Dear Friends of Notre Dame Right to Life,

I hope this issue of Footprints finds you very well and savoring Lent’s bittersweet anticipations of Easter. In our last letter, we promised to you that we would keep up the good fight in our pro-life work in light of the election of President Barack Obama. I am proud to say that our momentum has remained strong and true to this promise!

Merely two days after President Obama’s inauguration, the 35th annual March for Life took place in Washington, D.C., on January 22nd. Falling in the second week of classes, the semester got off to a running start as Notre Dame Right to Life sent 220 students to Washington for the March. In addition, ten faculty members, four of whom brought their families, joined the students in D.C. for the March. The trip’s success garnered attention from many campus news outlets, including The Observer, The Irish Rover, and Scholastic Magazine. Notre Dame has been a consistent presence at the March for at least fifteen years, and we are very grateful to March commissioners Steve Govea ('09) and John Walter ('11) who worked hard to make this year’s trip another successful one for us.

By the time you read this newsletter, Right to Life’s “Project Mom” fundraiser will have concluded. Service commissioner Mary Forr ('11) has been hard at work organizing the numerous aspects of this annual project for South Bend’s Women’s Care Center (WCC), from door-to-door fundraising in the dormitories, to coordinating mother-and-child item drop boxes around campus. To date, more than $1500 in funds and $600 in items have been collected. We expect these numbers to grow between now and Saturday, March 21st, when date this project will close with a baby shower to be held in honor of 15 WCC expectant mother-clients.

Working closely with Ann Firth, Associate Vice President of Notre Dame’s Office of Student Affairs, the Motherhood Resources commission has had success in its mission of dispersing information on University policies on student pregnancy and the available pregnancy resources on- and off- campus. Recently, the commission has designed and published postcard-size editions of this information to be sent to each University student.

With FOCA’s threat looming, the Legislative commission has been working to raise awareness of the Act. The commission has dispersed FOCA postcards to legislators to the 28 dormitories with the help of Campus Ministry. The commission also plans to host a mailing drive in the two University dining halls on March 18th to encourage students to send these postcards to their respective legislators.

The annual Right to Life Collegiate Conference will take place on March 27th and 28th, 2009. This year’s conference will be focusing on the fourth chapter of Pope John Paul II’s Evangelium Vitae, “You did it to me.” This promises to be an exciting and busy weekend of dialogue between great pro-life intellectuals and activists and students. Please see Holly Klejeski’s preview of these events for more details.

In spite of our successes, this semester has not been without its challenges and disappointments. Looking forward to the rest of the semester, though we anticipate meeting internal and external difficulties and bumps in the road, with hard work, lots of prayers, and the knowledge of support such as yours, our efforts to promote the Culture of Life will continue. If you would like to join us in this work, please feel welcomed to contact us at prolife@nd.edu.

Thank you so much for your continued prayers for and dedication to Notre Dame Right to Life. We are gratefully blessed to have your support to strengthen the work that we do, even the smallest support from you is so great in our eyes! May God bless you and keep you always!

In Notre Dame,
Mary K. Daly, ‘10
President, 2008-2009

We seek to promote and uphold the sanctity of all human life from conception until natural death through prayer, service, and education, and to help women in crisis pregnancies find alternatives to abortion through service and support, in the spirit of the Catholic Church.
WASHINGTON - The 220 Notre Dame students who attended the 36th annual March for Life in Washington, D.C. Thursday sensed new energy and purpose in the wake of the recent inauguration and were met with meaningful support, marchers said.

"There was a lot more energy in how the politicians at the rally were speaking," said junior Mary Daly, Notre Dame Right to Life club president.

Onlookers were thrilled to see Notre Dame marching 220 strong.

"Walking along, people were cheering for us, calling out support," Daly said. "They'll come up and ask us how many people we brought. People are always very impressed and glad to see us there."

High school junior Colin Cortes of Chicago, Ill. said he enjoyed seeing Notre Dame's strong presence at the march.

