

Yuba-Sutter Right to Life

Quarterly Newsletter

www.ysrtl.org

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I have gathered some 50 pages of what I believe to be incredibly heart-wrenching and upsetting news from around the world regarding pro-life issues. I'm not sure if it's a mood I'm in, or if the state of the world and our country today has begun to truly affect me, but I thought that perhaps this newsletter should be comprised of personal stories from fellow pro-lifers rather than simply doom and gloom news bytes. I found these stories to be truly inspiring, motivating and helpful in lifting the fog of "I can't do this anymore. I'm not making a difference. Why bother..." that had made my soul its home. I pray it will do the same for you. The inspirational stories will begin on page 3 for the e-mail version of the newsletter. Those who receive the newsletter in paper form will need to visit our website at

ysrtl.org/newsletter to read them. God bless!

IN THE NEWS:

August 8, 2013 (LifeSiteNews.com) - [BMJ Case Reports has reported](#) that a healthy 16-year-old Australian girl lost all ovarian function and went into menopause after being injected with the HPV vaccine Gardasil.

Dr. Deirdre Little, the Australian physician who treated the girl, provides solid evidence that Gardasil caused the destruction of the girl's fertility.

The girl received the Gardasil vaccination in the fall of 2008. By January 2009, her cycle had become irregular. Over the course of the next two years, her menses became increasingly scant and irregular, until by 2011, she had ceased menstruating altogether.

Dr. Little carried out numerous tests on the girl, including checking hormone levels and internal organ function, and diagnosed her as having "premature ovarian failure." She also found that the girl had no living egg cells.

After investigating other possible causes of the girl's premature ovarian failure, Dr. Little was left with the Gardasil vaccination as the only remaining explanation.

Dr. Little contacted the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) of Australia, the equivalent of the U.S Food and Drug Administration (FDA), for information about the safety testing of Gardasil on women's ovaries.

She found that the TGA had records of **various tests on (male) rat testes, but no records reflecting testing of the effect of the vaccine on (female) rat ovaries.**

July 5, 2013—San Francisco (LifeSiteNews.com) Weeks after their male counterparts changed their rules to allow openly gay members, Girl Scouts USA made history in their own way after some 90+ of their members and their families marched in San Francisco's Gay Pride Parade—the first time they have ever done so.

Girl Scouts of Northern California announced their participation in the parade in a post on their [official Facebook page](#), accompanied by a photo of the girls in uniform carrying a Girl Scouts banner. The Facebook posting for that event has since been removed from the Girl Scouts of Northern California official Facebook page.

Dana Allen, communications manager for Girl Scouts of Northern California, confirmed to LifeSiteNews.com that Girl Scouts participated in the parade. "The San Francisco Girl Scouts participate in many parades that celebrate the diversity of San Francisco," she said.

However, not all were pleased with the decision to march in the parade. Sydney Volanski, an ex-Girl Scout and founder of [SpeakNow-GirlScouts.com](#), has been a vocal critic of what she says is Girl Scouts' increasingly liberal tendencies.

Sydney's mother also expressed concerns about what the young Girl Scouts may have been exposed to at the parade.

She said that given the Girl Scouts pledge to "build girls of courage, confidence and character," she was "really surprised" that the organization would endorse participation in an event "[that features vulgar male dancers dressed only in underwear, a lesbian statue of liberty \(courtesy of the ACLU float\)](#), free condoms, and more."

"As a mom, I'm very concerned that the Girl Scouts feel this is an appropriate event for any age. And further, what does all of this have to do with scouting?" she said.

Yuba-Sutter Right to Life has an Information Kit for [American Heritage Girls](#), a Christian alternative to Girl Scouts. [Contact us](#) if you would like to start a troop.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

You Are Cordially Invited.... To our meetings! We meet the **first Wednesday of every month** at 7:00pm in the St. Isidore Parish Hall. Everyone is welcome! Call 673-1437 for details.

October 6th 2:00pm-3:30pm: Annual Life Chain which got its start right here in Yuba City in 1987! For more information, contact Royce Dunn at 674-5068 or visit the [website](#).

October 19, 2013 : A Woman's Friend banquet at the Yuba Sutter Fairgrounds Yuba City Toyota Exhibit Hall. [Melissa Ohden](#), abortion survivor, will be the guest speaker! Tickets are on sale now for \$30 each or \$300 for a table of 10. For more information, contact A Woman's Friend at 741-9136 or visit their [website](#).

In the News continued:

July 2, 2013—India (LifeSiteNews.com)
A study published in the May issue of [Indian Journal of Community Medicine](#) found a more than 6-fold increase risk of breast cancer among women with histories of induced abortion.

