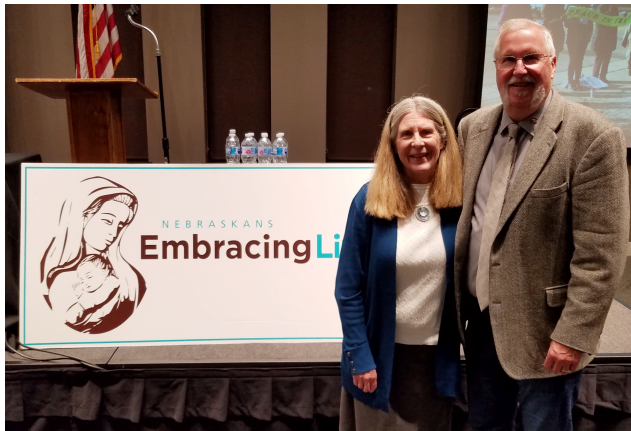


**Dear friends of Vital Signs Ministries,**

**January 2021**

My, my. It has been quite a January already with our pro-life witness on the streets, speaking engagements, creating more activity packets for quarantined seniors, a lot of correspondence, participating in the Walk for Life in Lincoln, work on our new website, all of the blog activity, receiving a great honor of an award from pro-life colleagues, and talking people “off the ledge” as they anticipate an administration full of abortion zealots. And that’s not all. Before January is done, we will (by God’s grace) add a trip to Kansas where I will present a pro-life talk at Tabor College and we will present the first live “When Swing Was King” show we’ve done in almost a year!



But let’s get on to this month’s letter. We are giving you a few photographs from some of the actions I’ve just mentioned along with 3 other items. **Number 1** is a copy of the brief acceptance speech we presented when given the Lifetime Achievement Award from Nebraskans Embracing Life. **Number 2** is a copy of the text I prepared for the crowds at the Capitol before beginning Nebraska Right to Life’s annual Walk for Life.

And **Number 3** is a very encouraging note we recently received from an activity director at one of the senior facilities that receive our activity pages every week.

1) First of all, in accepting the NEL award at their annual dinner, we presented the following remarks. I started off, “One of my favorite quotations of all time comes from my dear friend that many of you also know, Rick Duncan, a constitutional law professor at the UNL Law School. Like others of us in this room, Rick was a later convert to Christianity and I remember with great fondness this remark he once made at a pro-life event. Rick said, ‘You know one of the neatest things I’ve discovered is this -- in Christianity your heroes can also be your friends.’”

“Well, believe me, Rick’s observation is particularly relevant this evening as Claire and I humbly yet very gratefully accept this Lifetime Achievement Award because it comes from the hands of some very special hero-friends. Some of you go back with us to the old days of Metro Right to Life, before we started the Omaha Christian



Action Council or the AAA Crisis Pregnancy Center. We also remember so many of our beloved friends from those days that have already gone on to their reward: Rita Gradoville, Mary Ann Tiehen, Jo Elworth, Joyce Schuster, and others.

“So we accept this award, dear friends, in behalf of the whole team -- for all of you, for all of the steadfast champions who have stood alongside us with Vital Signs Ministries, even for the Christian pro-life friends we have made in our travels in England, Eastern Europe (especially Belarus), Africa, and all the other places we’ve been.

“We are blessed beyond measure in being part of a forever family of heroes because of the grace of God poured out upon us. Thank you so much for this honor.”

And then Claire added, “Several months ago, Vital Signs Ministries hosted one of our book brunches in which we listened to a Peter Kreeft video about JRR Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. In our discussion afterwards, we talked about the difference it makes to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ but also the crucial importance that friendship represents for those engaged in the grand adventure of heralding truth, justice, and such holy causes as defending the sanctity of life. There is no doubt that we have remained in this struggle all these years because we have taken full advantage of one of God's greatest gifts; namely, the friendship of like-minded brothers and sisters.

“One dramatic picture of how helpful this is comes whenever I look down the line of friends when I’m standing in a public pro-life witness at an abortion business. Several such friends are sitting right here in this room tonight. In such situations, I look to those friends as a joy, a comfort, and a sanity check. I’m reminded of who I am, the Lord I serve, and what a blessing it is to be part of such a company of Christian ‘doers of the Word.’ Yes, the comfort of seeing those friends reminds me that we in the pro-life movement are truly on the side of the angels. And that’s a very good place to be! Again, thank you very much.”

