

Respect Life Article for October 23, 2022

Article links for this week:

<https://wordonfire.institute>

<https://www.wofdigital.org>

<https://churchlifejournal.nd.edu/articles/misunderstanding-the-rise-of-the-nones>

[https://www.usccb.org/about/pro-life-activities/upload/wwmin-prayer-card-pregnant-mothers-eng-low-res.pdf.](https://www.usccb.org/about/pro-life-activities/upload/wwmin-prayer-card-pregnant-mothers-eng-low-res.pdf)"

Approaching the Nones and Others – Short of a miracle, changing laws and practices hostile to life will require a change in culture. This is true not merely for “Nones” – those who don’t identify with any religion, but also for those who profess Catholicism but reject its teaching on central matters of life such as abortion, assisted suicide and family. Currently, there are two schools of thought. One is to provide more effective catechesis to all. A prominent proponent of this approach is Bishop Robert Barron, whose Word on Fire apostolate offers splendid catechetical and apologetic material designed to reveal the beauty and cogency of the Catholic faith. A second approach, while not downplaying the first’s contribution, argues that people do not “choose their actions and identity *primarily* on the basis of theological belief.” In his article *Misunderstanding the Rise of the Nones*, Phil Davignon, Associate Professor and Chair of Sociology at Union University, explains: “[T]hose who become religious Nones are likely to draw on common critiques of religion to explain their new non-religious identity, but ultimately their *disaffiliation was only possible because their imagination*—formed through a lifetime of experiences—*was already thoroughly secular.*” George Weigel makes the same point. The Church is swimming against a furious and vicious secular tide. Today’s cultural signals form and lure the Nones and offer believers a justification for dissent. Not surprisingly, teaching doctrine remains essential, but the task of forming people in a Catholic vision of reality should be prioritized. Both approaches recognize the key role we laity have in changing culture by *personal witness in the way we live our everyday life*. After all, nothing attracts more than a life well lived in conformity to Christ. Mother Teresa of Calcutta is an exemplar. Of her likes, even the hardened hearts cry out: “See how they love one another.” And you don’t need to be canonized to influence culture or get to heaven. Even parents who may not be especially theologically adept can successfully pass on the faith to their children through their witness in everyday life. Our personal witness can help change the secular to a Catholic imagination which even today’s dominant post-modern media won’t be able to suppress.

Quotes – * “Mary, Mother of the Church, graciously help us build a culture of life and a civilization of love, together with all people of good will, to the praise and glory of God, the Creator and lover of life. Amen.” — USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, “A Prayer for Pregnant Mothers,” * “I would now like to say a special word to women who have had an abortion. The Church is aware of the many factors which may have influenced your decision, and she does not doubt that in many cases it was a painful and even shattering decision. The wound in your heart may not yet have healed. ...But do not give in to discouragement and do not lose hope. ...The Father of mercies is ready to give you his forgiveness and his peace in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.” — Pope Saint John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*, no. 99. © 1995, Libreria Editrice Vaticana. Used with permission. All rights reserved.

Our Prayers – * That the life of every person, from conception to natural death, will be protected in our laws and cherished in our hearts; *We pray to the Lord:* * For women and men suffering after abortion: May the Church’s abortion healing ministry, Project Rachel, help them find peace and healing through Christ’s endless mercy; *We pray to the Lord:*