

The painful effects of disunity



Most of my Saturdays recently have had an early-to-rise schedule as we head back to “normal.” Finally, on one less-hecktic Saturday, at the majestic Old St. Patrick’s Cathedral, which is a basilica, I went to Mass in Spanish. No, Lopez doesn’t speak Spanish, but it was the only early Mass nearby. It reminds me a bit of doing the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola – a 30-day retreat – a few years back in Assisi. As with Spanish, I can understand Jesus and mercy pretty clearly – and you can’t go too wrong with that and the Real Presence.

Rather innocently – cluelessly, really – I walked down the block to Planned Parenthood to pray the Rosary. When available, an abortion clinic always seems the right place to pray the Rosary. Unfortunately, the clinic was open and welcoming girls early in the morning.

Praying and sidewalk counseling can be brutal. It helps when there are others there. As I approached the street across from the entrance, I saw two young men, who I assumed were praying. Soon, another young man from Mass joined our side of the street. At one point, I heard one of the initial pair saying, “and he says he’s a Christian man.” After time passed, a Protestant pro-life counselor I’ve gotten to know arrived and warmly greeted me with a hug.

The unity at the front lines among Christians is typically moving. A few weeks ago, I shared the Sisters of Life Litany of Trust with a young Protestant man who was still seeking a spiritual home, and he was grateful. Normally, if newcomers show up, once they see a cross, they don’t try to tell you about their church. “You know Christ,” one said recently. I

try to more and more each day!

But once the sidewalk counselor arrived, one of the young men decided to start preaching – to the Catholics. He opened by giving lip service to love but then went on to excoriate the two obvious Roman Catholics (a rosary in hand kind of gives things away) for not knowing Christ. He has saved you, period.

Yes, he has saved me. But I am still a weak, pathetic sinner. So, we love more and go to him more for his love so we can be his love in the world. But I didn't get into it with him. He was on his crusade and didn't look like he was into listening to a Roman Catholic.

And as he ranted, young women walked into the abortion clinic. As he focused on us, [love](#) sure didn't seem to be on display. I'm sure he thought he was loving the two of us by trying to pound Catholicism out of us. But as I tried to not be distracted, and honestly, distraught, I saw hearts hardening in the Planned Parenthood escorts and security.

As he focused on us, could Christ's love be seen on that street? The devil must have salivated at the disunity on display that helped girls race into the clinic all the quicker. They don't need yelling. They need to be loved back to life so they know they can be the mothers they are.

People are talking about [what the Supreme Court may or may not do](#) about *Roe v. Wade*. But what are we going to do in our communities to help women see love, be loved, know love, and ultimately be love to the children they didn't plan but who they are the mothers of? Can there be any doubt that Christ would want us to [join together in his love](#) to save their hearts and the lives of their unborn babies? If we aren't even Christians to fellow Christians standing on an extremely hostile street corner to the message of life in the womb, how are scared pregnant girls ever going to believe we are heralds

of anything trustworthy?

My Baptist brother was right about one thing: I don't know Christ as I ought – I am a sinner. Christ is my savior, and I am a lowly work in progress.

Let's keep [loving together in Christ](#) to the promise of heaven. That's what we need to do for a culture of life and a civilization of love. Anything else is from hell.

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