"I loved seeing Notre Dame there, really representing what a Catholic university should be, especially now that a lot of Catholic universities don't value church teachings. It's great to see Notre Dame standing up for them," Cortes said. "Seeing that, I consider myself a huge Notre Dame fan," he said.
The marchers then walked to the Supreme Court building. Notre Dame students made their presence known with cheers adapted from football games, like "Go Irish! Save Babies!" and frequent renditions of the Fight Song and Alma Mater.

Daley said one big change to the march is that faculty came this year. The whole staff of the Center for Ethics and Culture joined in the march.

"With the new pro-life fund through the Center for Ethics and Culture we were able to invite the entire University hierarchy. Even though Father Jenkins couldn't come, his senior advisor, Father Jim McDonald, was able to make it," she said.

Bill Dotterweich, a 1958 Notre Dame alum, is a big supporter of the pro-life movement and Notre Dame Right to Life, Daley said. He contributed to the fund to send members of the Notre Dame administration to Washington for the march, as well as to support Right to Life efforts on campus.

Sophomore Karlo Leonor went on the march and returned on the bus later the night following.

"I thought it was really encouraging to see the professors there, especially those who brought their families," Leonor said.

Leonor said there was a sense of camaraderie among the marchers.

"You could feel the common appreciation for Notre Dame as America's Catholic institution," Leonor said.

**Students oppose abortion-rights bill - Aaron Steiner, 3/19/09**

In the early stages of the presidential candidate, then-candidate Barack Obama made headlines when he told a pro-choice group that "the first thing" he'd do as president was sign a controversial abortion bill that opponents call a radical attack on the pro-life movement.

Responding to a question regarding how he would preserve reproductive rights in a speech given to the Planned Parenthood Action Fund on July 17, 2007, Obama said, "The first thing I'd do, as president, is sign the Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA). That's the first thing that I'd do."

The legislation makes the Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade decision federal law, and allows a woman to "terminate a pregnancy prior to fetal viability, or terminate a pregnancy after viability when necessary to protect her life or her health," among other provisions.

While the bill has not been signed, or even reached the floor of Congress for debate during the current session, pro-life advocates have leapt into action since Obama's election, and members of the Notre Dame community have joined the campaign to prevent the passage of the legislation.

Chief among the opposition to the bill at Notre Dame is the University's student Right to Life club, which has organized a postcard campaign as part of a national movement.

Christine Romero, a junior and Right to Life's legislative commissioner, called the bill "extremely radical, really draconian," and said that through the postcard campaign, students can "let our congressmen know that we feel it is inappropriate."

Romero said the club is working with Campus Ministry and dorms to facilitate the effort. Postcards, which are produced by the
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, are sent to congressmen, stating the constituent's opposition to FOCA.

The club ordered 12,000 postcards, Romero said. She noted that each person is able to send three to members of Congress - one to each of his state's Senators and one to his Representative.

Wednesday night, representatives from the club gathered signatures outside both South and North dining halls.

"We had a really great turnout," Romero said. She estimated around 1,200 individual postcards were signed.

In addition, Romero said that Campus Ministry has facilitated the distribution of postcards to every dorm through Campus Ministry commissioners.

In addition to supporters who mail their own cards, Right to Life, as well as some individual dorms, will fund the cost of postage, according to Romero and Brett Perkins, director of Catholic Peer Ministry for Campus Ministry.

"Our mission is one of solidarity with the voiceless and underprivileged, both women and unborn children," Perkins said. The postcards convey a message to officials that FOCA "is a poor piece of legislation, is clearly an offense to life … and does not promote the well being of women, let along their unborn children."

Angela Rossi, Campus Ministry commissioner for Cavanaugh Hall, said that her dorm was provided with 300 postcards, available for residents to sign. Cavanaugh will send the cards and pay the postage with discretionary funds, she said.

Rossi said the postcards coming from Notre Dame could have "a large effect," pointing out that students hail from all 50 states and have a diverse mix of congressmen and women.

