

My Good Friends,

I am always very happy to be with a fellow Minnesotan. Matt Birk is an alumnus of Cretin-Derham Hall High School, a venerable institution which for over a century has produced outstanding student athletes in St. Paul. Matt graduated from Harvard University and is a famed Minnesota Viking great.

You and I need to apologize for our accent, Matt, that is our Minnesota accent. So speak slowly and distinctly. But we are happy to be here. You betcha!!

My word tonight for Iowans for Life is congratulations! The three day waiting period prior to undergoing an abortion is the first pro-life bill in many years to be enacted. Equally important on its first court hurdle, it was upheld. We pray that its continuing legal journey is equally successful.

A key dimension for me with the pro-life movement is education. As Eleanor Roosevelt commented: “Win their hearts and minds and their votes will follow.” The most recent news country-wide demonstrates progress.

According to the Guttmacher Institute, approximately 926,200 abortions were performed in 2014. Some 1.5% of women aged 15–44 had an abortion.

The abortion rate in 2014 was 14.6 abortions per 1,000 women aged 15–44. This is the lowest rate ever observed in the United States; in 1973, the year abortion became legal, the rate was 16.3.

We cannot recede from our educational efforts since they induce behavior that is founded on well-formed consciences, a tribute to human dignity.

I salute Maggie DeWitte, all Iowans for Life and your supporters with us tonight for your dedicated, generous and unflagging efforts that God's precious gift of life might be protected and enhanced from conception until natural death.

Let us Pray,

We pray, O God, that all may come to the great insight of your inestimable gift of human life and we dedicate ourselves to advocacy and education that precious life might be protected and enhanced from the moment of conception to natural death.

We ask your blessings on all of those associated with Iowans for Life. May their efforts and dedication, exercised in a spirit of respect and love, enjoy fruits of success, especially in the care of those yet to be born.

We pray also for those who have suffered recently from the destruction of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, Maria and the wild fires raging in California as well as the victims of the tragic event in Las Vegas. May we continue to express our solidarity espousing the dignity and life of every human being. As Pope Francis constantly affirms, we are all members of the human family, all brothers and sisters.

We ask God now to bless our time together, renew us in His spirit and love as we keep in mind especially those afflicted with chronic poverty and hunger.

We pray together: "Bless us O Lord . . .