



August 2014

Guided by a commitment to the sanctity of every life, the Pro-Life Union fosters a cohesive vision and strategy for a Culture of Life in Greater Philadelphia. Our beliefs are incarnated in the context of the family and through service to those making the choice for life.

Pro-Life Mass & Summit

On Saturday July 19th, over 100 people gathered for the Semi-Annual Pro-Life Summit. The Philadelphia area is blessed with a wonderful network of groups offering alternatives and help to women in need. It was encouraging to hear about the work being done here in our community to offer women the help and support they need to make a life affirming decision. Special thanks to Amy Stoner and her colleagues from Catholic Social Services, Marie Joseph of the Community Women's Centers and Karen Hess from Alpha Pregnancy Services for their outstanding and compassionate service to women in need. To view the presentations online, visit www.phillycatholiclife.org.

"Thank you for being here..."

A few weeks ago, a young woman left a local abortion facility. She encountered someone outside praying who offered a brochure and help. As the girl left, her grandmother, who had taken her to the facility, spoke with the volunteer who had offered help and support. She simply said "Thank you for being here, she is going to have the baby." Our prayers and our witness make an impact every day, in so many lives. Please consider committing to one Saturday this year and join us as we advocate for women and their unborn children. Contact us here at the Pro-life Union.

Upcoming Events

- On **September 28th, 2014** the "**Rally for Life**" will be held in Center City at Love Park. The Pro-Life Community will stand together to celebrate the sanctity of life. The Rally begins at 3:30 p.m. and features national and local speakers, including Bobby Schindler, Fr. Frank Pavone, Brendan O'Morchoe and others. The Rally will be followed by a short walk and then a Holy Hour in the Cathedral of SS. Peter and Paul. The Event will conclude with the annual Archdiocesan Respect Life Mass at 6:30 p.m. with Archbishop Charles Chaput at the Cathedral.
- The St. Ignatius Social Justice Committee is holding a **Diaper Drive on Saturday, September 13th** from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. This is a great way to directly aid women in need. Diapers are expensive and mothers who are struggling are so very grateful for the extra support when they are given a package of diapers and other items. These small gifts also allow women to save a little bit of money to allocate to other needs for their family. If you live in the Bucks County area, please consider supporting this incredible event by dropping off diapers sizes newborn to 5, baby wipes, infant clothes, onesies, baby wash, baby shampoo, baby soap and towels or gift cards.
- **A Baby's Breath - Warminster Run for Life Saturday, October 4, 2014** - Come Run, Walk or Wheel at Tyler State Park, Rt. 332 (Richboro-Newtown Road) at One Trail Lane Richboro, PA 18954) 1-Mile Fun Run/Walk - 9:00 a.m.; 5K Run - 9:30 a.m.; Awards Ceremony - 10:30 a.m.

*The following is a listing of some area hospitals that do not perform abortions.
(based on Pa. Dept. of Health reports)*

Aria Health Frankford
Brandywine
Chester County
Pottstown Memorial
Riddle Memorial

Holy Redeemer
Jeannes
Chestnut Hill
Doylestown
Roxborough Memorial

Mercy Health System
Nazareth
Lower Bucks
Delaware County
Girard

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Stand Up for Life

Ticket orders are already starting to come into our office for the *Stand Up For Life Dinner*. So, mark your calendars and gather your table mates together. This year's Dinner will be held on Sunday, November 23rd at the Philadelphia Sheraton. Our guest speaker will be Ryan Bomberger, the founder of The Radiance Foundation, which brings to light the staggering rate of abortion in the Black community, as well as the subject of adoption. Ticket prices are \$60 per person. A table of ten will be discounted to \$550. Student tickets are just \$40.

Please consider placing a Patron ad in our Program Book. This is such a wonderful way to support our Dinner and also honor a deceased friend or family member, or celebrate and thank God for the many gifts He bestows.

Faith, Courage and Love (by Kimberly Carr)

In September of 2013, my husband, Shawn and I were overjoyed to learn we were expecting our second child. It was an uneventful pregnancy until the "routine" 20 week exam when a neonatologist came in the room speaking painful words that drove through my heart like a sharp object. "We see some things that are concerning to us and things may not be developing properly in your baby," she began. Those stinging words hung in the air as she then proceeded to comb through all the various issues our baby was dealing with at her very young age. One of the main issues was that she had a large pleural effusion on the left side of her lung which was compressing the heart and the repercussions of this rogue fluid meant the heart and lung development was being impeded.

At the end of the ultrasound we were told we had "options." Growing up Pro-Life, I knew that terminating the pregnancy was not an option. We returned for further ultrasounds over the coming weeks and things were growing bleaker. We were sent to CHOP's Fetal Diagnostic and Treatment Center and after a long day of testing we were told there was nothing they could do for us and that our child would be stillborn or face an extremely difficult life. We knew that we would not terminate the pregnancy and when the doctor at CHOP shared that a Catholic hospital might allow for the induction of delivery at 25 weeks or greater, we considered that option. The thought of not having to endure the long and torturous pregnancy was tempting. I remember rationalizing in my head that it would be an act of mercy and safer for my health. But my OB doctor at home, who also happened to be Catholic, said that we would in fact be inducing termination. Once I heard the "T" word I knew I would be carrying our baby for as long as she would allow. Shawn and I opened the sealed envelope that contained the gender and eventually named her Layla, who is the guardian angel of conception and childbirth.

As the weeks went by, the polite questions such as, "When are you due?" left me with holding back tears and the steak lingering in my heart was driven in even further. Over time, it got a little easier to deal with the seemingly endless questions and I would tell myself that a few months is a very short time in the grand scheme of things. God gave me the strength to not only endure, but to love being pregnant with our angel Layla.

At our 32 week Ultrasound, things looked more promising and we returned to CHOP for a re-evaluation and were given a glimmer of hope. We decided to deliver at CHOP because of resources available medically and also for the counseling and palliative care.

On the morning of May 22, 2014, at 38 weeks and 6 days, Layla Ann was born at 7:21 that evening, weighing 4 pounds. She was swept away from us for assessment, but she was breathing on her own. Layla had a ductal dependent heart condition, and was diagnosed with Cornelia de Lange Syndrome, a rare genetic disease that interfered with the development of many systems. The challenges vary greatly, ranging from severe learning disabilities to life threatening heart defects. We learned that Layla would have to endure at least four surgeries and we were given a grim life outlook from a Cornelia de Lange Syndrome specialist doctor. We chose not to put her through such suffering. We chose palliative (comfort) care so that she was able to stay with us. We got to hold her, kiss her and tell her we loved her and that we would forever.

I remember thinking that terminating the pregnancy or inducing termination would have been easier, but now I know that carrying our baby was the right "option," one that left us without regret. We were fortunate to have the opportunity to hold our baby, Layla, for almost three days. I would love to go back to that pregnancy now to feel Layla move and kick inside again. Reflecting back on the pregnancy, I was right - it was a blink of an eye and was well worth all those blows to the heart. Our Layla Ann will always be with us. The three of us now have an angel who will be there to look after us. She has brought us all closer together as a family. We were fortunate to see her take her first breath and my husband, Layla and myself all snuggled in a hospital bed as she took her last. Thank you, God, for giving us our very own angel.

Support the Pro-Life Union of Greater Philadelphia's mission through a secure, recurring online monthly gift.
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