

**“Why are u still here. Clearly no one wants you.”**

That was just one of the many disturbing text messages sent through an anonymous third-party website to a Texas schoolgirl, Shea Shawhan. A gentle and kind teenager, Shea suffered a frontal-lobe brain injury at birth and was taking special education classes at Plano West High School when she began receiving the anonymous texts last February. Though Shea has the mental capacity of an 8-year-old, she was able to read and understand the hateful notes mocking her appearance, ridiculing the seizures brought on by her disability, and branding her despised and unwanted.

Only after months of being threatened repeatedly and even urged to take her own life was Shea finally free of her tormentor. In October, detectives finally arrested a juvenile known to Shea and her family and charged the bully with misdemeanor harassment. But Shea’s family—and the thousands of viewers who learned of her story through national media—were left wondering how anyone could be (in the words of Shea’s mother) “so evil and cold” as to wish death on an innocent child.

### **THROWN AWAY, AS IF WE WERE TRASH**

Respect for the dignity of every human life has long been a concern of Catholics. “The human person is in danger,” Pope Francis recently warned, because modern priorities are so badly misplaced. In our “throwaway culture,” he says, it is not even newsworthy when a homeless person dies in the streets, but every shift in the stock market excites us. No surprise, then, when “people are thrown away, as if we were trash.”

Sometimes this is literally true of those whom the pope calls “the most defenseless and innocent among us,” unborn children. *Every Child a Wanted Child* is a popular slogan of the abortion-rights movement. But the slogan does not mean we should “want”—and shower with love—every child God sends our way. Instead, it implies that being “wanted” is a measure of a human being’s worth, even an individual’s right to live. That’s why the pope insists that “defense of unborn life is closely linked to the defense of each and every other human right,” particularly the rights of the most vulnerable among us, for whom Catholics should have “a particular love and concern.”

### **STAND UP, DON’T STAND BY**

Fortunately, love and concern can still thrive in today’s culture. Within 24 hours after Shea’s mother launched the *Imwithshea* website to support her child, 19,000 followers had signed up. After news of the cyberbullying reached her classmates, many arrived at the next Friday football game wearing “I’m with Shea” and “Stand Up, Don’t Stand By” T-shirts. Invited to a Dallas Mavericks preseason game, Shea posed with basketball players, cheerleaders, and the team owner. Before long, says her mother, they could not go out without hearing friendly shouts of “There’s Shea!” Best of all, Shea herself addressed the bully with a message every pro-life Catholic should echo: “It doesn’t matter if you don’t like me. I’m going to like you anyways, because that’s what I do.”

*Want to stand up instead of standing by? January marks the 41<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the US Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion. For information about **Stand for Life** plans in the Atlanta archdiocese, visit <http://www.archatl.com/ministries/respectlife/stand/>*

*Our Lady of Lourdes Monthly Calendar*

# JANUARY 2014

| SUNDAY  | MONDAY  | TUESDAY  | WEDNESDAY   | THURSDAY   | FRIDAY  | SATURDAY  |
|---|---|--|---|--|---|---|
| <b>5 Epiphany Sunday</b><br><b>NO Sunday Breakfast</b><br>RCIA 9:30A<br>Social Action 9:30A<br>Women's Council 11:30A   | 6<br>Life After the Pink Ship 7P<br><b>Liturgy Meeting 7P</b> | 7<br>Lourdes Lunch 11:30A<br>Zumba Class 6:00P<br><b>Stephens Ministry 7P</b><br><b>Lector Prep 7P</b><br>Baptismal Class 7P | 8<br>AGLD Rehearsal 7P<br>Bible Study 7:00P<br>Church Office Closed | 9<br>Lourdes Lunch 11:30A<br>Choir & AGLD Rehearsal 7:30P  | 10<br>Stephens Ministry 8:30A<br>Eracism 11A<br>Dance by Kenya 1:30P<br>Rosary 4:30PM<br>5:00PM Eucharist   | 11<br>Stephens Ministry 8:30A<br>Eracism 11A<br>Dance by Kenya 1:30P<br>Rosary 4:30PM<br>5:00PM Eucharist   |
| 12 RCIA 9:30A<br>Sunday School 10:30A<br>Teen Ministry 10:30A<br>Parenting Class 10:30A<br>Bible Study 10:30A<br>St. Vincent de Paul 12N<br>KPCL/A Meetings 1:30P<br>Parenting Pappepy 2P | 13<br><b>Pastoral Council 7P</b>                              | 14<br>Lourdes Lunch 11:30A<br>Zumba Class 6:00P  | 15<br>AGLD Rehearsal 7P<br>Bible Study 7:00P                        | 16<br>Lourdes Lunch 11:30A<br>Choir & AGLD Rehearsal 7:30P | 17<br>Men's Ministry<br>Movie Night for Edgewood 7:30P  | 18<br>Dance by Kenya 1:30P<br>Rosary 4:30PM<br>5:00PM Eucharist<br>Ulteya Dinner 6:30P  |
| <b>19 No Sunday School</b><br><b>Sunday Breakfast</b><br>RCIA 9:30A   | 20 M.L. King, Jr. Day<br>Church Office Closed                 | 21<br>Lourdes Lunch 11:30A<br>Zumba Class 6:00P<br><b>Stephens Ministry 7P</b>   | 22<br>AGLD Rehearsal 7P<br>Bible Study 7:00P                        | 23<br>Lourdes Lunch 11:30A<br>Choir & AGLD Rehearsal 7:30P | 24<br>25 SAT Prep Class 7A<br>Stephens Ministry 8:30A<br>Eracism 11A<br>Dance by Kenya 1:30P<br>Life Issues 4:00PM<br>Rosary 4:30PM<br>5:00PM Eucharist | 25 SAT Prep Class 7A<br>Stephens Ministry 8:30A<br>Eracism 11A<br>Dance by Kenya 1:30P<br>Life Issues 4:00PM<br>Rosary 4:30PM<br>5:00PM Eucharist |
| <b>26 Bookstore Open</b><br>RCIA 9:30A<br>Sunday School 10:30A<br>Teen Ministry 10:30A<br>Parenting Class 10:30A<br>Bible Study 10:30A<br>Health Ministry 12N                             | 27<br><b>Taize Prayer Group</b><br>8:00PM                     | 28<br>Lourdes Lunch 11:30A<br>Zumba Class 6:00P  | 29  | 30<br>Lourdes Lunch 11:30A<br>Choir & AGLD Rehearsal 7:30P | 31  | 31  |

Join us for Sunday Breakfast, January 5<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup>  
 Sponsored by the Knights of Peter Claver

Teen Ministry SAT Prep Training January 25, 2104 ~ 7A  
 Save the Date ~ February 25 ~ Parenting Ministry Bus to Birmingham