Rossi said there has already been a response in Cavanaugh, but "participation could be greater than what it is."

"Maybe people are not aware enough, or maybe people don't understand everything about [this act]," she said.

Mary Daly, a junior and president of Right to Life, said that she knows Right to Life supporters are aware of the legislation, but was unsure how much other students knew about FOCA.

"My general impression is that people have heard of it. The extent to which people are aware of the details - people aren't as aware of that," she said.

Daly said some people argue the bill is unlikely to pass through congress, due to the many controversial provisions it includes, but Daly said there is value in voicing opposition to the bill, "letting [legislators] know that people are against it, despite the seeming impracticality of [it's passage]."

Romero said the response from Wednesday's postcard drive was mostly positive.

"A surprising amount of students already knew what FOCA was without us explaining it," she said.

Perkins agreed that he believes most students are aware "of the potential that FOCA legislation could be brought before congress, either in its entirety or piecemeal."

Overall, he said, "the response to the campaign has been very favorable."

Romero said that Right to Life would be collecting remaining cards from dorms that chose not to fund postage, and would mail them in the coming weeks.

* These articles have been reprinted here with the permission of The Observer. The Observer does not support or operate in affiliation with Right to Life; it is an independent student newspaper serving the Notre Dame and Saint Mary’s community.
HLA Insert and Discussion—Kevin Veselik

On Tuesday, February 10, ND Right to Life’s Pro-Life Presentation Committee hosted a discussion on the Human Life Alliance insert that ran in The Observer during the first week of February. The Human Life Alliance is non-profit, non-denominational, pro-life organization based in Minneapolis, Minnesota that works to protect human life from conception to natural death by publishing and distributing their twelve page advertising supplement entitled We Know Better Now. This insert includes free help lines for pregnancy help and post abortion help, reflections from men and women who have been a part of abortions, and articles on the long term effects of abortion, abortion methods, the development of the child in the womb, the staggering percentage of African American children that are aborted, how Margaret Sanger’s eugenic goals affected her founding of Planned Parenthood, the overpopulation myth, rape and incest, the link between abortion and breast cancer, and how hormonal forms of birth control can cause abortions.

Over thirty undergraduate and graduate students were present for the hour-long discussion. The group present agreed that the HLA insert was a good idea and a noble endeavor but that it seemed better suited for a high school audience. Yet the articles in the insert did provide extensive footnotes so that students could find more information than the brief article provided. We also discussed the many, many problems—both physical and psychological—that women who have had abortions face, how these post-abortion issues need to be exposed, and how more research and study on the effects of abortion on women needs to be done.

We also focused on how research has shown that all forms of hormonal contraceptives, including the pill, have the capability to cause an abortion since they have a back-up mechanism that thins the lining of the uterus to prevent implantation in case their contraceptive functions fail. If the contraceptives do not stop fertilization, they can cause an abortion by making the uterine lining too thin to implant and receive nourishment.

We discussed the overpopulation myth, why it is perpetuated, how it is often portrayed in developing countries, and how Europe is drastically declining in population. We also talked about how we can come to comprehend the huge number of lives taken daily and over the past 37 years from abortion. Finally, we discussed ways to get these issues more openly known to the campus so that people from the Right to Life club are not just talking to other Right to Life people about issues they agree on. To that end, the Pro-Life Presentation committee is planning another event in which professors will present the scientific facts and moral implications of abortion and to which we will invite many groups and departments from across campus. We decided that it is important for the pro-life voice to be heard in the Viewpoint section of The Observer.
This past February, the Notre Dame Right to Life club helped sponsor the fourth annual Edith Stein Project conference, which promotes an optimistic perspective on the future of the modern world through the affirmation of the dignity of the human person. The approximately $30,000, student-run conference is an initiative of the Identity Project of Notre Dame, a student club that aims to promote a positive approach to living our lives as college students in the modern world, in coherence with our identity and dignity as human persons. The idND club holds ongoing discussion meetings on topics ranging from authenticity to sexuality, hosts guest speakers, organizes outreach and social activities, and co-sponsors events with many other campus clubs to promote cultural change as it seeks to live out its motto: “idND: Discussing our true identity, restoring our human dignity…”

