



### Life Newsbytes

#### U.S. Birth Rate Falls to All-Time Low

– The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported in December that the U.S. birth rate fell less than one percent in 2013 from the previous year. This marks the lowest rate in births among women under 30 years of age, according to the new data. A total of 3,932,181 babies were born in the U.S. in 2013, down from a peak of 4.31 million in 2007. The U.S. fertility rate declined as well. The rate of 2.1 children per woman is necessary to keep the population steady—in 2013, women averaged only 1.87 children. (CDC's National Vital Statistics Report; CLR Life News, 12/11/14)

**The Supreme Court in England has rejected the opportunity to uphold the right of conscientious objection for senior midwives who refuse to supervise abortions performed in a labor ward.** Connie Wood and Mary Doogan were in a seven-year legal battle to secure the right to work in the National Health Service without being involved with abortion in any way. Paul Tully, General Secretary of the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children, said of Connie and Mary, “They have fought not only for their own careers, but for all current and future members of the profession who uphold the right to life of everyone, from the time of conception, without discrimination. We are bitterly disappointed for them.” (SPUC, 12/17/14)

### Speaking Up For Life

“What work has God prepared for you? (Ephesians 2:10) Is it helping a woman who is pregnant and alone? Is it ministering to someone who has had an abortion and can't believe that God would forgive her? Is it feeding the hungry? ... Whatever God has called you to do, do it with joy.” *Kay L. Meyer, former director of development for Lutherans For Life*

“From a pagan perspective, that which is in the womb is something. From a moral perspective, it is someone. But from a Christian perspective, it raises that which is in the womb to someone created by God, someone for whom Jesus died, and someone the Spirit desires to call into eternity. The same could be said of the embryo in the Petri dish or the elderly in the nursing home.” *Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb, executive director of Lutherans For Life*

“Pro-life parents should never compromise on the truth, but we should never neglect compassion, either. I believe it is very important to bring our children along and involve them in pro-life work. In the end, if pro-life parents are truthful, passionate, creative, caring, prayerful, and active, I believe we will go a long way in leading our children to life.” *Kristi Burton Brown, stay-at-home mom and pro-life attorney*

www.lutheransforlife.org/media/life-quotes

Life Sunday • Matters of the Heart

January 18, 2015

www.lutheransforlife.org/store-life-sunday-2015

## The Unassuming Epiphany by Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb

Happy New Year and happy Epiphany season! Epiphany slips in a bit more quietly than Christmas or Easter, but it offers great opportunities for life-affirming folks like you. Epiphany means “to reveal or make known.” Specifically, the focus is on making Jesus known to others as God.

*The Treasury of Daily Prayer*, published by CPH, said the following in the devotion for Epiphany, January 6: “The idea of Epiphany is that the Christ who was born in Bethlehem is recognized by the world as God. At Christmas, God appears as man, and at Epiphany, this man appears before the world as God” (1094). I suppose I could launch into an attack on this God-less world and decry its ever-increasing anti-Christian propaganda and pro-pagan behavior. This might make me feel better, but I doubt anyone would be listen or care if they were. “They know not what they do.”

We, on the other hand, do know what we do, or at least we're supposed to do! Before revealing Jesus as God to the world, it might be good to remind our own hearts and minds of this fact. Because God became human, it becomes an easy trap to humanize Him and in the process de-Deitize Him. We try to figure out the infinite God with our finite human capacity. Luther once said that if you can comprehend God, then he is not God. And it was God who once said, **“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts”** (Isaiah 55:9).

Our attempts to comprehend God do not materialize in some theological treatise. Rather more like, “Why is this happening to me?” or “Why would God allow her to suffer?” You know the questions. Maybe you have asked the questions. A good *person* with godly power would certainly intervene. Why not a good God with godly power? We equate divine goodness with human goodness and end up questioning and even despairing.

But divine goodness is not revealed in human circumstances. God reveals it in His Word and through His Word made flesh. Divine goodness is more about future holiness than present circumstances.

**“[H]e disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness”** (Hebrews 12:10). God's goodness was epitomized in the suffering and forsakeness of a cross on a *Good Friday*. God's goodness works in and through our suffering to bring about what we could never see or imagine.

God in a manger! God on a cross! God our Savior who works through suffering for our eternal good. Do not strive to comprehend it. Believe it and trust in it. And then share it! That brings us back to Epiphany's focus. The life issues that you are passionate about provide an opportunity, not just to speak up for the vulnerable, but also, to speak *to* the vulnerable about this God-baby and God-man who loves them and is at work in their lives for good.

Thank you for sharing this message. Thank you for supporting LFL as we share the message and equip others to do so.



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