

On this past Christmas morning, I walked down my driveway to get the newspapers, and I opened them up inside at the kitchen island. What greeted me was a front page headline on *The Washington Times* that read “For unto you this day a Savior is born”, Luke 2:11. It made me look twice and I felt a great joy within me. I even showed my family. For that moment it felt like people had recognized Jesus and his saving power. It’s hard to describe but it felt like a dream. The hope you and I look for at Christmas season was made known in that written message, for all to know that day. Though the world wasn’t united, it sure seemed like it, and Jesus was surely the answer to it all.

Jesus has been the only news story being talked about continually 2000 years later. Jesus is able to liberate us from sin and death, help us navigate this Earth and lead anyone to eternal life with God. One must only respond. His Gospel of Life is the good news of joy and peace, and the fulfillment of our heart. It reveals the sanctity and truth of every human life, created in the image and likeness of God. It calls us to protect, cherish and foster life. His message is what the world needed, what it still and will always need. And more than ever you could argue that today we are faced with such rising secularism and a world that seems in disarray like never before.

As we enter this week with the Vigil Mass and the March for Life, we should take the time to reflect upon the dignity and sacredness of the human person. And to remember our foundation must be in our relationship with God and helping others come to know Him. Because only in His truth will we be able to change people’s hearts about abortion. Condemnations won’t get anywhere. And the laws can be changed, but that doesn’t rule people’s hearts. God’s love and truth is able to reach anyone, indeed it “is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword” (Heb 4:12). Conversion doesn’t happen all at once; it’s gradual for us all. Our own faith was not what it is now five or ten years ago. When someone comes to know God though, a relationship forms. In that mutual relationship trust is grown, things come to be known, and love is sown. We just have to help others come to that encounter.

It is not just abortion but so much more that threatens the dignity of life today and its sacredness. The pro-life movement extends to euthanasia, assisted suicide, poverty, hunger and human trafficking to name a few. Today brutal executions still happen. Injustices towards others are still around and have left their mark on history forever. The presence of all this warrants everyone, especially the followers of Jesus, to unite and work against such issues and struggles, and to rescue people from their perils.

Life is just not always seen through God’s eyes. When I say that, I think of a particular scene from the ’98 movie, *The Mask of Zorro*. Zorro accompanies a rich party of statesman to a merciless labor camp, where he sees the people suffering, and sees one man shot down in front of him. The other men simply walk away laughing while Zorro, though unable to save him, lovingly comes to kneel down by the man at his last moment. Later Zorro, disguised in a cloak and seeking to liberate the camp, gives water to a collapsed laborer. And the laborer’s eyes go wide upon recognizing Zorro because the hope of his presence is enough in that present

suffering. I think Zorro recognized something that others didn't. While I don't know for sure, I'd like to think it was a love that only Jesus and his disciples would know. There Zorro brought that to those two men, and through his action spoke the Gospel of Life.

While Jesus is not physically here today, His presence in the Holy Spirit is alive in all of us. We carry His message. Wherever we may go in our life, we seek to bring His love to people by which Jesus said all "will know that you are My disciples" (Jn 13:35). We hope to bring a joy and comfort to people in which they recognize the Lord's presence in the form of his trustworthy, gentle Knights.

Life is certainly the most wondrous creation. Our life is more special than we really know. Earth without life was just a big, barren space. It is something no one person can create and no one can even bring a life back from the dead. We can find out just from simply looking around that God loves life and all its forms. The beauty and wonder of creation reveals this. And Pope John Paul II, in his Gospel of Life Encyclical reminded us that "in man there shines forth a reflection of God himself."

As Knights, we have quite the task ahead. We stand for life in the light of God's truth in a time when life is often rejected and hearts are closed to its possibility. The general disbelief in God is far and wide. Throughout our encounters to defend life, wherever our adventures take us, we will meet opposition. We will be looked at as crazy fools, getting in the way of what people say should be a choice like abortion or euthanasia. We will be ignored and stared at. We will all need the courage to endure and lead others to Jesus because in Him life is made meaningful, and the truth of the human person is made evident. This week, particularly one dedicated to the abortion issue, one of the remarkable things is the way a baby ultimately can lead someone closer to God. Over the break, I talked to a father who told me he had come to know and love Jesus through his children. He saw his role as a loving protector of the lives that God had entrusted to him. Think of the way that God manifested himself to us as a poor baby in a manger that night long ago. As Pope Benedict said in a 2012 Christmas address it was God's invitation "that we may dare to love him." It is quite the mystery to think about.

The openness to life then is ultimately openness to God and leads to certain joy and peace.