

The Parish of St. Edmund, King and Martyr

(Waterloo, Ontario)
www.stedmund.ca



The Anglican Catholic Church of Canada
(A member of the worldwide Traditional Anglican Communion)

UPDATE

January 12, 2007 - **St. Benet Biscop**

February Schedule

February 2	Friday	The Presentation of Christ in the Temple / The Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary / Candlemas
February 4	Sunday	Septuagesima
February 11	Sunday	Sexagesima
February 18	Sunday	Quinquagesima
February 21	Wednesday	Ash Wednesday
February 24	Saturday	St. Matthias the Apostle
February 25	Sunday	The First Sunday in Lent

Service Times and Location

(1) All Services are held in the Chapel at Luther Village on the Park - 139 Father David Bauer Drive in Waterloo.

(2) On Sundays, **Matins** is sung at **10:00 a.m.** (The **Litany** on the first Sunday of the month), and the **Holy Eucharist** is celebrated (sung) at **10:30 a.m.**

(3) On weekdays - **Major Holy Days** - the **Holy Eucharist** is *usually* celebrated at **7:00 p.m., 10:00 a.m.** on Saturday.

Notes and Comments

- 1) Protecting the innocent and vulnerable - **That They May Have Life** - this page.
- 2) For **Robert's Ramblings - Some Brethren in C.R.** - see page 3.
- 3) Commentary on - **THE BLESSING and THE LAST GOSPEL** - from the booklet **The Ceremonial of High Mass** - see page 5. This completes the 'serializing'!
- 4) Some help in countering the gay agenda - **But What do I Say?** - see page 6.
- 5) **Euthanasia Radicals Show True Colors in Canada With Suicide Pill** - see page 7.
- 6) **Why Some Faithful Anglicans Still Cannot Ordain, License or Accept Women as Priests** - see page 7.
- 5) Refuse to choose - women deserve better - the first of several **Pro-Woman Answers to Pro-Choice Questions** - see page 10.

St. Benet (Benedict) Biscop

St. Benet Biscop founded and ruled the monasteries at Wearmouth and Jarrow, England. He is known for helping to bring art and culture to England. His learning and artistic knowledge influenced all of England and greatly enriched the Church and English life.

On his many trips to the continent and Rome he brought back treasures for the English churches - books, altar vessels, paintings and vestments. He brought skilled craftsmen to teach their crafts to the English, masons from France to build stone churches and glaziers for making glass. He also brought John, Arch Cantor of St. Peter's in Rome, to teach the liturgical chant to his monks.

He died on January 12, 690. His true name was Biscop Baducing. The English Benedictines honor him as one of their

patrons.

From the website of **St. Benet's Guild** - a place for ecclesiastical vestments and textile furnishings

That They May Have Life

Every human life is intended by God from eternity for eternity. Human life is sacred because it is the creation of God, the Lord of life. "For you did form my inward parts, you knit me together in my mother's womb" (Psalm 139:13). Nature shares in the consequences of sin and innumerable lives are lost before they have an opportunity to develop in the womb, as many die in disasters such as famine, earthquakes, and hurricanes. Mortality is the common denominator of all life on earth. We are morally responsible, however, for the protection and care of life created in the image and likeness of God. The commandment "You shall not kill" is the negatively stated minimum of what we owe to our fellow human beings.

The direct and intentional taking of innocent human life in abortion, euthanasia, assisted suicide, and embryonic research is rightly understood as murder. In the exceedingly rare instance of direct threat to the life of the mother, saving her life may entail the death of the unborn child. Such rare and tragic instances are in sharpest contrast to the unlimited abortion license created by the Supreme Court, resulting in more than forty million deaths since 1973.

The blindness of so many to this moral atrocity has many sources but is finally to be traced to the seductive ways of evil advanced by Satan. Jesus says, "He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies" (John 8:44).

