

Prayer Warrior Testimonial...



I was scared. Four months ago, I never would have admitted that, but I was. So I didn't go. And every Sunday, I saw it. I knew it was there and didn't even have to look, but I always did. I almost couldn't help it. There on the very last page of the bulletin it would jump off the black and white pages seemingly bigger than anything else. Pray at abortion clinic 10:30.

That's great they do that, I would think every week, but I can't go because... Take your pick of any number of reasons here. Trust me, I've been through most of them, but here's a few: Don't have the time. Don't have anybody to watch my 2-year old daughter. Don't want to see somebody I know. Don't want somebody I know to see me. Don't know what to say if somebody confronts me or even just asks me a question. Don't know what to pray, and if they pray the rosary, I can't remember exactly how it goes. It's too cold out. I don't want to hurt somebody's feelings or make them angry. I just need a day to rest and Saturday is it. Is it really going to make a difference if I go anyway or is it just a waste of time?

Week after week, I suffered from an attack of the CGBs, "Can't Go Because." Until finally, the Holy Spirit sent me the cure, the "But What Ifs." It hit me like a bag of bricks one Sunday. I'd had that same bad case of the CGBs when I saw some of our parishioners were going to the abortion clinic again, but this time the minute I'd think of a reason why I couldn't go, I'd immediately get a rebuttal. It went a little something like this:

Don't have the time...What if nobody ever has the time?

Nobody to watch my daughter...What if that same daughter asks you one day what you did to fight against abortion when it was legal?

Don't want to see somebody I know or somebody I know to see

me...So what if they do? What if that stops an abortion from happening or they join you in prayer?

Don't know what to say if I'm confronted...What if I tell you? Or what if you just say nothing?

Don't know what to pray...What if that doesn't matter? What if you learn as you go?

It's too cold out...What if you went anyway? Can you pray in the cold?

Don't want to hurt somebody's feelings...What if you do? What if it gives them at least a moments pause to consider life?

Is it really going to make a difference?...What if it does?

It was the last one that got me. What if it does? I couldn't shake that one off. What if it does? What if in some way God used me and me alone, my presence, my appearance, the sound of my voice, or my prayers and even just one woman got back into her car and went home? What if just one child could be saved because I went?

At the WomanCare clinic in Southgate a child's life can be taken through 24 weeks. These are babies fully capable of living on their own, but yet are legally permitted to be murdered because they are still inside their mother's womb. The doctor who owns this clinic owns 6 additional clinics across the state. They are the self-proclaimed, "full service leader in abortion care."

The sad truth is as many as 1 in 3 women, according to Planned Parenthood, will have an abortion. That means our very own mothers, sisters, daughters, granddaughters, nieces, friends could be the very ones who need our prayers the most. More than 48 million babies have lost their lives since Roe v Wade in 1973. To put that into perspective, that is substantially more American Casualties than in the Revolutionary, Civil, both World, Korean, Vietnam, Gulf, and Iraq Wars COMBINED. And in our state of Michigan alone, just in 2006, 25,636 babies did not get a chance to take their first breath. That's more than the entire undergraduate student body of U of M Ann Arbor. Only God knows what priests, doctors, teachers, scientists, poets, composers, athletes we have lost through the years.

Please prayerfully consider taking the time to come out and pray with Fr. Jim and your fellow parishioners on April 5th. This is a peaceful, prayerful vigil which only lasts about an hour. In just the 4 short months I have been going, I have already been blessed to see some small miracles, everything from a chance to talk to people who were inside or driving by, to bad weather delayed until after we finished our prayers, and even hot chocolate delivered to our mighty cold hands on a snowy day. Once we even saw the abortionist locked out of his own clinic, where he waited out in the snow listening to us pray until someone finally let him in. And I know, the prayer warriors who have

been standing strong, since before the thought even crossed my mind to go, have witnessed even more. Who knows? Maybe God is just waiting to work a miracle through you and only you, if only He had the chance.

...So I decided to go. After a lot of soul searching and inner battles, I just couldn't ignore that little tug I felt at my heart to go. I was finally going to pray at an abortion clinic, but I was still scared.

My next move was to try to convince everybody close to me to go too. I got a lot of strange looks, and ultimately a lot of no's, but I had made up my mind. I was going. I would do this by myself if I had to. When that first Saturday rolled around that I had committed to going, to my surprise I found it snowing and pretty hard. It must be a sign I thought, but shook it off in the next instant. Yes, I can pray in snow I told myself. As I began to pile layer after layer of clothing on, I noticed a knot had developed in my stomach and a million thoughts started running through my head. I just had no idea what to expect. I had seen the phone number of the lady at our parish who was heading up the prayer group and thought about calling to ask her, but just felt silly doing that. Looking back now, I know that Jill Brazier would have been thrilled to answer any questions about the Saturday morning prayer sessions and would have welcomed my call. But that day, I just didn't feel like I could pick up the phone.

So I grabbed my rosary on a hunch on my way out the door, and headed out. I drove the entire way in silence trying not to let my nerves get the better of me and trying to shake off or pray away all the different reasons why I should turn around and go home not the least of which was the snowy conditions which seemed to be getting worse the closer I got to the clinic.

