

greater acceptance of the need for state intervention, and focus on curbing the excesses of state power through subsidiarity. What the rise of Donald Trump may portend for the development of American conservatism is a topic Krason does not here consider, but his treatment provides an excellent foundation for assessing the often-heated arguments for and against proposed recalibrations to the contemporary conservative approach.

Informative and stimulating, this book will be of value to those new to Catholic social thought and those seeking to refine their understanding of its contemporary prospects. It ought to be in the hands of anyone interested in the revival of liberty and justice amidst the creeping chaos and collectivism of contemporary political society.

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Frederick W. Marks, *Pro-Life Champion: The Untold Story of Monsignor Philip J. Reilly and His Helpers of God's Precious Infants*. CreateSpace, 2017.

Monsignor Philip J. Reilly's many years of experience in the pro-life movement have convinced him that shouting out against the injustice of abortion produces limited results. He has learned instead to apply wisely and effectively the biblical maxim that there is a time to be silent as well as a time to speak (Ecclesiastes 3:7). Accordingly, Monsignor Reilly, founder of the Helpers of God's Precious Infants, cautions members of this group to follow a strict regimen when witnessing at abortion sites. Author Frederick W. Marks notes that the Helpers' day at these sites includes prayer, compassionate speech, and reverential silence. Marks, a teacher and historian, chronicles the stages that led to the establishment of this format along with the many blessings that have followed. His description of Reilly's earlier dramatic attempts to stir the conscience of an indifferent public combined with vivid examples of his disarming sense of humor bring welcome relief to an otherwise heavy subject. Reilly's pattern of perseverance will strengthen and inspire those who feel discouraged by this ongoing battle for life.

After briefly describing the history of abortion and of the pro-life movement, Marks sketches Reilly's formative years, his advancement to the priesthood, and his initial parish assignments. These were capped by twenty-six years of service at Cathedral Preparatory High School and

Seminary in Brooklyn. As early as the 1960s, this newly ordained priest, who saw signs that New York was moving towards liberalizing its abortion law, became active in the pro-life cause. As so many others were to do, Father Reilly tried writing and lobbying legislators in Albany, and participating in street demonstrations. Nevertheless, in 1970 New York State legalized abortion, and in 1973 the Supreme Court opened the door for federal funding by making it the law of the land. Reilly responded by holding back part of his taxes.

Over the next few decades, Reilly attempted various ways to raise awareness concerning the plight of preborn babies. These included participating in a hundred-mile march in California's Death Valley and acts of civil disobedience, such as blocking abortion entrances, which eventually led to six arrests. By 1989 he recognized that these efforts were producing too little of lasting value, and he began the Helpers of God's Precious Infants. Although he wanted the law changed, the primary purpose of the format he developed for the Helpers was to change hearts. This long-term goal has become increasingly popular among seasoned right-to-lifers who believe that only then will a meaningful change take place in society. Reilly aims to change the hearts not only of those seeking abortion, but also of those who enable it to proceed, admittedly a huge undertaking. The author notes that the Helpers' prayerful presence at abortion facilities affects even those who casually pass by. Because Reilly's method has been recognized as effective, he has been called upon to educate others about it both at home and abroad. Indeed, Marks reports that, in addition to establishing chapters in most major U.S. cities, Reilly has done so in thirty other countries as well.

Monsignor Reilly considers prayer essential to the groups' success and Marks offers ample proof of its positive results. Before proceeding to an abortion site, Helpers attend Mass. They also pray specified mysteries of the rosary before, during, and after they witness. Equally important, they are strengthened by the prayers their founder elicits from others, particularly from students, the sick and aged, and consecrated religious. Stricter than most pro-life leaders, Reilly counsels against anything that seems confrontational, including carrying placards, chanting slogans, or manifesting a readiness to debate while at these sites. But he does promote tactfully offering help and allows the distribution of select handouts. He directs Helpers to maintain a reverent silence at or near abortion sites when not at prayer. In an age of constant chatter, whether person-to-person or via some media device, this reverential silence attests to the seriousness of the life-ending procedures performed there. It also contrasts with other

more vocal pro-life demonstrations, such as those Reilly attended earlier in his priestly career.

Although the author contends that before Reilly's founding of the Helpers, the pro-life movement was heading towards violence, this supposition rests on media reports that frequently attribute individual acts of violence to the movement as a whole. As Marks himself points out, by giving this impression, abortion providers create a stumbling block for would-be pro-life activists who fear being connected with "bombers" and "murderers." Interestingly, Marks relates some of the shrewd practices Reilly employs to counteract unfounded propaganda when it is directed at his Helpers. Like any good chess player, Reilly, who headed Cathedral Prep's chess club, appears to be well practiced in thinking ahead and remaining flexible in the face of change. For instance, suspecting foul play, Reilly once canceled a vigil and showed up alone. Representatives from pro-abortion groups, who had previously alerted the media, arrived with prepared statements maligning the activity of the Helpers. However, none were there. Reilly's simple move had thwarted their contentious plans, leaving them at odds with the newsmen.

Admirably, the many roadblocks Reilly has encountered neither discourage nor stop him, nor does he merely accept them as the inevitable price one must pay for doing God's work. Instead, he rejoices, taking them as signs that what he is about to accomplish will turn out well. In one of the long, memorable quotes that Marks includes, Monsignor Reilly reminds the Helpers point-by-point how through their work "they perform the spiritual works of mercy": Instructing the ignorant, counseling the doubtful, admonishing sinners (albeit very gently), bearing wrongs patiently, forgiving offenses, comforting the afflicted, and praying for the living and the dead—imitable practices for those who might follow. All those interested in the pro-life movement, its history, and its heroes should put this book on their priority reading list.

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