The direct and intentional taking of innocent human life may be attended by

what is believed to be compassion, especially in the case of the dependent and debilitated aged. While we can sympathize with those who view their own life or the life of another as a burden and not a gift, and while, by the grace of God, there can be repentance and forgiveness for those who are guilty of committing great evil, there can be no moral justification for murder. We are determined to employ every legal means available to protect, in law and in life, the innocent and vulnerable members of the human community.

From an article - *That They May Have Life - A Statement of Evangelicals and Catholics Together* - in the October, 2006 issue of **FIRST THINGS**

Robert's Ramblings

Some Brethren in C.R.

"Gently scan your brother man" (Robert Burns).

If you know the ancient Greek and Latin fathers better than the back of your own hand; if without knowing chemistry, you can mug it up sufficiently well to teach it to schoolboys at St John's College in Johannesburg; if without knowing Spanish, you can mug it up sufficiently well to translate texts for Martin Jarret-Kerr, you deserve to be an innocent in other respects. Edward Symonds MA BD DD (Oxford) was such an innocent. Though normally punctilious about rules, he broke lesser silence in the front hall to ask, pointing at his biretta, "Where do they keep these? Mine is worn out". He was rumoured to own another, with the red pompom for a doctor of divinity, but that would have been kept for special occasions. "If you are at your desk in the library, I shall bring you a new one there", I replied, thinking to give him mine. I had only worn it twice. Once at a funeral in Zimbabwe, when its shape and size did nothing to protect my head and neck from the sun; once during a blizzard at Mirfield as I trudged to the early mass at Knowle, when its shape and size did nothing to stop snowflakes falling down my neck. "Thank you", he said with a nod

of his enormous cranium when I handed him the hat, "if you want to know something, ask a novice".

Some years later in Zimbabwe I watched Roman Catholic priests concelebrate with the Pope in the open air. They wore straw hats against the sun. Canon Frank Synge, former Warden of St Paul's Theological College in Grahamstown, would have approved. He wrote a circular letter to the old boys, "Even an intelligent face looks foolish beneath a biretta". Edward could never look unintelligent, whatever he wore. Students nicknamed him Bags, perhaps in reference to an outdated fashion in baggy trousers which they had spotted beneath his cassock. I saw him as wearing jodhpurs under that cassock. He was then in his 80's and the Superior had asked him to stop riding horses when on holiday. I saw Godfrey Pawson wearing under his cassock the sawn off pants of an evening dress suit.

Gordon Arkell would never have thought of himself as being "on the spiritual wing of the Community", to quote Andrew Blair, but I saw him as one of the more Benedictine among us. He never missed choir, though he couldn't sing, and suffered from a kind of verbal dyslexia in the said parts of the service: he jumbled words, omitted words. He found incessant liturgical experimentation a trial. He pursued no mystic moments through purgative, illuminative and unitive ways. St Benedict's *Rule* says little about progress in personal prayer.

As to devotional literature, Gordon read diligently in popular science which was for him profoundly spiritual. "This is Thou and this also is not Thou", is the paradox in man's knowledge of God. For Gordon the emphasis fell heavily on the first half of this proverb. God was to be known in, by and among His effects rather than apart from them.

The third leg of the Benedictine stool is manual labour. Few Brethren can have loved this aspect of monasticism as much

as he. The gentle undulations and contours in the slopes between the Church and College, between the Church and Cemetery, are his work, laboured at with pick, shovel and rake over many long years. Part of his holidays he spent digging the garden at Hemingford Grey retreat house for the Resident Warden. He was glad to worship God in the sweat of his brow. He was a South African farmer who had trained at Cedara Agricultural College. Oddly enough, he didn't care much for his homeland. Though he had spent some years as treasurer and estate manager both in Sekhukuniland and at Penhaloga, he preferred the murky weather and apocalyptic skylines of the West Riding, the hills of which he loved to tramp.

