



Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama

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Office of the Bishop

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Since the *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton* Supreme Court decisions of January 22, 1973, 57-58 MILLION American babies have been killed by abortion. About 2 babies are killed by abortion every single minute in our nation. Beyond *these* unrepeatable lives, *their* offspring will never exist, will never have the right which God intended for each of them – the Right to Life!

In July 2015, The Center for Medical Progress began to expose the horror of the harvesting and trafficking of aborted baby parts through a series of videos. At this point, the abortion industry has used court action to block the release of more videos; legal action is on-going. The videos have been verified to be accurate and original; they are also a publicity nightmare for the abortion industry, especially for Planned Parenthood, the major abortion provider and promoter in our nation, and the main aborted baby parts profiteer.

As the Cardinal Archbishop of Buenos Aires, Pope Francis steadfastly defended human life against every kind of abuse: he “comforted the afflicted and afflicted the comfortable.” Pope Francis continues to urge Catholics to persevere in their pro-life mission, even if “they persecute you, calumniate you, set traps for you, take you to court or kill you...No child should be deprived of the right to be born, the right to be fed, the right to go to school. No elderly person should be left alone, abandoned.”

Pope Francis calls all of us to become “agents of reform”, not only through *prayer*, but also through *action*. Each of us has a mission: each of us is called to change the world, to work for a Culture of LIFE, a culture forged by love and respect for the dignity of each human person. We can fulfill this challenge through public witness for the protection of human life at all stages through events such as **40 Days for Life Campaigns**, which will run from **February 10 (Ash Wednesday) through March 20 (Passion Sunday) 2016**. There will be 40 Days for Life campaigns in Birmingham, Huntsville, and Tuscaloosa in our diocese, in Mobile & Montgomery, and in hundreds of other locations throughout the USA and internationally.

I endorse the 40 Days for Life Campaign which has three components: *Peaceful and Prayerful Vigil* at abortion businesses; *daily Prayer and Fasting*; and *Community Outreach* to personally publicize the purpose of the 40 Days for Life to pastors and churches in your area, door-to-door neighborhood outreach, conversations with family, friends, and co-workers, and social media. Speakers are available for your parish through the local campaigns.

In Birmingham, the 40 Days for Life campaign will take place at Planned Parenthood, 1211 South 27th Place, daily, 7 am – 6 pm, in Huntsville at 3861 Sparkman Avenue, and in Tuscaloosa at 535 Jack Warner Parkway NE.

In spiritual solidarity with the 40 Days for Life, a **NOVENA OF MASSES** will be conducted in our Diocese from **March 1-9, 2016**. **All Priests and parishes are encouraged to offer one or more Masses during this time period specifically for the permanent closing of Planned Parenthood Birmingham, and for the conversion of its staff.** Three Novenas of

Masses previously offered for this abortion site provided a 9-month closure in 2014. This will be the fourth Novena of Masses for this Birmingham abortion business. Please pray that God will answer our prayer for its permanent closing!

"Respect for the dignity of the human person demands a commitment to human rights across a broad spectrum... Yet abortion and euthanasia have become preeminent threats to human dignity because they directly attack life itself, the most fundamental human good and the condition for all others. They are committed against those who are weakest and most defenseless, those who are genuinely 'the poorest of the poor'" [US Bishops, *Living the Gospel of Life*, 1998, n. 5].

Over 8000 babies die by abortion in Alabama every year; about 1 child dies in this state, by abortion, every single hour of every single day.

We are reminded in Proverbs 24: "You may say that it is none of your business, but God knows and judges your motives... He knows. And He will reward you according to what you do." [v.11-12]

For information about, and registration for, the **February 10 through March 20, 2016** 40 Days for Life Campaign in Birmingham, call (205) 305-0950, or visit Birmingham, <https://40daysforlife.com/local-campaigns/birmingham/>; Huntsville, <https://40daysforlife.com/local-campaigns/huntsville/>; Tuscaloosa <https://40daysforlife.com/local-campaigns/tuscaloosa/>; Mobile, <https://40daysforlife.com/local-campaigns/mobile/>; and Montgomery <https://40daysforlife.com/local-campaigns/montgomery/>

I invite all priests, and all Catholics in the Diocese of Birmingham to be "unconditionally pro-life" [EV, 28] with your time, talent, and treasure to spread the Culture of Life.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Robert J. Baker". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

Most Reverend Robert J. Baker, S.T.D.
Bishop of Birmingham in Alabama