The Edith Stein Project first took place in 2006, the brainchild of a committed and diverse group of students, including members of a taskforce that had visited the UN to promote Catholic views on women’s issues. The co-founders of the project saw a need at Notre Dame and in the world for a positive perspective on issues affecting women and their role in society. The first conference was the fruit of many people coming together and helping make it happen. Edith Stein, now canonized as St. Theresa Benedicta of the Cross, was chosen as the patron of the conference because of her extensive philosophical work on woman and her heroic testament of martyrdom at Auschwitz. Both her writings and her life provide genuine inspiration to the women of today.

Since its first year, the Edith Stein Project has continued to emphasize the importance of addressing various issues of gender, sexuality, and human dignity by exploring what it means to be authentic women and men. Believing firmly that these issues are not solely women’s issues and that men and women must work together to come to a fuller understanding of each other and to promote deep and meaningful relationship, the Edith Stein Project, while it maintains a concentrated emphasis on woman and her roles, expands to embrace both men and women. In keeping with the overarching mission of the Identity Project of Notre Dame, the conference aims to provide a forum, open to all people, to discuss these issues and to discover positive solutions coherent with our inherent dignity as human persons.

This year a team of about 30 students, led by the three conference co-chairs and the committee heads, met weekly to plan and prepare for the February 13th-14th date. The theme chosen for this year’s conference was “Love: What Hurts and What Works: Engaging Self, Society, and God” and the schedule featured presentations on the distortion of love in such problems as eating disorders, pornography, sexual assault, domestic violence, and just plain selfishness as well as the restoration of love in authentic relationships, prayer, faithful marriage,
The Edith Stein Project 2009 opened Friday, February 13th with its keynote, Fr. Samuel Martin of the Archdiocese of LaSalle speaking on the conference theme: “Love: What Hurts and What Works.” Afterwards, psychologist Dr. Philip Mango spoke on the different ways men and women experience and express love; Dr. Tim Alan Gardner presented on his book *The Naked Soul: God’s Amazing, Everyday Solution to Loneliness* and living authentic relationships in the modern world; and Dr. Jeffrey Langan and ND student Patrick Tighe discussed the problem of pornography. Friday afternoon also included a much anticipated panel on true beauty and the hook-up culture featuring alumna Caroline Lashutka’s testimony on eating disorders and six undergraduate student’s thoughts on genuine beauty and the hook-up culture at Notre Dame. The conference room was filled to overflowing with students who came to consider the topic that hit so close to home. Bishop D’Arcy of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend also came and presided at the conference Mass and spoke about how we experience love in our different vocations over a pizza dinner Friday night. The final artistic presentation wrapping up the evening was highlighted by a selection of love songs performed by the popular Notre Dame all-men acappella group the Undertones.

Saturday kicked off in the morning with the renowned women’s historian Sr. Prudence Allen giving a powerful talk on the example of love in the life of Edith Stein. The rest of the day was filled with equally exciting speakers, including Dr. Janet Smith, and featured several striking panels. Dr. Dan McInerny and Dr. Gary Anderson presented on love in the movie “Juno” and the concept of family in the book of Ruth, respectively, and engaged in a lively and entertaining discussion afterwards bringing together the modern media and ancient Biblical texts. The afternoon featured a moving panel on sexual and domestic violence, as well as a panel on natural family planning featuring ND students Amy Kleczynski and her “Sex and Abstinence: the Perfect Couple” relating NFP to the Holy Family and Victor Saenz, current RTL vice-president, presenting his paper on Dostoevsky’s Grand Inquisitor and contraception. The conference concluded Saturday evening with a closing banquet featuring a brief reflection by Dr. Lawrence Cunningham on Pope Benedict XVI’s first encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est*.