Our other South African farmer, Brother Michael Twine, told me that Gordon had some aptitude at apologetics, that he could be a persuasive speaker at sixth form conferences or student retreats as he harmonized science and faith. "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel", said St Paul (*I Corinthians* 9,16). Humphrey Whistler burned with longing to bring those who do not know Jesus to a personal living faith in Him. Humphrey was impatient with the Benedictine understanding of stability, commitment to remaining in the monastery. As was Giles Ormerod, "The religious life consists of priests sitting on their bums singing plainsong while a laybrother labours in the vineyard". Gordon had no such longing. But if opportunity occurred he was "ready to give a reason for the hope which was in him" (*I Peter* 3,15).

Our Yorkshire farmer, Ralph Bell; was said to have an aptitude with the rural gentry of his own class. He explained the vows of confirmation and marriage, "A chap gives his word and of course he keeps it". He explained the sacrament of reconciliation, "If a chap is a gentleman he will make his confession". During the Second World War he took temporary charge of a London parish. Gordon Arkell and Augustine Hoey were his curates. On his day off he turned up at the Priory in Holland Park, dressed in

what was described as his ratcatcher's outfit. Lionel Thornton refused him entry, "Nonsense, that's not Ralph. I know Ralph. That fellow is a farmer's labourer".

There are many Brethren I wish I had known. The obvious ones of course, such as the five founders, and Keble Talbot and Raymond Raynes. There were two with a proper sense of proportion: Arthur Wells, the young schoolmaster at Penhalonga who had *Alice in Wonderland* read to him as he lay dying; Oswald Philips, the Welshman ex Missions to Seamen who died during a post prandial nap with a who dun it resting upon him. Charles Fitzgerald the fey Irishman; Henry Alston the Mr Chips of St John's College. I learned much from Norman Blamires when he was Warden of my theological college before he came to Mirfield. When he arrived to test his vocation, I was senior novice in charge of his chores, a situation which embarrassed me but not him. However, the three Brethren from whom I have learned most about God are Jonathan Graham, Gerard Beaumont and Matthew Trelawney-Ross.

Jonathan's character and convictions spoke eloquently of the transcendence of God. To hear Jonathan read from *Isaiah* 40 was to know that the Trinity is above and beyond our understanding; that God has no psychological need of creatures. "To whom then will ye liken Me that I should be like him?, saith the Holy One" (40,25). "What can any man say when he speaketh of Thee?," (St Augustine). Our efforts to help poor old God out with suggestions and even plans are as foolish as Sarah's when she organized the conception of Ishmael (*Genesis* 16). God is He who "openeth and none shall shut, who shutteth and none shall open" (*Revelation* 3,7). Before the incomprehensible and mighty acts of God "kings shut their mouths" (*Isaiah* 52,,15).

Gerard's character and convictions spoke eloquently of the imminence of God. To hear Gerard preach, not least if from the keyboard of a piano, was to know that the Trinity permeates, sustains and contains the universe (*Colossians* 1,16 -

17). "In God we live and move and have our being" (*Acts* 17,28). Harry Williams said that for most of us God is boxed up inside religion; that we turn to God rather as a man with bad lungs turns to a cylinder of oxygen; that for Gerard God was the air he breathed day and night whether awake or asleep.

God is transcendent and imminent. It was therefore no surprise that Jonathan and Gerard had a respect and affection for each other. "That All which always is All everywhere, yields Himself to lie in prison" (John Donne). And again, "Immensity cloistered in thy dear womb".

So much in England is determined by consensus, custom, tradition, unwritten rules, usage, that England is a land of conformists. But then to right the balance, England throws up the most marvellous eccentrics. Our Matthew Trelawney-Ross was one such. When Martin Jarret-Kerr played the clarinet, Matthew would accompany him on the piano, "Skip that arpeggio, Martin, too difficult". In the harsh winter of 1963 most of the House was down in a flu epidemic, not least Matthew. But there he was outside in the snow, dressed only in longjohns, skull cap and muffler, pouring boiling water into a frozen bird bath. *Acts* describes St Barnabas as "a good man full of the Holy Ghost" (11,24). If *Galatians* 5,22 and *Ephesians* 5,9 are to be believed, goodness is a concomitant of the Spirit. Put simply, Matthew was a good man.

