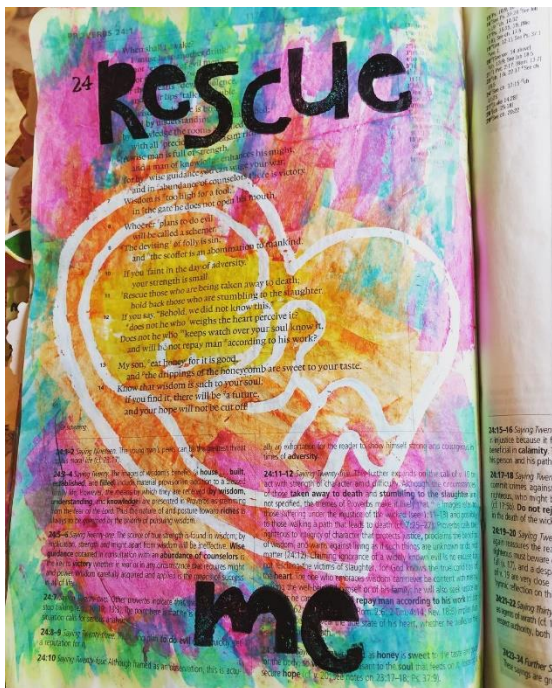


# In Defense of Rescues July, 2017

Hi —this is Monica Migliorino Miller, director of Citizens for a Pro-Life Society and author of **Abandoned—The Untold Story of the Abortion Wars**

On May 13<sup>th</sup> 2017, ten members of the pro-life group Operation Save America conducted a rescue at a Louisville, KY abortion center. These pro-lifers engaged in what they called a non-violent, biblically-based act of interposition on behalf of their brothers and sisters—namely unborn children—who were scheduled to be put to death. These rescuers blocked the doors to the abortion clinic and have been charged with violating the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act—a law passed by Congress and signed by then President Bill Clinton in May 1994. This law, among other reasons, contributed to ending what had been for decades a very vibrant and effective Pro-Life Rescue Movement.



A rescue of the unborn takes its name from Proverbs 24:11: “Rescue those being dragged to death, and from those tottering to execution withdraw not.” Acting on these words of God that call for action on behalf of the oppressed, thousands of pro-lifers blocked the doors to abortion clinics all over the country.

A rescue of this type may be likened to sit-in activity that could result in the arrest of participants—it is an action that encompasses civil disobedience.

Now that 10 pro-lifers took it upon themselves to conduct a rescue of the unborn in Louisville, a debate has erupted regarding whether rescues of the unborn should be done. Those who denounce rescues have been quite vocal, taking to social media to argue their position, particularly those involved in sidewalk counseling apostolates.



It is important for you to know that I have sidewalk counseled for nearly 40 years. Sidewalk counselling is incredibly important, absolutely necessary pro-life work! Without this outreach to the mothers and witness to life at the very places where the unborn die, we are not a movement.

But let's examine the arguments against rescues at abortion clinics. Many who oppose rescues say that this action is not peaceful, not prayerful, not pro-woman, and fault it for not being law-abiding.

To characterize rescues as not peaceful is based on a most narrow, restricted idea of what constitutes true peace. Those who in a non-violent manner stand or sit in front of the door to a killing center are the true advocates of peace—keeping in mind the necessity to always behave in a loving and prayerful manner.

Yes, they are disrupting the clinic in the sense that they are disrupting the killing of the unborn, but this does not mean that their action is not peaceful. The disruption of an injustice, the prevention of acts of aggression against the weak and vulnerable are acts of peace. It is wrong to characterize acts of disruption with the absence of peace.

The critics of the pro-life rescue wish to wrap themselves exclusively in the mantle of peace—and superficially characterize any sort of confrontational action as lacking peace when this is quite false.

Critics of rescues say that the rescuers are not pro-woman. In other words, blocking doors to the clinic or chaining oneself to abortion equipment are actions that “fail to genuinely win the heart of a woman considering abortion, leading to less lives saved.” But those who are not familiar with rescues don't understand

that this is not an either/or situation. Plenty of sidewalk counseling takes place while a rescue is in progress. Indeed, rescues may give the sidewalk counselors added time to talk to the moms coming to the clinic. Sidewalk counseling should take place while a rescue is in progress.

Moreover, perhaps we need to start thinking about other types of rescues—and not simply limit ourselves to the more common activity of blocking clinic entrances which will most likely result in rescuers being charged with the FACE law.

A rescue can be done without blocking anything—and yet be a more direct defense on behalf of the unborn.

Here is what the critics of rescues fail to appreciate. At least 95 percent of the mothers entering an abortion center will not be reached by sidewalk counseling—they will enter the death centers and kill their children. Should charity then end for those innocent unborn about to be executed? Do our acts of defense for the



innocent unborn stop at the doorway of the killing centers simply because the law forbids us to defend them? —and frankly these are unjust laws designed to protect the killing. Should we do nothing more for these babies once their mothers still intend to abort them? If we put ourselves in the place of the unborn schedule to die, would we not want someone to at least plead for our lives up to the very end?

The rescuer is performing an act of love, an act of charity on behalf of that abandoned baby—and yes, really, as beacons of truth and light, they perform an act of love for those abortion-bound women as well! The pro-life movement needs these radical acts of love.

To be overly obsessed with law-abiding when a law is unjust is not a virtue. No one should ever make a pledge to never break the law when charity towards others may require that laws be broken!

A legitimate concern is raised that rescues of the unborn may result in the enactment of buffer zones and negatively impact sidewalk counseling efforts. This is an issue to which rescuers need to be sensitive and about which prudence should be exercised. Sadly, however, there are plenty of clinics that have no consistent sidewalk counseling if any sidewalk counseling at all. Those clinics should be given the priority, or those who plan to do a rescue should first consult with the sidewalk counselors and obtain their cooperation, knowing what may be the risks involved. But in any case, rescues should not be opposed strictly because of this reason. Why? Because the fact is that the unborn scheduled to be slaughtered have a moral right to a defense, they have a moral right not to die alone.

I hope this short video will give you something to ponder in defense of rescues of the unborn. Indeed, I hope that you would support the rescue effort and if God's wills, even participate in them. To learn more about our work—see [prolifesociety.com](http://prolifesociety.com) And let us work and pray to end abortion.