

Sanctity of Human Life Day

by Matthew Clendineng

This Sunday, January 18, 2009 will be named, by executive proclamation, “National Sanctity of Human Life Day”. This day is set aside to recognize that each life has inherent dignity and matchless value. As a nation we are called to defend the weakest and most vulnerable members of our society. All Americans are called to commit to respecting and protecting the life and dignity of every human being.

This Sunday many individuals and congregations will take time to honor “National Sanctity of Human Life Day”. Many churches will preach sermons and pray prayers recognizing that life is sacred. If you participate in this day, I applaud you for celebrating that life is a sacred gift. However, I beg you to remember that the sanctity of life does not end at birth.

The life of the teenager being abused in your neighbor’s house is sacred.

The life of the meth addict whose life is spiraling out of control is sacred.

The life of the teenage girl who, too late, realizes she is repeating the mistakes of her own mother is sacred.

The life of the child sold into prostitution is sacred.

The life of the homeless man sleeping under a stairway in our town is sacred.

The life of the criminal paying his debt to society is sacred.

The life of the woman who goes hungry so her children can eat is sacred.

The life of the Christian, Buddhist, Muslim, atheist, or meditator living out their beliefs is sacred.

The life of the illegal alien striving for a better life is sacred.

The life of the terrorist who does not care for the lives of others is sacred.

The life of the kid with more piercings than you can count is sacred.

As you sit in your pew, or in some other way celebrate “National Sanctity of Human Life Day”, I beg you to consider what it means to honor the sanctity of all human life. If you truly believe that life is sacred, then what are you being called to do in this community? We are surrounded by sacred lives being treated like garbage, and we fail these lives over and over; I fail as much as anyone. I am too often blind to the human suffering I pass every day. If you celebrate “Sanctity of Human Life Day” this weekend, I challenge you to open your eyes and see the men, women, and children in our community who have fallen through the cracks. I challenge you to recognize

the sacred lives we pass every day. Stop being blinded by the ordinary and see the hungry, the thirsty, the homeless, the sick, and the imprisoned.

If we are going to take the time to remember the sanctity of life on Sunday, we need to exert the effort to treat all lives as sacred on Monday. We need to care about poverty, discrimination, suicide, abuse, homelessness, war, and a host of other sanctity of life issues.

I am a husband and a father, and I love my children. I have intensely strong feelings about abortion, but the sanctity of life does not end with birth. There are lives all around us that have been thrown into the trash bin of life. We are called to treat all of these lives as sacred.