In our Community there have been no clones, not even of our dynamic Founder whom, as he wished, we mostly ignore.

+Robert Mercer C.R.

The retired, Third Bishop of The Anglican Catholic Church of Canada

The Ceremonial of High Mass

THE BLESSING

Although the dismissal has been said, the

Priest remains for two other acts: the blessing and the reading of the Last Gospel. The blessing (which is not used in Masses of the Dead) was first introduced by Bishops, then adopted by Priests. Its comparatively late introduction is the reason why it is said by the Priest in an ordinary voice, even when the Mass is sung. A Bishop, however, sings the blessing. At the words of the blessing the Priest makes the sign of the Cross over the people, and they sign themselves. As the Mass began with the invocation of the Holy Trinity, the blessing of the same threefold Godhead is called down upon the people before they leave the church.

THE LAST GOSPEL

The Last Gospel is a final devotion that has become attached to the Mass, rather than an integral part of the Mass itself. It is said in the same place as the earlier Gospel, and with a similar announcement. Normally, the beginning of the Gospel of St John is read, but on Christmas Day, when the passage has already been read as the Gospel of the day, the Gospel for the feast of the Epiphany is read in its place as the Last Gospel.

St John's Gospel begins with the idea of the eternal existence of the Son of God. He was the Word of God, the perfect expression of the Father's mind, and himself perfect God. Through the ages before the Incarnation, he was nevertheless the light that shone in the darkness of this world. At last, when the fullness of the time came, the Baptist appeared to bear witness. Then the true Light burst on the sight of men. He was rejected by his own people, but those who received him and believed in his Name were given power to become the sons of God, not by a carnal birth, but the will of the Incarnate Lord. So the Word was made flesh, the Son was incarnate, and by his life on earth revealed his glory, as of a Father's only begotten Son. (As in the Creed, all kneel at this statement of the Incarnation.)

St John in this preface to his Gospel puts before us the basic ideas of his theology.

They are cardinal principles of our religion, and sum up the significance of the life of Him whom we offer to the Father in our sacrificial worship. The Blessed Sacrament is the extension into our lives of his Incarnation, of his Passion and of his Resurrection.

Frequently, if a Mass has begun before the traditional times of the *Angelus* (six in the morning, noon, six in the evening) and ends afterwards, the *Angelus* (or the *Regina Coeli* which replaces it in Eastertide) will be recited after the Last Gospel.

From ***The Ceremonial of High Mass*** by Priests of the Society of the Holy Cross, and available from The Convent Society

But What do I Say? - (1 of 4)

The gay-activist movement is finding its way into more and more schools - promoting destructive behavior under the guise of tolerance. How can you ensure that the truth gets a fair hearing.

Public schoolteacher Laura Lopez was an idealist. Although she had plenty of work already, she hadn't minded being asked to serve on the new Committee for Special Programs and Curriculum Enrichment. But now she was having second thoughts. The reason? It wasn't the time and it wasn't the work - it was the issues.

The first meeting of the new committee was consumed by a proposal to add "alternative-family friendly" material to the curriculum. The second meeting concerned a suggestion from the local chapter of the teachers' association to have a Gay Pride Week. The third meeting went downhill when the assistant principal proposed having a speaker from the "Just Like You Coalition" address "the special needs of homosexual students."

In a few hours the fourth meeting was to take place, and Laura was dreading it already. Someone from another school was coming to give a presentation about "gay peer counseling."

Laura was running out of arguments. When she said that the schools shouldn't be in the business of promoting homosexual behavior, she was told, "We're not endorsing it. We're simply presenting it as an alternative lifestyle." When she pointed out that homosexual acts were morally wrong, she was told, "That's just your opinion. Don't you believe in tolerance?" When she said homosexual acts are a bad choice, she was told, "These kids can't help their feelings. Where is your compassion?" When she used what she considered her strongest argument - that the Bible condemns homosexual acts - she was told, "We understand your religious feelings, but church and state are separate. Leave your faith at the schoolhouse door."