Study leader Ramchandra Kamath of the Department of Public Health, Manipal University, observed that India has the "largest estimated number of breast cancer deaths worldwide," and that breast cancer ranks second only to cervical cancer as the most common diagnosed malignancy among Indian women.

[Dr. Joel Brind](#) is a professor of endocrinology at Baruch College, City University of New York and a recognized expert in research into the links between abortion/contraception and breast cancer.

Dr. Brind said he found it "troubling that the abortion-breast cancer link is now showing up big time in the world's most populous countries where breast cancer used to be rare. That means that millions upon millions of women will die from this deadly after-effect of abortion. Consider that between India and China, we're talking about over a billion women. If only 1% of them get breast cancer due to abortion, that's still 10 million women...."

The full text of the Ramchandra Kamath study is available [here](#).

40 DAYS FOR LIFE™

September 25–November 3: 40 Days for Life Fall campaign in Sacramento at Women's Health Specialists, 1442 Ethan Way, Sacramento. Visit their website [here](#) or call Maureen at 673-1437 or Heather at 751-9349.

[Lifetime Adoption Center](#) has opened up in the same complex as the



Planned Parenthood in Yuba City! Their services are confidential and FREE! Check them out at 430 N. Palora Ave, Suite K, Yuba City. They accept new and gently used maternity clothes and offer compassionate help for women and children! **Phone: 1-800-923-6784**

WHEN THE TIME COMES

By Congressman Henry Hyde c.1990's

"When the time comes as it surely will, when we face that awesome moment, the final judgment, I've often thought, as the late Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen wrote, that it is a terrible moment of loneliness.

You have no advocates, you are there alone standing before God—and a terror will rip your soul like nothing you can imagine.

But I really think that those in the pro-life movement will not be alone. I think there will be a chorus of voices that have never been heard in this world but are heard beautifully and clearly in the next world—and they will plead for everyone who has been in this movement.

They will say to God 'Spare him, because he loved us,' - and God will look at you and say not, 'Did you succeed?' but 'Did you try?'"



But the greatest of these is love: what my grandmother taught me about being pro-life

BY RACHAEL DENHOLLANDER

June 11, 2013 (LiveActionNews.org) - There are so many things we need to teach the next generation about the pro-life cause. The science, the truth about what abortion does to the mother, the reality of fetal pain, the communication skills needed to effectively defend the pro-life position...the list is endless. Yet sometimes amidst all the information and reasoning and academic papers, we can miss transmitting the most essential aspect – *love*.

Why care about abortion harming women? Because we love these mothers, and what happens to them matters. Why does it matter that the aborted infant feels pain? Because we love the unborn person who is suffering. Why the science demonstrating the humanity of fetuses? Because we love life, and value it. We need to pass on all aspects to the next generation, but always and only within the framework of teaching our children to *love*. And sometimes – sometimes actions truly do speak louder than words, and the most unassuming person becomes a hero for the defense of life.

I've had the privilege of attending many pro-life seminars, debating for the cause of life, testifying before legislative assemblies, and working "on the ground" for pro-life ministries and leaders, yet I learned the most from one little "nobody": one woman who, in her quiet, unassuming life, passed on convictions and truth that I could not escape even if I tried.

My grandma lived through a lot, including her fiancé's service and injuries in World War II. When Grandpa came home and recovered, they married quickly, years before Grandpa would be able to finish his college degree, which had been sidelined due to his service. He drove a school bus to pay the bills; it was one of the only jobs that would also accommodate his school schedule, but it didn't pay much. So to say a surprise pregnancy, resulting in my eldest uncle's birth just ten months after the wedding, was "at a bad time" was putting it nicely. Grandma and Grandpa didn't have a place to live of their own, and barely enough money even for food – I still recall Grandma telling me that it was very common for her and Grandpa to eat only squash or beans for dinner, because otherwise they would not have money to feed their child, too. Yet she *loved*. Yet her son's life was a gift. His life was more important than money, more important than their "plans," more important than personal comfort. The same was true for her second son, born not that long after. My grandma taught me that babies don't always come at the best, most convenient times, but they are always, always worthy of love, and that sacrificing to give life is worth it.

By the time my father was in kindergarten, Grandpa was an electrical engineer, they had a house, and life was markedly easier. So my grandparents did the next natural thing – open their hearts to orphans in their city through foster care. Over the course of the next several years, more than 30 children found a home in Grandma's arms. My dad and uncles did all the normal things little boys do: played baseball, went fishing, attended school...and learned to change diapers, feed small people, and treasure each little person who came through their doors. My grandma passed on a legacy of loving life, in the most intensely practical way, to her three sons, who in turn passed it to their children, and who all still possess that "magic touch" with little ones. My grandma taught me that my material blessings are best used to love others, especially the weakest, and to find the greatest joy in serving others.