For the fourth year, the Edith Stein Project engaged central issues and concerns that touch the very core of our being as human persons, and offered inspiration and optimistic solutions to address them in our lives. Whatever your worldview, religious or not, conservative or liberal, the Edith Stein Project relates to your life. The discussions started at the conference are meant to continue afterwards and to be brought into reality through actions in our daily lives. Reflecting on these issues of love and its distortion and restoration, the conference hoped to empower its audience to be able to make free and conscious decisions to live in accord with human dignity and to live true, authentic love – with ourselves, others, and God – and, ultimately, to become the people we are meant to be. All in all, the Edith Stein Pro-
ject 2009 lived its mission faithfully and compellingly, and powerfully impacted the minds and hearts of all those who attended. However, while the Edith Stein Project 2009 provided an abundance of ideas and inspirations to reflect on and implement in our lives, I am definitely looking forward to next year. Hope to see you there!

~ Joanna M. F. Emilian
Co-chair of the Edith Stein Project 2009
Vice President of idND
And Notre Dame Senior

For more information on the Edith Stein Project or idND, please visit www.nd.edu/~idND

Reaching Out…

Project Mom 2009—Mary Forr

This year Project Mom has been able to help a number of moms in crisis pregnancy situations. Starting in October, Project Mom raised over $400 to help make one mother’s pregnancy run a little bit smoother. We were able to purchase baby food, clothes, a bathtub, tons of diapers, and many other infant necessities. Since then, Project Mom raised over $1600 in monetary donations and $400 in material donations. With these donations we will be able to host another baby shower for up to six moms who could use a little extra help.

Through Project Mom, the students here at Notre Dame have been reminded of the hardships our heavenly mother, Mary, went through in order to choose life for our Savior. Like the mothers that Project Mom strives to help, our Blessed Mother did not have much clothing for her precious Child. She gave birth to Him in a stable, the humblest of all settings. Through Project Mom, we hope to live out Christ words in Matthew 25:35-40:

“For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed me…Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me. “

These mothers and their children are truly our brothers and sisters in Christ. As students at Our Lady’s university, we have been given so much. Project Mom is one way we can recognize the gifts we have been given and use them to help others.

At the baby shower in the fall it was amazing—the members of the Project Mom Commission went to the Women’s Care Center to host the shower. We brought with us baby gifts of all shapes and sizes. The woman we held the shower for left it with enough diapers to last a long time, a number of baby outfits, new bibs, baby food, baby detergent, and many other things. We gave away everything we brought with us—right down to the last cookie and piece of cake—but we left with so many gifts. The smile on the woman’s face as she opened the baby wrap carrier that she really wanted put a new found joy in our hearts. The laughter in her voice as she showed her husband the “Daddy’s Little Girl” bib, gave each of us that warm fuzzy feeling you get every time something beautiful happens. And the tears in
her eyes as she hugged each of us goodbye made us feel like we had given her the world—but at the same time it made us wish we could have given her more.

Though monetary and material donations help, they are not the things that make Project Mom a success. Love is the greatest gift given through Project Mom—it is passed from each of us to each mom, from each mom to her child, and from her child to the world—what a gift. ♠

Going Deeper…

Joseph — Mary Forr

Think back to your best childhood times, and remember the movie 101 Dalmatians. Picture the scene in which Lucky, the sensitive little pup, is shivering in the cold on the mountainside as the other puppies trudge on in freezing snow. With his teeth chattering Lucky whimpers, “I’m tired, and my nose is froze, and my tail is froze, and my toes is froze… and my nose is froze.” During most of the March for Life, I was just like Lucky. Although I was one of the only people on the bus with a seat to myself, I still got what I considered to be an insufficient amount of sleep the night before the March. I was not wearing the most comfortable shoes in the world, and even though it was fairly warm outside, my hands were freezing. Like Lucky, I wanted to just sit down on what seemed like a mountain as we climbed up to the capital building. And then… I met Joseph.