Could she counter the gay agenda in her school?

Can you counter it in yours?

How should Christians speak with nonbelievers?

You *can* counter the gay agenda in your school. To do this, however, you need wisdom in at least three areas:

How to speak about matters of importance with people who don't share your biblical convictions;

How to explain to them the human sexual design; and

How to explain to them the problem with homosexuality itself.

Let's consider area one. In thinking that biblical teaching was the strongest argument she could present to her non-Christian colleagues, Laura made a big mistake. It may seem "biblical" to knock people over the head with the Bible, but that's not how the apostles spoke with the unconvinced.

The clearest Scriptural model is Paul, "the apostle to the gentiles." When he was speaking with his fellow Jews, he did begin

with Scripture (Acts 17:1-2). This was the obvious thing to do, because they knew and believed it already. However, when Paul was speaking to non-Jews, he did not begin with Scripture. It would have made no sense to do so, because they had never heard of it and would have had no reason to accept its authority. Rather, he began by speaking about things they *did* know. To the Athenians, for example, he mentioned their altar "To An Unknown God." He did this because deep down, they already knew that their idols were somehow inadequate.

Where, then, can you start on the subject of sexuality? What do your colleagues already know about *that*?

By **J. Budziszewski** - the first of four parts

Euthanasia Radicals Show True Colors in Canada With Suicide Pill

Euthanasia radicals are always trying to pretend that all they want is access to assisted suicide for the terminally ill in unbearable pain for whom nothing can be done to alleviate suffering. This is a false premise, of course. But it is not the true agenda, which is really about eventually getting to the place of near death on demand.

Proof of this assertion can be found in the ongoing World Federation of Right to Die Societies Convention in Toronto. One of the prime presenters at the conference is Australian physician and euthanasia absolutist Philip Nitschke, who was paid thousands of dollars by the Hemlock Society (now merged into the euphemistically named Compassion and Choices) to develop the "peaceful pill," a suicide concoction that is designed to allow ready access to suicide for those who live in countries where assisted suicide and euthanasia are illegal.

(Nitschke now says that the peaceful pill resulted from elderly people pooling their

resources to help create it. But he has worked on the project, funded by euthanasia advocates, for years.)

How radical is Nitschke? He has supported suicide for "troubled teens," and has urged that the peaceful pill be available in supermarkets.

Euthanasia ideologues often try to distance themselves from Nitschke, and for obvious reasons. If the public got a true whiff of the ultimate agenda, the euthanasia political movement would be doomed.

But the truth is that Nitschke is widely liked and respected within the movement. That is why he is always invited to speak at high visibility euthanasia conventions such as at Toronto, where he is introducing his peaceful pill to the attendees.

The moral of the story: don't listen to what these advocates say. Watch out who they hangout with. After all, we are known by the friends we keep.

By **Wesley J. Smith** - September 12, 2006
- www.lifenews.com

Why Some Faithful Anglicans Still Cannot Ordain, License or Accept Women as Priests

For many years those of us who cannot accept women as priests, and bishops who refuse to ordain or license them, gave all the reasons why we oppose this innovation. But gradually we came to realize that what we were saying was falling on deaf ears and soon we became tired of repeating ourselves. Now it seems that people have forgotten what we said, or assume that the reasons we gave no longer count for much. We have more heady things to argue about, things like the ordination of +Vicki Gene, and most people have lost interest in the debate over women's ordination. It is taken for granted that those still opposed are only headstrong cranks immersed in past injustices, and that's the end of it. But if history teaches us anything it teaches that

what once happened to all our arguments against ordaining women as priests and bishops will soon happen to all the current arguments against ordaining practicing homosexuals. So in the midst of our current debates the time seems right to repeat once again why we believe women cannot be priests even if they are legally ordained. Those who have ears to hear, let them hear.

Those who promote the ordination of women commit three errors: biological, anthropological, and theological.

