



DIOCESE OF DES MOINES

PRESSRELEASE

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Bishop Pates speaks out on proposed abortion clinic

After learning of a proposed abortion clinic in Council Bluffs, Diocese of Des Moines Bishop Richard Pates asked all Catholic churches in Pottawattamie County to distribute the following note to parishioners at all weekend Masses Nov. 27-28. The note was sent to the Council Bluffs churches Queen of Apostles, Holy Family, St. Patrick and St. Peter along with Our Lady of Carter Lake in Carter Lake, St. Patrick in Neola, St. Columbanus in Weston and Our Lady of the Holy Rosary in Glenwood.

Letter from Bishop Richard Pates to the parishes in Pottawattamie County

Our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI has invited Catholic parishes throughout the world to join him on the First Sunday of Advent in praying for “Nascent Life.” This is an earnest prayer for all of our brothers and sisters in the human family who are developing in the wombs of their mothers. Such an initiative coincides with commemorating that time when Jesus, Our Savior, was in the womb of Mary, His Mother.

This commemoration takes on special focus for the people in the city of Council Bluffs and Pottawattamie County this year insofar as late term abortionist, Leroy Carhart, has indicated his intention to set-up shop in the area to practice the taking of life of young people at a vulnerable stage.

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Bishop Pates speaks out...add 1

I write to you today, my friends, to address this unspeakable possibility from three perspectives:

- I. An appraisal of late term abortion from the Natural Law or purely human/natural perspective.
- II. Continuing outreach to those experiencing difficult pregnancies.
- III. The action that can be taken to address this situation by the Council Bluffs/Pottawattamie County residents

I. Natural Law/ Medical facts regarding late-term abortions:

On October 15, 2010 the Nebraska Law, Legislative Bill 1033 took effect prohibiting abortions after 20 weeks of pregnancy on the basis that the unborn children feel pain. The genesis of this bill resulted from significant medical research and expert testimony documenting the observations of doctors performing fetal surgery at and after 20 weeks of gestation. Unborn children recoil from painful stimulation, which also results in the elevation of stress hormones due to physiologic insult. It has been clearly demonstrated that unborn children seek to evade certain stimuli in a manner in which an infant or an adult would be interpreted as a reaction to pain. Anesthesia for the unborn child is now routine for surgical procedures performed at or after 20 weeks of gestation.

The terminal enterprise of killing unborn children after 20 weeks now seeks refuge in Council Bluffs, Iowa. In addition to his plans to challenge Nebraska Legislative Bill 1033 as unconstitutional, Leroy Carhart was in print as "Leroy Carhart Forced to Move Late-Term Abortion Business Out of Nebraska." The good citizens of Iowa must recognize this assault on the life of our younger brothers and sisters as a crisis of life or death, for that is truly what it is. No ambiguous terminology, no word has the power to change the reality of things; procured abortion is the deliberate and direct killing of a human being in the initial phase of his or her existence, extending from fertilization to birth. To embrace such a practice is to embrace the forced death of innocent human life.

We are the people of life and we maintain that solidarity with all members of the human family must begin at the beginning and not at some arbitrary point along the continuum of existence.

Ricardo Montalban once reflected, "When did I become I? At the very moment of fertilization, I became I.... and there will never be another like me." May we too acknowledge that moment when our life began and the life of each member of the human family.

There is an order to rights as proclaimed by the Declaration of Independence: "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." May all of our unborn brothers and sisters be granted that same order!

II. Continuing Outreach to those experiencing difficult pregnancies

We are sensitive to the reality that there are serious, personal problems for some women in their pregnancies. As members of the Church community we are committed to continuing our compassionate, understanding and effective outreach to them. Examples of this commitment are:

1. Counseling through trained and licensed counselors of Catholic Charities to assist the pregnant mothers in working through their problems, anxieties and fears.

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2. Gabriel's Corner is a pregnancy counseling center in Council Bluffs founded by Deacon Jean and Mrs. Kathy Plourde which provides pregnancy testing, counseling, ultrasounds and baby supplies. This includes follow-up so that there is adequate support for Mother and baby in the post-birth period.
3. Adoption Services through Catholic Charities: the diocesan Church community provides professional child placement in homes in which the young child is welcomed, revered and provided for. There are more parents than available children to be adopted who are eager to welcome the gift of such a child to their family.

III. Action to be undertaken by members of the Council Bluffs and Pottawattamie Communities:

Approximately 300 individuals have already attended a meeting with the Council Bluffs City Council to voice their opposition to the coming of Leroy Carhart and the establishment of a late-term abortion operation.

I encourage all to join their voices with the 300 in a cascading voice of opposition to this highly negative possibility.

Clerical leaders from our parishes are gathering contact information of city officials, county officials and state representatives whom I ask each member of our congregations to contact in order to exercise our public responsibility of protecting the lives of the most vulnerable in our society. I trust these lists will be available soon.

In closing, I assure you of my strong support and prayer as we people committed to a culture of life take action in a spirit of love for our brothers and sister who are at the "nascent" stage, those developing in the wombs of their mothers.

With every good wish, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Richard E. Pates

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The Diocese of Des Moines Catholic includes 82 parishes in 23 counties in central and southwest Iowa.