

Father Frank Pavone

Father Frank Pavone, a key proponent of the Roman Catholic Church's pro-life movement, has devoted his life's work to ending abortion, euthanasia, embryonic stem cell research, and other techniques and procedures that he believes threaten human life from conception to death. His contributions to the pro-life movement include founding a new religious order called the Missionaries of the Gospel of Life and participating in high-profile protests and television interviews for the pro-life cause. In doing so, his actions and efforts have helped define the Catholic Church's stance on modern issues regarding embryology and reproductive rights.

Born 4 February 1959 to Marion and Joseph Pavone in Port Chester, New York, Pavone quickly realized his passion for the Church and the defense of the unborn. After graduating from high school as class valedictorian, Pavone turned down several offers from Ivy League universities to attend Don Bosco College and Seminary in New Jersey. Again graduating as valedictorian with both a teaching certificate and a degree in philosophy, Pavone joined the Salesian order as a brother in 1982. In 1984 he entered St. Joseph's Theological Seminary in New York where he obtained a master's in theology and degrees in Sacred Scripture. He was ordained into the priesthood on 12 November 1988 and spent several years serving various New York parishes. It was during this time that he initiated a series of religious and pro-life educational programs as well as a television show designed to expand his ministries.

Father Lee Kaylor, the founder of Priests for Life, passed on his organization to Pavone on 1 September 1993. Pavone quickly increased the group to its present size and helped make Priests for Life an international pro-life group of clergy and laypeople. Though his actions and beliefs have at times caused considerable controversy, he has devoted himself to fulfilling the pro-life mission as laid out by Pope John Paul II in his encyclical "Evangelium Vitae", or "The Gospel of Life". His work with Priests for Life has taken him around the world to speak to pro-life audiences, address national and state governments, train and motivate clergy to be more active pro-life advocates, and expand his ministries through frequent appearances on national television programs and widespread publications. In addition Pavone received papal permission in 2004 to found a religious order devoted entirely to pro-life work and the mission laid out in "Evangelium Vitae," for which he now serves as the founder and first Moderator General for the Missionaries of the Gospel of Life.

Pavone has authored numerous articles and several books, among them *The Ashes Still Remain*, and *Ending Abortion, Not Just Fighting It*. He is also known for his ability to work with people from every faith background and belief system on life issues. For example Pavone worked with Norma McCorvey, better known as Jane Roe from the landmark Supreme Court case (*Roe v. Wade*) legalizing abortion in 1973. His and others' efforts at communication with McCorvey culminated in her reversal of opinion on the matter of abortion and her conversion back to Catholicism in 1998.

In addition to his work with Priests for Life, Pavone serves on boards of multiple national right-to-life groups, most notably as the National Director of Priests for Life, President of the National Pro-Life Religious Council, and Pastoral Director of Rachel's Vineyard. He also contributes as an advisor or board member for groups such as America's Crisis Pregnancy Helpline, the Common Ground Network for Life and Choice, the Ivy League Coalition for Life, the Center for Bioethical Reform, the Focus on the Family Institute, and the Society of Saint Gianna Beretta Molla. In addition, he served as an official for the Vatican's Pontifical Council for the Family. He remains active in television, radio, and print outreach on a daily basis and his dedication to promoting the pro-life mission has earned him the highest honor from the National Right to Life Committee: the Proudly Pro-Life Award.

In keeping with the Church's comprehensive pro-life position, Pavone defends the idea of a human

right to life from conception until death. His rejection of embryonic stem cell research, human cloning, abortifacient contraceptives, and abortions at any stage of pregnancy demonstrates his full support of the Catholic Church's doctrines concerning embryology as laid out by other Church leaders. Pavone has been aided in his endeavors by Pope John Paul II and Mother Teresa, both vocal advocates for Pavone and his efforts during their lifetimes. He remains dedicated to the advancement of the pro-life cause around the world, and his impact on the Roman Catholic Church's approach to life issues and reproductive concerns is not likely to be short-lived.

Sources

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