

September 2023

The Cheeseburger Festival in Caseville is well known even outside our state. When I received the call at seminary to move my family from Fort Wayne, IN, and serve St. Paul and Good Shepherd, a professor (not from Michigan) made it a point to come and tell me that Cheeseburger occurred there annually and he would like to come and check it out. I had absolutely no idea what he was talking about so he briefly described what he knew about it and then we parted ways. I didn't think too much about afterwards because, obviously, my head was swimming about where God was sending us and the excitement and fear of serving Jesus in His church consumed my thoughts.

Having lived here now for over eight years, I understand why that professor brought up Cheeseburger. It's an enormous influx of people into the tiny town of Caseville and in the middle of the ten day event they boast one of the biggest parades around. I've seen it take an hour and half for all the participants to make their way through downtown Caseville. Most of it has businesses promoting themselves while having fun in Cheeseburger gear adorned with flamingo trimmings. Some of it can get a little over the top and the wise parent may have to shield young eyes. But one thing is for sure; people turn out in droves to witness the parade. Thousands upon thousands line the street in Caseville to watch, gather candy and beads, and shout for the floats they like best.

I never thought I would be in that parade, but as it turns out this year was my second year in a row. Last year I had the opportunity to walk with the Huron County Right To Life and this year it was the same. Several brave souls who encouraged each other found confidence to walk the gauntlet. We joined together to spread the message of the value of God given life in the womb to thousands. This is an intimidating task and venue but the message is worth it. Some boo or hiss. Some give back the bookmarks with God's truth of life on it. Some decline the simple pen or pencil with the message that even the smallest are loved by our Lord. Some deny the golden pin of the feet of a ten-week old child. But some don't! Many don't! I heard cheers as our van with banners on either side saying, "Pro-woman, Pro-Child, Love Them Both" approached. Many accepted the handouts and the balloons which said, "Smile! Your mom chose life!" This gave us encouragement. Encouragement that we were not alone in standing up for life. Sometimes what other people need is to see is that you need not be afraid to speak the truth and our voice gets louder together. It's a voice that speaks for the voiceless and seeks to defend those who need someone to do it for them. Someone yelled from the crowd, "Keep politics out of the parade!" Standing up for children isn't politics, it's a confession that any decent society needs because it's matter of life and death for children. If we can't see that this isn't arbitrary politics but a necessity of any well functioning group of people then we are blind.

I led our small group in prayer before the parade started. We prayed that the Author of life, Jesus, would give us wisdom and courage to speak His truth. We prayed that He would soften hard hearts to see that all life is precious. We prayed that others would be encouraged to join in defending life.

May our Lord answer our prayers even in the midst of a Cheeseburger parade. He who is faithful will do it.

In Christ,
Pastor Suggitt



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