

### **Third Place (1), Student-Holy Family**

What does it mean to be alive? I ask myself this question when I think of pro-life. I know that pro-life is being for life and respecting all kinds of life, but who does pro-life include? Through experiences in my own life, I have witnessed illness, disability, and addiction. Pro-life includes all of these, pro-life is respecting and valuing all forms of life. It is valuing people with illnesses, disability, addicts and more.

There are millions of people who get addicted to drugs, people like my mom. There are many choices my mom made that were wrong, but not me. She knew that from the moment of conception I would be born. Why? Why did she choose my life? She chose my life because she knew it had value, just like hers. My mom was a loving person, who made awful mistakes, like becoming an addict. She went to her “friends” house and did drugs. My younger brothers loved these horrendous “friends” because they did not understand who they really were, but I did. Even though my mom and her “friends” made ghastly decisions I knew they still have value in God’s eyes.

I encountered many difficulties while my mom was an addict. I not only had to take care of my mom, when and after she did drugs with her friends, but also my siblings. In 2013, an estimated 24.4 million Americans had used an illegal drug in the past month. Even though my mom did drugs, I still respected her and she was still my mom. I knew that she had value in God’s eyes and therefore in mine. I took care of my mom and her responsibilities. Isaiah 41:13 says “for I am the Lord your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you.” This passage helped me realize that God was always watching and helping me along my way. There were many dire choices I made that were not only hard on me, but on my siblings as well. Psalms 8: 4-5 states “what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son

of man that you care for him? Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor.” I think this quote is saying to respect all living beings because they are all gifts from God.

Although my mom did not die naturally, she overdosed, God knew the time of her death long before it happened. I have lived with my cousin for several years because the state found out my mom could not care for us anymore. I remember vividly when my mom died, my cousin called my siblings and me down from our rooms. He told us that our mom had died from a drug overdose. At first, I just laughed because I thought he was joking, he wasn't. At the time, I thought to myself that I should not cry because I had to stay strong for my siblings. My cousin ended up calling some of my relatives over, it was then that it became clear to me; she was dead and never coming back. I began to feel hate and disgust, but mostly remorse because I never had the chance to get close to my mom because of her addiction. Even still, I knew my mom loved me. She chose my life from conception on and I valued her despite her addiction. I know my mom was with God when she died.

Even though disability, illnesses, and addiction are what I have witnessed in my lifetime, I know that pro-life includes many more forms of life. Pro-life is respecting all life and knowing that all forms of life have a purpose. Even though my mom became an addict when I was younger, and I had to take care of my siblings, I knew that when she died she was reunited with God. I saw the value in my mom, and I respected her. Addiction is not the first thing you might think of when you think of pro-life, but people in this group are still worth valuing. Being pro-life is being like Jesus Christ and viewing all people as perfect through His eyes.