



Closing of the 40 Days for Life

November 6, 2011
7:00 p.m.

Good evening,

This is a night, not of celebration of affirmation. Tonight as the *40 Days for Life* reaches its conclusion, let all who care to see, recognize that these 40 days represent a time when people of faith affirm their respect for the dignity of every human life from the moment of conception to natural death. It's impossible for others to see these 40 days as an affirmation of our faith in the power of God to transform the hearts of the women who have passed by those who, in prayer, have been constant witness of faith and love.

In the scripture the number 40 appears many times. In the story of Noah, God brought the rain for 40 days and nights. Moses remained with God on Mount Sinai for 40 days. Jesus was tempted in the desert for 40 days and nights, and ascended into heaven 40 days after his resurrection. The number 40 symbolized a time of struggle, testing, and anticipation.

We must view the 40 Days for Life not as a mission completed, but as a new beginning to our resolve to inspire this culture to respect and revere God's great gift of life. These 40 days are marked by the memory of people in need, struggling through the desert of their lives unable to embrace God's life giving compassion, instead choosing life draining despair.

These 40 days have been a time of testing our determination to never stop being a voice for the voiceless, even when the world tries to close its ears to the undeniable truth that shines in each of you, that God is the author of all life and has dominion over each heartbeat, however small and seemingly unprotected.

40 Days for Life is also a time of anticipation of a day when God's will be done, when this nation will restore the most fundamental right we have as human persons, that of life. For without life, "liberty and the pursuit of happiness have no meaning."

I thank you my brothers and sisters in Christ for the light and life that you bring to the streets of San Antonio. Your faith illuminates the way to a tomorrow in which this nation will once again

be a beacon of hope, renewed by its respect for each human person. Tonight is not an ending, but a continuation of our constant prayer.

In St. Paul's letter to the Thessalonians he wrote: "Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus."

Let us join together now; lifting our hearts and minds to God....For He is with us....

Heavenly Father, author of all life, let us always hear your voice in the silent whispers of the unborn. Fill our hearts with love and compassion for the women who have believed Satan's deception, so they may see that when they extinguish the flame of life when it is most vulnerable, that a part of our own humanity dies.

Lord, wipe away the tears that have stained our days and lift the sadness from our hearts that darken our nights as we grieve the loss of the lives of these holy innocents. Let us find our hope in you, Oh Lord, that we will be victorious because our cause is right and just in your eyes.

Just as your son, Jesus, was tempted for 40 days in the desert, let us not be tempted to lose faith in the face of the false promises of the world. May your Holy Spirit always be the source of our strength that is grounded in truth. May its light penetrate the cloud of darkness and death that our society perpetrates on its people.

You are the God of peace, who calls us to be faithful to your Word. In the prayer of your beloved St. Francis, may each one of us be a channel of your peace.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
and where there is sadness, joy.

Amen!