Joseph and I first became friends when I turned around and saw his mother and elderly friend desperately trying to keep him standing while continuing the strenuous hike past the capitol. I immediately hustled back to help them—Joseph had Downs Syndrome and a number of other disabilities, and as we struggled up the hill together with me supporting most of his weight, we became fast friends. Joseph’s knees and legs were very tired from walking—so much to the point that he did not want to walk at all. At times he would just pick up his legs causing his friend and I carry him up the hill. Though sometimes his legs stopped, his mouth never did. And in words that were not always easy to understand, Joseph explained to me that he was 14 years old, went to school each day, worked, loved to play basketball and football, and most importantly—was going on a date in three weeks. While the name of the lucky girl remained elusive, there were strong indications that I was that girl—I asked Joseph if this were the case, he merely laughed it off as if I was being ridiculous and asked me if I was going on any dates. When I said no—he said, “aahh NO WAYYYYY!” which I quickly found out was Joseph’s favorite phrase. He went on to tell me that he would take me on a date in two weeks. Joseph continued to explain to me all about his basketball and football adventures—his love for the Giants, and most importantly—how he had come to Washington, D.C. to march for life. This young man struggled to convey his thoughts and hopes to me, and excited exclaimed, perhaps his only completely coherent phrase, “aahh NO WAYYYYY!” each time he discovered we had something in common.

At the end of our strenuous journey Joseph told me he had a letter he wanted to give to President Obama. I have no idea what the exact words of the letter were, and I probably never will, but I do know that young men and women like Joseph are the reason I march each year. He wanted the president—and the world—to know how much he loved and respected the gift of life. Joseph knew more about life than anyone ever will. Joy radiated from his eyes, and while I stood there shivering in the cold, the happiness shining through him was warmer than the strongest ray of sunlight on that cold winter day. After being around him, I was suddenly no longer tired, my hands, though still chapped and wrinkled from the cold, did not hurt so badly, and my feet no longer ached with pain. I immediately realized that yes, I was just like the 101 Dalmatians pup… I was Lucky. ♠
Evangelium Vitae Conference Preview —Holly Klejeski

On March 27-28, students and faculty from Notre Dame and other colleges and universities will gather for our annual Collegiate Conference. The theme of this year’s Collegiate Conference is *You Did It for Me: For a New Culture of Human Life*, and we’re very excited about our speaker lineup and other arrangements. The Conference will begin on Friday evening with Mass in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart, followed by dinner and a lecture in the Oak Room of South Dining Hall. Saturday’s portion of the Conference will begin with Mass celebrated by Fr. Andrew Hofer, O.P. in Alumni Hall, and then continue in the Jordan Hall of Science.

This year’s speakers include Dr. Francis Beckwith, philosopher and this year’s Senior Visiting Fellow with Notre Dame’s Center for Ethics & Culture. Dr. Beckwith is author of the recent book *Defending Life: a Legal and Moral Case Against Abortion Choice*, and he will be speaking on “What the Abortion Debate Is Really About.” Also speaking will be Chris Godfrey, former NFL player, ND graduate, and founding president of Life Athletes, Inc. The title of his presentation is “Where Do You Live?” Lisa Everett from the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend’s Office of Family Life will be speaking on “The Family as the Sanctuary of Life”. Chaunie Brusie of Feminists for Life will present on “Say NO to the Status Quo: Support for Women and Children”, and researcher Dr. Elizabeth Shadigan will speak about the long-term health effects of abortion.

The conference schedule and registration is now available at [www.nd.edu/~prolife/conference](http://www.nd.edu/~prolife/conference). Registration is free and includes breakfast and lunch on Saturday. For those without Notre Dame meal plans, tickets for Friday’s dinner are available for $10.

Every year, participation by a broad group of speakers, faculty, and students makes the Collegiate Conference a valuable exchange of ideas and information, and we hope you can join us this year!

Looking Forward…

Pictures!
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May you be blessed with hope and strength this Lenten season!