But then it stopped, I can't remember for sure at what point it stopped, but I do know that as I sat there parked on the side street next to Womancare waiting to see who else would arrive or what would happen next, it wasn't snowing anymore. In fact, the entire time we prayed it only snowed a little bit and despite the cold, I felt warm. That knot in my stomach went away and has never returned, but instead has been replaced with a peaceful feeling I simply cannot seem to put into words. A feeling that I only seem to find when I am standing in front of that clinic.

If you have been considering joining us on April 5th, here are some things you might be interested to know:

You need only to bring yourself.

A sheet with prayers will be provided for you.

If you have a rosary, bring it. If not, your fingers will work too!

It only takes about an hour.

This is a peaceful, prayerful vigil.

You do not have to, in fact we recommend you do not try to confront people. Just pray. Remember, it's God who does the converting.

If you need a chair, something to drink, or a snack, bring it!

Check the weather and dress appropriately.

People will honk in support of you.

Yes, some people will yell things, but most of the time you can't hear or understand them over the prayers and the sound of the cars.

Sometimes people will walk up and ask questions about what we are doing. The important thing to remember is you don't have to talk to anybody if you don't want to. There will be other people prepared to do so if you can't, don't want to or just aren't ready yet.

You can drive yourself, or meet ahead of time at St. Mary's at 10:00.

If you drive yourself, there is a side street next to the clinic you can park on. Please do not park in the clinic's parking lot.

The address to the clinic is 14523 Northline Rd, Southgate 48195. It is right next to a 7-11 and close to Fort St.

We will joyously welcome your arrival!

Please remember if you just can't make it, that 10:30 am on Saturday mornings would be a great time to bow your head for just a moment wherever you are and whisper a silent prayer for the sanctity of human life in all of its precious forms, but especially for God's tiniest children who at that very moment are in desperate need of help.

I left the same way I came. In silence. The first thing I did, when I got back into the car was turn on the heat. The second was to thank God for all of the people who had stood their ground in front of the Womancare abortion clinic to pray for many years before I came for the first time that day.

Then, I cried. I cried because it had taken me so long to act, because I had ignored all those little tugs at my heartstrings to go, because I had by doing nothing, refused to help those who so desperately needed me. And at that moment, none of the reasons I had thought of to put off going seemed even remotely adequate compared to the crisis of what was happening at that clinic. I cried for the babies who would never get to take their first breath. I cried for the women who were losing their children, most of whom wouldn't realize it that day,

but in the years to come. I cried for the many people who think providing women with "a choice" is more important than protecting the life that resulted from a choice already made.

But when I left that day, my prayers had new life. Now, I could picture the abortionist driving up in his car to a crowded waiting room of visibly shaken women. I could see the women's faces, some peering through the blinds of the clinic as if looking for a reason to leave, encouraging me to keep praying. And after a subsequent visit, I would even have a name to pray for, given to us by a troubled mother.

I have gained much in my few trips to this clinic, a passion in my prayers, belief in their power, and a commitment to praying all which was so often lacking for me before. But I have lost too. I lost that fear of what others might say, do or think. And more importantly, I lost the ability to see abortion as anything other than what it is. I am incapable now of seeing it as a political topic or issue to be discussed and debated. Now, for me, the child in danger of abortion is a child regardless of the term someone chooses to use to describe him. And I can no longer see these women as women trying to make the best choice for their lives, but only as mothers in desperate need of help.

A few months after that first trip, in a way that I never expected, I learned just how intimately I was connected to abortion. Twenty-four years ago, 19 and scared, my sister-in-law walked through the doors of that very same Womancare clinic where I now stand in front of and pray. After searching through the phone book, she found Womancare listed at the top for free pregnancy tests. She went there with one of her sisters and a friend for support, but when the time came for her to go to the back for the test, she had to go there alone. When the nurse walked through the door with the results, without even pausing for a breath she said, "Your pregnancy test was positive. Do you know what you're going to do yet? Confused by the question, she asked the nurse what she meant. "We do abortions here."

Even though she was under tremendous pressure to have an abortion, my sister-in-law never went back to that clinic. Her son, now 24, is a computer whiz, a black belt working on his 2nd degree black belt in Choi Kwang Do, a martial arts instructor preparing to open up his own gym and a big brother to five. Although it was never easy, if you ask my sister-in-law, she will tell you "I just never ever thought there could be such happiness." How many other stories started in the same fashion 19 and scared, but end there? More than 48 million lives since

Roe v. Wade never had the chance to take shape. What would they have become? How would the lives of their mothers and fathers be different?

Today, on Divine Mercy Sunday, remember in your prayers this great nation. Just as St. Faustina prayed for her precious but troubled Poland, pray for our troubled land, that one day our nation will value all life as sacred and our laws will reflect this belief.

Thank you, women who are mothers! You have sheltered human beings within yourselves in a unique experience of joy and travail. This experience makes you become God's own smile upon the newborn child, the one who guides your child's first steps, who helps it to grow, and who is the anchor as the child makes its way along the journey of life. (Letter of Pope John Paul II to Women)