2) Okay, here is Number 2 in our list and that is my remarks at the Walk for Life in Lincoln. “Thank you, Sandy. And good morning pro-life Nebraskans! As Sandy suggested, Claire and I have been involved in pro-life ministry for a long, long time. And though it’s always been a tough, controversial, even confrontational undertaking, the days ahead will undoubtedly be tougher still. Indeed, as we enter a new year dominated by fear, political injustice, cultural chaos, economic meltdown, and moral cowardice, we need to be ready to carry on the fight with greater resolve than ever before.

“And to help encourage you in this mission, I have a little story for you -- one taken from JRR Tolkien’s masterful *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. Now, as a Baptist preacher, I’m usually using a different text for public exhortations, but I don’t think you’ll mind if I use this one today. The scene I’m drawing to your attention comes from the last book in the trilogy. The brave hobbits Frodo Baggins and Sam Gamgee are struggling through Mordor on their way to Mt. Doom and, in this terrible moment when Frodo is nearly overcome with despair, fatigue, and dread, he turns to his dear friend and moans, ‘I can’t do this, Sam.’





“At which Sam Gamgee, one of the most wonderfully heroic characters in all literature, responds, ‘I know. It’s all wrong. By rights we shouldn’t even be here. But we are. It’s like in the great stories, Mr. Frodo. The ones that really mattered. Full of darkness, and danger, they were. And sometimes you didn’t want to know the end, because how could the end be happy? How could the world go back to the way it was when so much bad had happened? But in the end, it’s only a passing thing, this

shadow. Even darkness must pass. A new day will come. And when the sun shines, it’ll shine out the clearer. Those were the stories that stayed with you. That meant something. Even if you were too small to understand why. But I think, Mr. Frodo, I do understand. I know now. Folk in those stories had lots of chances of turning back only they didn’t. They kept going. Because they were holding on to something.’

“Frodo then asks, ‘What are we holding on to, Sam?’

“The answer? ‘That there’s some good in this world, Mr. Frodo...and it’s worth fighting for.’



“My friends, we have things good and worth fighting for too – the biblical ideals of truth, justice, and the sanctity of human life. So the decision of these two characters must be, in real life, our decisions too. Oh yes; we have a God-given opportunity to be heroes just like Frodo and Sam, Merry and Pippin, Aragorn and Gandalf, and all the rest of that noble fellowship of the ring. We too must carry on with our part in the adventure story God has written us into. True enough, it’s a story that has real danger, real

enemies, and real sacrifices. And yet it has spiritual rewards that are unimaginably rich and fully deserving of our boldest efforts.

So, what do you say? Let's get after it."

Believe me, to then receive the applause and hurrahs from that large crowd (many of whom were teenagers and young adults with kids) --- a crowd dedicated enough to drive to Lincoln and brave the cold in order to demonstrate their convictions --- was a very hopeful sign to me that the pro-life movement in Nebraska will move ever forward.

3) And to highlight yet another element of our ministry, let me close with this very kindhearted note from one of our activity director friends...

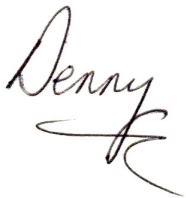
*Dear Denny & Claire,*

*You two are so amazing! Your WSWK packets have been such blessings to me (and us) all of these months. When my hands were full with various projects, I always knew I had some fun, challenging, and motivational activity to give to my residents! I will look back and be forever grateful for you!*

*A.M.*

And please remember that all of our activity packets (9 pages each of trivia questions, song lyrics, quotations, photos, and a personal letter) are available on the Vital Signs Ministries website. All 45 of them! And that means they are available to whoever in the world wants to enjoy them themselves or who would pass them along to friends, family members, or residents in other senior living centers who could use an uplifting, affirming, and positively provocative exercise.

Okay, that's it for now. We do want to pass along our profound thanks, however, for all of you who are helping us stay in the fight for life --- and the corollary fights against other injustices and lies. Your prayers, your financial support, your encouragement, your use of our materials, and your passing along to others the work of Vital Signs Ministries is worth more to us (and the Kingdom) than we could ever express. Blessings...

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Denny". The signature is written in dark ink and includes a stylized flourish at the end.