

OUR CITY COUNCIL EXPOSED: A 32-SECOND ECHO CHAMBER

How ironic that on the same afternoon (March 4) that the Pioneer Press ran a feature about the joyous addition of a new baby girl to the family of one of our capital city's key leaders, our seven-member St. Paul City Council voted **unanimously 7-0** to recognize March 10, 2020 as **Abortion Providers Appreciation Day**. The first sentence of the City Council's webpage reads: "As the legislative body, the City Council is responsible for setting City policy through ordinances and resolutions." **Res 20-416** was introduced by Councilmember **Rebecca Noecker** (Ward 2- West Side, downtown) in honor of abortion providers and endeavors to "celebrate the courage, compassion, and high-quality care that they provide." Evidently, we citizens are left to infer that "to celebrate" abortion is henceforth official city policy. Abortion is amongst the most contentious issues in society, yet clearly not for our City Council. I scheduled a meeting with my Councilmember to express my concerns.

Here is the historical backstory. An abortionist by the name of Dr. David Gunn was killed by an activist on March 10, 1993 in Pensacola, FL. That murder was soundly **condemned** by every noted **pro-life leader** at the time. Pensacola is a 19-hour, 1,216-mile drive from St. Paul City Hall. **Q:** For what possible reason would this resolution be introduced in 2020, twenty-seven years after the fact? **A:** Pure and **unbridled ideology**, period. The published agenda for the March 4, 2020 meeting lists the Resolution as part of the "Consent Agenda." Council rules state: "Items listed under the Consent Agenda will be enacted by one motion with **no separate discussion**. If discussion on an item is desired, the item will be removed from the Consent Agenda for separate consideration." (my emphasis added) The Council's intent was to pass this item **without any public input** whatsoever. It was never offered for public discussion at the Council meeting.

The title of the resolution reads: "Recognizing March 10, 2020 as Abortion Providers Appreciation Day in Saint Paul, to honor the memory of Dr. David Gunn and the many other abortion providers and clinic staff face [sic] who support patients' reproductive choices." The final resolution is replete with hyper-sensitive language, **lest anyone be offended**. The resolution's initial version included this: "WHEREAS, abortion providers and clinic staff help to ensure that all women, trans men, and other people who can become pregnant..." The final version reads: "WHEREAS, abortion providers and clinic staff help to ensure that all people who can become pregnant can make their own decisions about their bodies and their pregnancies, and support their patients' decisions by treating them with dignity, compassion, and respect;" You can research these and other resolution details by clicking [here](#) (online version).

The resolution was the very **first item** after the approval of the agenda. It begins at the 3:42 minute mark of the meeting video. "Any discussion on that motion...?" may be heard at the 4:07 mark. I confirmed in a phone call with the City Clerk that the "motion" in question referred only to the change of language detailed above, not the merits of the resolution itself. That was never in question. **Two seconds later** at 4:09, "Seeing none, all in favor say aye..." The video reveals that one councilmember is entering something in his cell phone, while another adjusts her wristwatch. The others mostly are looking down at their laptops. The resolution was adopted at the 4:14 mark, meaning that a grand total of **32 seconds elapsed** from the resolution's introduction to its **final 7-0 approval**. At least our City Council is efficient while simultaneously **offending tens of thousands** of Saint Paul residents for whom **life in the womb** has meaning and value.

No discussion and most certainly no dissent! Our City Council after all, is an **echo chamber**, comprised entirely of individuals who think alike on this and most other issues. The nonchalant manner with which it was approved was as astonishing as it was tragic. Any tangible concern of offending pro-life constituents is absent, ignored amidst the **tone deafness** of our councilmembers who so needlessly dismissed the feelings of all who value life in the womb. After all, why on earth would anyone dissent or possibly be offended by this resolution? This is what happens in an echo chamber– you **hear only** your own voice. Perhaps Council leaders are nervous that public opinion is increasingly in favor of increased restrictions on late-term abortions?

This echo chamber has created an oversight vacuum, evidenced all throughout our city: outrageous budget spikes, both with school renovations (from \$291 to \$471 million) and Ayd Mill Road (from \$5.2 to \$9.8 million);

trash collection woes, Light Rail safety, etc. This latest act of ideological virtue signaling took just a half-minute of their time, before moving on to more pressing business of the city. In 2018, abortion claimed 10,000 lives in Minnesota, 60% of them at Planned Parenthood of Minnesota facilities in Saint Paul and Rochester. Our capital city describes itself as **“The most livable city in America.”** Except of course, for **unborn life** in the womb. In this town, as far as our City Council is concerned, their voices remain unheard.

- Though I am neither a film critic, nor certainly a fan of Hollywood, you may be interested in seeing a 90-minute docudrama entitled **“I am Patrick.”** Screenings will be at **6:30 pm** for just two days– March 17 and 18 at the following theaters: AMC Rosedale 14, Oakdale Cinema and the AMC Southdale in Edina. Produced by the Christian Broadcast Network, it tells the story of St. Patrick through historical re-enactments, interviews and the saint’s own writings.
- It’s a miracle! Well, not quite. But in the Italian town of **Castelvetro**, located 25 miles west of Bologna, **wine flowed freely** from the **faucets** in homes of its residents. And for more than three hours, no less! A malfunction at a local winery sent 1,000 liters of ready-to-be-bottled red wine through the water pipes of about 20 homes Even the shower heads poured forth the local red wine. *Cin cin!*
- At the request of the Holy Father, dioceses are again hosting “24 Hours for the Lord,” a confession marathon highlighting God’s mercy this Lent. Beginning this Friday March 20 at 12:00 Noon and continuing until Noon on Saturday, our confessional light will be on and the Blessed Sacrament exposed for **Adoration**. God’s mercy is stronger than any sin we could commit. I am grateful for the visiting priests who will help us fill all the slots.
- Thank you for your understanding our Communion protocol changes in light of the **Coronavirus**. All public Masses have been suspended in Rome until April 3, and the entire nation is effectively under quarantine. Still, we ought not to panic but remain prudent and vigilant. We have an outstanding health system in this country.
- Still pondering my 2020 **Twins prediction**. With an early March 26 Opener in Oakland, I’ll have to commit by next Sunday’s bulletin. Baseball should never start before April– period!

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. John L. Ubel,
Rector