The biological error is about sex. Sex is confused with gender; male and female with masculine and feminine. But the two are quite different and we confuse them at our peril. Both are biological at their source but sex manifests itself physiologically and gender psychologically or, in its original meaning, spiritually. Thus God is not male because he has "no parts or passions," i.e., He is not physical. But He is masculine because He is the spiritual Source and Father of all.

Every human being is both masculine and feminine and this is natural, but if anyone is both male and female this is pathological. We are masculine in originating behavior, be it through thought, imagination, or physical activity. We are feminine when we receive outside influence be it grace or music or food.

God is only masculine because He is what the philosophers have called "pure act." There is nothing passive about Him; he does not receive grace or music or food from any source other than Himself. But we are sacramental beings in which the inward and spiritual expresses itself in the outward and physical. Male and female are both masculine and feminine but each symbolizes one more than the other. Physiologically the female is predominantly receptive or feminine, and the male is active, initiator, and originator. Women need to be cherished; men need to be honored, as St. Paul himself recognized. (Ephesians 5:33) Women need to be

caressed physically and spiritually; men need to be built up physically and spiritually. Women are from Venus; men are from Mars. Hence women represent the feminine and men the masculine. They are not interchangeable. A woman will be upset if her husband forgets their wedding anniversary, by at least giving her flowers, but in all my years as a priest I have never heard of a husband being upset because he did not get any flowers from his wife on their anniversary.

The second error of those who accept women as priests and bishops is anthropological. Having confused sex with gender and realizing that all human beings have both masculine and feminine characteristics, the next step was to confuse women with men. Just as the biological differences between men and women express themselves in the physiological and spiritual, so the anthropological differences express themselves in economics and politics. Be they single or married, women get together and talk mostly about clothes and shopping; men talk about sports or ways we should resolve the war in Iraq; women are the economists and men the politicians. By nature women are practical, men are idealists. But in the eighteenth century Adam Smith changed all this. By redefining economics as finance rather than household management, he took women's work out of the home of cottage industry into a man's world of factories, laboratories and banks - and women have been trying to get back their proper work ever since.

It was thought that to regain their rightful work and make women equal to men they had to become just like men. This was called Feminism but it is really just the opposite of Feminism. It is a movement that denigrates femininity. There is no accepted word for it, but let us give it its proper name; let us call it Masculism. Men unjustly remained on top of the pinnacle of earthly greatness, and women were simply encouraged to climb up after them. Women doing men's work was not a social

revolution but a greater participation in the *status quo*. Unisex shops sold trousers but not dresses. Bars became refuges for women as well as men, but few men ever frequented Tea Rooms. And in spite of heavy pressure, most men rebelled against becoming housewives. Not that there is anything intrinsically wrong with women doing the work normally done by men and *vice versa*, yet when women and men do each other's work they do it in different ways. Men and women are not interchangeable nor are their jobs.

Finally we come to the theological error of those who support women's ordination; the one most crucial for traditional Christians but of little interest to the typical secularist sitting in the pews of our churches or voting in national conventions. They usually so emphasize the crucifixion, centering their theology on sin and redemption that they ignore the real significance of the Incarnation, turning Jesus into a pure spirit of fairness and good will rather than the incarnate Son of God. When they argue from the Incarnation it is only to demonstrate that human beings are spiritual and God-like, not that the Incarnation is God's self-identification with fleshly human nature. The Catholic, on the other hand, in emphasizing the Incarnation talks about nature and grace. Both emphases are necessary, but the Catholic view must come first. To appreciate the crucifixion and resurrection one has to accept the Incarnation; to understand sin one has to believe in human nature; to be saved one has to know the nature of the Savior.

