

PRO-LIFE Report - September 2010

I had the opportunity in June to attend the blessing of a new ultrasound machine donated to the Tepeyac Family Center in Fairfax by the Knights of Columbus. Virginia State Deputy Pat O'Donnell represented the Knights and Father David Whitestone, pastor of St. Leo's Parish, officiated. It is estimated that as high as 70% of women facing crisis pregnancies choose to give birth after seeing a sonogram of their child.

As a change of pace, I have asked Brother Carl Eifert to write a guest column for this issue of the quote. Below are his thoughts and observations which he is graciously sharing with us:

In the post-WW2 days when radio was king, comedians would joke about Dr. Albert Schweitzer, who supposedly would not, literally, hurt a fly. Fans often would joke among themselves about ignoring Schweitzer just before dispatching an ant on the picnic tablecloth.

In truth, the renowned Protestant theologian, philosopher, musician, and physician who founded a hospital in Africa won the 1952 Nobel Peace Prize for his idea of "Reverence for Life." Wikipedia says Schweitzer "thought that Western civilization was decaying because it had abandoned affirmation of (and respect for) life as its ethical foundation." No Knight worthy of his order would deny that.

Wikipedia does not state Schweitzer's stance on abortion, if he had a public one, but surely he had to have been opposed. Whether he ever swatted a tsetse fly in a fit of anger and in a lapse of faithfulness to his belief structure . . . well, we don't know. Still, it seems safe to believe that Dr. Schweitzer practiced what he preached.

So how do Knights practice what they preach about the evils of abortion and the sanctity of life? We do quite well as an organization. A Knight can tick off the ways, including the Pro-Life program of Council #5998 headed so ably by SK Michael Guignard. But whether each Knight takes part in some formal work to protect life or not, he can speak up when the occasion offers such a chance.

For some, speaking up is not easy. Many of us grew up in a time when parents would say --- and repeat and repeat -- that children should be seen and not heard. (Would that some of that restraint were practiced today!) Perhaps such early training has stifled tongues in speaking out for life. This writer remembers hearing an acquaintance, in discussing the number of his children, remarking that at one point he and his wife "terminated a pregnancy." His matter-of-fact admission brought no response from a stunned listener --- a silence still regretted.

Of course, it must be a rare opportunity to hear someone admit being part of an abortion. That subject, however, comes up in other contexts. Speaking up in favor of life can be done, usually without much intrusion on polite conversation. Of course, we don't have to accept a Schweitzer-like love for insects and call for the termination of Terminex. We can, for instance, espouse the dignity of old age, question the effectiveness of capital punishment, and support counseling of unmarried pregnant women, and championing virginity among young men, of course, pointing out that people in other religions, such as Dr. Schweitzer did, feel as strongly about the sanctity of life as we Knights. Conversion of conventional opinion to appreciate God's gift of life will take more than Knights speaking out at opportune times, yet that is a place to start, or continue, the quest. Voting the right way, of course, helps, too



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