She had a special place in her heart for special-needs children, too, and it is these memories which are the most vivid and powerful yet to this day. One young man, several years older than I, was a particular friend of hers. Clark was born to one of my grandma's best friends and was a "surprise" pregnancy, coming very late in life, accompanied by the diagnosis "Down syndrome." The type of baby that 90% of families choose not to birth. Grandma had a special place for Clark, and she loved him dearly. She and Grandpa regularly cared for him on days and even

learn to navigate things like oxygen tanks and communicating with a nearly non-verbal young man. As Clark got older, he wasn't much one for hugs or physical affection, and he tended to keep a pretty specific personal space, but Grandma was a completely different story, and the joy they *both* showed at seeing each other was marvelous to behold. Hugs abounded then, even if no one else was so privileged! Some of my earliest memories are of Grandma teaching me how to play with Clark, what sorts of things he enjoyed, how to be patient with his limitations and forgiving of occasional accidental aggressiveness, and to love and treasure people and their differences. Grandma taught me that the 90% of children with Down syndrome who are never given a chance at life are priceless treasures, too.

Karen was another of Grandma's special treasures. Born with a condition that left her severely brain-damaged, she had no control over movements or her voice and remained in an infant-like state. She was the type of child doctors would say has little "quality of life," who probably "doesn't comprehend," and who is certainly "a burden" to such a productive and progressive society as ours. Then one day, as I helped Grandma in the church nursery, Karen was brought in to be watched while her parents attended the service. Grandma didn't reach for the healthy, picture-perfect baby sitting on the floor, absorbed in a teething toy. She went to Karen – nearly a teenager, lying on a bean-bag chair, vocalizing randomly, limbs contorted and twisted, moving her head without any real direction. She knelt down, despite painful, arthritic knees, reached for Karen, and held her close, calling her name and beckoning her to give Grandma "that beautiful smile." Decades later, it remains one of the most beautiful scenes I have ever witnessed.

Grandma *radiated* love. I saw the same love she directed at me towards Karen. Not patronizing pity, like a superior gives to an inferior, but pure, unadulterated, joy-filled *love*. The way one human soul treasures another. Karen had *value*, she had *worth*, she was a *priceless gift*. She *meant something* to Grandma. And as Grandma knelt there, calling Karen's name, the little girl who "couldn't respond" and "couldn't move voluntarily" turned her face towards Grandma's voice and broke into the most beautiful smile of joy. The little girl who "couldn't be reached" responded to one thing: *love*. Grandma taught me that no matter how severe the handicap or illness, it is never beyond the reach of love.

Then I began to learn the most bittersweet lessons of all – the joy of serving the one who had been the servant. Alzheimer's began to set in, and deteriorating vertebrae left Grandma in constant pain. She made it to my wedding, but just a few weeks later suffered a blood clot that accelerated the dementia exponentially. I had the privilege of sitting by her in the hospital and spending nights on those awful fold-out chairs that supposedly double as beds, and I watched what Grandma became when almost everything was stripped away. She whispered the words of her favorite hymns as she drifted off to sleep. She belted out "Jesus Loves Me" with gusto I had never before seen. She "sewed clothes" for her family, believing the hospital sheets to be reams of material. She cooked with unseen utensils and food, and she talked endlessly of her children and grandchildren, often not realizing they were right there with her. When nothing else remained, Grandma loved and served.

She made it through, and not two years later, I had the joy of placing my first child, only a few weeks old, into her arms. I watched in amazement as her normally trembling hands cradled my son without a waver, even when she slept. When he fussed, she instinctively soothed and patted him, though for years her movements had been awkward and uncertain. As she whispered, "I think he's sweet..." her voice changed back to the normal pitch I had grown up with, and when I asked her, "What are you thinking about?," she answered my question, though she had rarely had an answer for the past many years. "That baby!" I told her about her seventh great-grandchild, born shortly after my son, whom she was to meet in a few weeks. "Two babies? I will be so happy I won't know which way to look!" She remembered and communicated so little, but her love for the tiniest of humans was such a part of who she was, it remained when everything else faded away.