Jesus is divine, but He is also human. "The Word became flesh." It became sexual. God the Son became man physiologically as well as spiritually. As God He remained masculine but as a human being He became male. One was a sacrament of the other. He was man, i.e. all of human kind, of the same nature as us, and able to represent everyone, women as well as men, but as an individual he was male, with both masculine and feminine characteristics. He could, for example, be

thought of as feminine by someone like the mystic Julian of Norwich, (who by the way was never canonized a saint) and he could describe himself as a mother Hen gathering her baby chicks under her wings. But that is no excuse for calling Him Hen Jesus or Mother Jesus. As an individual human being He is fully male, not a hybrid of male and female. He had to be male in order to be the sacramental or incarnational presence of divine masculinity. Unlike His portrayal in some nineteenth century paintings, He is not androgynous.

The advocates of women's ordination either so emphasize sin and redemption that they forget that this redemption was achieved through male flesh, or else they use the doctrine of the Incarnation to so spiritualize Jesus and all humanity as to ignore or deprecate the flesh. In either case inherent American Puritanism wins the day. But in Jesus Christ our created earthly humanity is saved, not changed. Our sinfulness does not come from our humanity but from acting less than human. By our participation in Christ's humanity, our own humanity is glorified in spite of our sins. And this happens sacramentally, by Baptism and the Eucharist. In these and other sacramental rites God saves and transforms our humanity and He does this through those who have been set aside by ordination to re-present the activity of the Father. The church and all its members are feminine in relation to the Father - we speak of Mother Church, but some human beings within the church are ontologically ordered to re-present, to make present, the activity of the Father in relation to His creation which is always masculine. As the Church is called mother, so Priests are called Father. To call them Mother is trying to turn them into something they cannot be.

Though men and women both have masculine and feminine traits and both can and must minister in the Church, only males can represent the masculine. Only men can be priests.

By **Canon John Heidt**

Pro-Woman Answers to Pro-Choice Questions

What about rape? What if it was your daughter who was raped?

I would love her and my grandchild unconditionally, and I would do everything in my power to prosecute the perpetrator to the fullest extent of the law.

Out of our desire to save someone from suffering, it is normal to wish we could erase a painful memory such as rape. Unfortunately, the hard truth is that as much as we want to, we can't.

Abortion doesn't erase a memory. Think about it. Could anything ever erase your memory of September 11, 2001?

At my lecture at Vanderbilt University, a medical student told other students that abortion is a second act of violence against a woman who is raped, and said her "abortion was worse than the rape."

Both victims - the woman and her child - deserve our unconditional support.

Pregnancy can be punishing, but a child is not a punishment. When Julie Makimaa was reunited with her birthmother, Lee Ezell, Julie asked her if it would have been better for Lee if Julie was never born at all. Lee told Julie that she was the "only good thing to come out of the rape."

When someone asks about exceptions for rape and incest, we must also consider how that makes those feel who were conceived through sexual assault.

Well-meaning statements can hurt. As one UC-Berkeley grad student said to her pro-choice peers, "I have a right to be here." They responded, "We didn't mean you!" She asked, "Who did you *think* you meant?"

My mother told this story to a coworker who agreed and said, "People never think they are talking to an exception - like me."

Could you look at someone conceived in violence and tell her that she never should have been born? What if it turned out to be your best friend - or a relative? Would that change the way you felt about her? Would you think less of her mother?

Rebecca Kiessling, a young attorney and mother who was conceived through sexual assault, asks "Did I deserve the death penalty?"

Can you imagine if we ranked the value of people based on the circumstances of their conception? We don't discriminate based on parentage - that's not equality! You are valuable no matter who your parents are, no matter the circumstances of your conception.

Abortion after rape is misdirected anger. It doesn't punish the perpetrator of the crime, or prevent further assaults against other women.

After a lecture at a midwestern university where I shared the story of Lee and Julie, a student pulled me aside. She told me that she was raped by her third cousin as a mere thirteen-year-old and had become pregnant. Her parents had helped her have the privacy she wanted during her pregnancy, and then she placed her son with two loving parents. I asked her, why did she make the decision to have the child - when she was just a girl who had lived through what was arguably the worst of circumstances? She said she would never pass on the violence that was perpetrated against her to her own unborn child. Now that is the strength of a woman!

By **Serrin M. Foster**, President, Feminists for Life - www.feministsforlife.org

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