



Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama

Post Office Box 12047
Birmingham, Alabama 35202-2047

2121 Third Avenue North
Birmingham, Alabama 35203
Telephone: 205-838-8322
Fax: 205-836-1910

Office of the Bishop

February 8, 2017

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

“Only those who are free can vote for slavery...only those who are born can vote for abortion.”
[quoted by Fr. Joseph Wolfe, 2016 DC March for Life]

Since the *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton* Supreme Court decisions of January 22, 1973, about **59 MILLION** American babies have been destroyed by abortion. About 2 babies are destroyed by abortion every single minute throughout our nation. In 2014, 8000+ babies died by abortion in Alabama -- 22 children -- a classroom full of children -- every single day. In 2015, 6000 babies died - a 30% decrease -- because the largest abortion business, in Tuscaloosa, was closed for 7 months. When abortion sites close, babies live!

Beyond *these* unrepeatable lives, *their* offspring will never exist, will never have the First Right which God intended for each of them -- the Right to Life!

Abortion is the greatest destroyer of human life in our world, and is a reflection of our national failure to meet our responsibility to respect, protect, and nurture every human life. 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]

Being prolife means we mourn the loss of babies, and care about the safety and health of their mothers, while simultaneously working to protect all mothers and babies. Pope Francis tells us that each of us has a mission: “*Let us be bearers of hope and continue to work to bring an end to abortion throughout the world, every day.*” [World Youth Day 2013]

We are called to live and work for the day when abortion will be unthinkable, when our constant dream that women and children will be safe from abortion will become a reality. We can fulfill this dream through grassroots public witness for the protection of human life at all stages during events such as **40 Days for Life** campaigns, which will run from **1 March through 9 April 2017**. There will be 40 Days for Life campaigns in Birmingham and Huntsville in our diocese, in Mobile and Montgomery, in 310+ other locations in the USA, and in 30 nations.

I endorse the 40 Days for Life Campaign. In our diocese, 40 Days for Life campaigns will take place at Planned Parenthood in Birmingham (1211 South 27th Place, 35205, daily, 6 am – 6 pm), and at West Alabama Women’s Center in Tuscaloosa (535 Jack Warner Pkwy NE, Tuscaloosa, AL 35404).

In spiritual solidarity with the 40 Days for Life, a **NOVENA OF MASSES** will be conducted in our Diocese, **1-9 March, 2017**. **All Priests and parishes are encouraged to offer one or more Masses during this time period specifically for the permanent closing of West Alabama Women’s Center in Tuscaloosa, and for the conversion of its staff.** Three Novenas of Masses previously offered for this abortion site provided a 7-month *closure* in 2015. This will be the fourth Novena of Masses for this Tuscaloosa abortion business. Please pray that God will answer our prayer for its ‘permanent’ closing.

For information about, and registration for, the **1 March through 9 April 2017** 40 Days for Life Campaign in Birmingham, call (205)305-0950, or visit <https://40daysforlife.com/local-campaigns/birmingham/> ; Huntsville, <https://40daysforlife.com/local-campaigns/huntsville/> ; Mobile, <https://40daysforlife.com/local-campaigns/mobile/> ; and Montgomery, <https://40daysforlife.com/local-campaigns/montgomery/> .

It is time for each of us to work and pray every day to end abortion in our nation! We cannot simply rely on courts, Congress, or the President to end abortion. We, the People *of Life*, are the

“antidote” to abortion when we stand for God’s Truths and Principles even in the face of insults, mockery, and persecution – when we are silent no more.

Let me close with this impassioned plea from Juana, one of our diocese’s Hispanic 40 Days for Life participants: *“Learning about abortion brought me great pain in such a way that it awoke in me a desire to leave the comfort of my silence and raise my voice... Those who do not help the victim, empower the oppressor... Please join us with an open heart, I ask, I beg... Let us work, let us live the experience of getting to work for the protection of Life!”*

I invite all priests, and all Catholics in the Diocese of Birmingham to “make abortion unthinkable” by praying and working every day to spread the Culture of Life!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Rmt 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