

May
2017

www.lutheransforlife.org

**Life Newsbytes**

After struggling over medical assistance to end their patients' lives, some physicians are having second thoughts. Pro-life bills have been recently signed into law in Arkansas, Arizona, and Utah. In **Arizona**, Gov. Doug Ducey signed a measure giving additional legal protections to health care providers and institutions opposed to assisted suicide. SB 1439 “aims to help ensure doctors and nurses aren’t fired for their beliefs if the practice is ever legalized,” CNA News reported. In **Arkansas** Gov. Asa Hutchinson signed into law a bill imposing fines and prison time on doctors who perform abortions for the purpose of gender selection. The law imposes prison time of up to a year in prison and a maximum \$2,500 fine, as well as civil penalties. Arkansas joins Arizona, Kansas, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, and South Dakota in banning abortions based solely on the baby’s gender. In **Utah**, Gov. Gary Herbert signed a bill requiring abortion providers to inform women undergoing a chemical abortion that the abortion can be halted if they do not take the second of the two-drug RU486 abortion technique. The law, HB141, is scheduled to take effect in May. Utah becomes the third state to enact such legislation—joining Arkansas and South Dakota with similar laws. (*CLR LifeWire*, 3/30/17)

Since 1973: 58,586,256 abortions in America

Source: www.lifenews.com

Speaking Up For Life

“We have been among the living from our first moments inside our mothers. God’s holy angels and many wonderful people worked very hard to keep it that way. Because they did, we have fulfilling lives in Jesus Christ. And there is hope for others through us as we live for Him. We owe a great debt. Let us pay it forward as guardians of life and hope.” *Jason Nelson, www.timeofgrace.org*

“It is God’s design that the marital union of man and woman become the nest for new life, the foundation for home and family. Sin has distorted God’s perfect design, but even in disappointment and difficulty, a faithful marriage is the bedrock of a finely tuned and healthy society.” *Linda Bartlett, former president of Lutherans For Life*

“If you keep thinking of your life—which is utterly unique in the entire universe!—as a true gift, you will draw nearer to the Giver of that gift.” *James M. Kushiner, The Fellowship of St. James*

www.lutheransforlife.org/media/life-quotes

For those who have had an abortion—a **Word of Hope**.

888.217.8679

www.word-of-hope.org

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What's in a Name? (Luke 20:34-38) by Rev. Michael Salemink

My wife wouldn't let me name our son "Judas." And as much as I argued that this edgy appellation embodies my family's Greek heritage and derives from one of Israel's tribes—the Messiah's own line!—she had it right. Christians don't call their children Judas. We don't want them following in Iscariot's footsteps.

Judas Iscariot has the saddest story in all of Scripture. **“I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.’ They said, ‘What is that to us? See to it yourself’ ... and he went and hanged himself”** (Matthew 27:4-5), **“turned aside to go to his own place”** (Acts 1:25b).

How Jesus must have grieved him. **“I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord God”** (Ezekiel 18:32)—not even the wicked (Ezekiel 18:23). God our Savior **“desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth”** (1 Timothy 2:4). Chosen above others and three years beloved, Jesus walked side by side and worked shoulder to shoulder with Judas. Yet God's own life sacrificed, heart broken open, and love poured out did not prevail to save him. Surely His sorrow exceeded even His lament over Jerusalem's rejection, **“How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!”** (Matthew 23:37), and eclipsed His ache at dear ones distancing themselves, **“After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. So Jesus said to the Twelve, ‘Do you want to go away as well?’”** (John 6:66-67).

If only Judas had acknowledged that even in death the Almighty undoes evil. Even delivering God's Son into death doesn't amount to an unforgivable sin. Jesus freely underwent punishment precisely to prevent it from falling upon anyone else. He suffered on purpose to intercede and atone for, to redeem and reconcile the very one who brought about His execution. **“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do”** (Luke 23:34a). Jesus hung so that Judas and every other sinner wouldn't have to. As nobody's good works can earn God's compassion and salvation, so no one's wrongdoings can ruin it. Had Judas' regret given way to repentance, confessing complete weakness and abandoning even suicide as a last act of self-justification, he too would have beheld paradise that day and been welcomed into God's gracious favor beside Jesus.

Abortion cannot cast anyone outside Christ's mercy-reach. Suicide doesn't lie beyond God's absolving grasp. Adulterers, abusers, addicts, politicians, prostitutes, perverts, and even advocates of all the above have not committed unforgivable sins. Christ crucified, resurrected, reigning, and coming again means hope and healing for all sins and every single sinner, no matter how great. Satan's fate only befalls the one who deliberately declines the Lord's deliverance altogether. Judas' place awaits only the one who persistently denies the Savior—and not because of the refusal's magnitude but because of its nature, excluding oneself even though our Heavenly Father has declared pardon.

You can't make up for your misdeeds—and you don't need to. He who created, redeemed, and called even Judas for eternal unity also arrived, died, and abides for you. In Christ God gives Himself and His whole kingdom for the guilty, the ungodly, the enslaved, and the enemy (Romans 5:6-10). Whatever you have done or can't do, He forgives—yes, even crimes against life. His grace makes you as precious as the unborn, as respected and protected as the infirm, as prized and praised as the angels and saints of heaven itself, and as dear and beloved as God's own Son. Your life, impaired and uncomfortable and ugly as it may seem, is worth saving, worth having, worth living—if not to you, then still to our Lord God Almighty, and to His people. Here we stand, in Easter joy, for the wounded to have abundant, everlasting life. Lutherans For Life promises to proclaim it to everyone. Let us prove it to you.

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