize the depth of Christ's love and Mercy. As St. Paul wrote, "He loved us to the point of death, death on a cross" (Philippians 2:6-11).

[Bill Zalot is a freelance writer from Levittown, Pa.]

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