Not two weeks later, she suffered a stroke that would end her life, and as I sat by her hospital bed for the last time, I realized I had learned from Grandma my final lessons. Lessons I would have never been taught if the likes of Peter Singer ever get their way, and euthanasia becomes the fate of the elderly or ill. I learned the beauty of service. I learned to constantly ask, what will remain in me when everything else is stripped away? Will I create a pattern of loving people that will endure when almost nothing else is left? Will love be so deeply ingrained that it will last until the end?

And I realized again: *this* is what the next generation needs to see. *This* is what supports, undergirds, and gives value to the fight for life. A love for the mother in crisis, a love for the unborn baby showing up at the “worst possible moment,” a love for the little ones with special needs, a love that sees value in children deemed “unreachable.” A love that is so ingrained, rooted so deep, that when nothing else remains, love will.

So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

She changed my life without ever taking a single breath

BY HANNAH ROSE ALLEN

July 8, 2013 ([LiveActionNews](#)) -

My Darling Lily,

When I first discovered you were growing within me, I was terrified. So much so that I scheduled an abortion to terminate your life. I was only 19, unmarried, feeling alone and ashamed. I didn't want anyone to know you ever existed.

However, Jesus was fighting mightily for both you and me. He supernaturally intervened, showing me that if I chose to end your life with an abortion, I couldn't imagine the pain and darkness that would follow. But if I embraced your LIFE, I couldn't begin to imagine the beauty that He would bring...

Instead of walking through those clinic doors, I chose to walk into Jesus' light towards freedom. It was as if the reasoning for abortion fell away once I knew that God would be guiding me every step of my difficult journey. I was at peace knowing I was making the right choice, that of embracing your God-given life. Our Heavenly Father clearly showed me what a gift your life would be to me forever. I went from viewing you as a burden to loving you more than I knew I could ever love anyone...as my belly grew, so did my love for you, little one.

Early in my pregnancy, God revealed to me that you were my little girl...and your name was to be Lily Katherine. At the time, I had no idea that both names mean “pure and innocent.” God intended for you to be a symbol of my renewed purity and redemption in Christ.

March 16th, 2010 – the day of your birth – was supposed to be full of joy and happy tears. Unbeknownst to your loving, expectant family, God's gracious plan was different. You see, that morning, I was told your perfect little heart was no longer beating. I waited to deliver your precious body on earth, as you awaited me, already in the Kingdom of Heaven. I will forever cherish that sacred time with you, the only time we will ever share on Earth. How exceedingly painful it was knowing those fleeting hugs and kisses would have to last a lifetime. Never once would I gaze into your adoring eyes, never again would I hold you or kiss your soft cheek. My little blessing from Heaven, blue skies turned to gray when you slipped away.

On the day your tiny body was buried in our beloved Virginia, I left a piece of my heart in the ground with you. After we sprinkled your miniature coffin with tears, and rose and lily petals, I had to walk away without you protectively nestled in my empty, aching arms. It was the most painful challenge I've ever endured and certainly one not natural for any twenty-year-old to experience.



Now, the only motherhood I know is mothering a grave...a legacy. Oh, but what a beautiful legacy it is... Even though you never spoke a word...never took a single breath, my entire life, both here and into Eternity, has been radically transformed thanks to you. I was in a deep pit of destruction and despair with no way of escape... until God used you to break my chains of sin and rebellion. Because of you, dear girl, I turned from my sin and brokenness and returned to the Saviour of my soul. He rescued me through you. At the same time He saved your life from abortion, He used your brief but valuable life to save me from eternal death. With my entire being, I thank you, darling.

My sweet girl, who only ever lived within my womb, God is speaking through you, proclaiming how precious and valuable each individual life is. He has a plan and purpose for every life created in His image. My life now has a passion and purpose that would not have been discovered had you not lived. The Lord can take our deepest sorrow and sin and weave them together into a beautiful tribute for our good and His glory! Due to your treasured life, God restored family relationships and friendships. An abundance of flowers have blossomed in many lives because of you, my little flower.

Though you whispered goodbye before I could say hello, I want mommies who are on a lonely path similar to mine, to realize because of you that if they embrace LIFE – no matter the outcome – it is the right choice. I will never regret choosing life, even if I had known from the beginning that I would lose you before you breathed your first breath. I shudder to think where my life would be today if it weren't for you. You accomplished more in your brief time on Earth than many do in a lengthy lifetime. The purpose of each life is not ours to decide - it is determined by God alone.

Your legacy will never be forgotten. YOU will never be forgotten, precious Lily. You will never be tainted by the corruption in this world or marred by suffering and sin. You will never be faced with the opportunity to reject beloved Jesus. You will forever be pure and innocent, just like your name. I am proud to call you my child, proud that God chose me to carry you – a set-apart princess for Him. It is one of the greatest honors of my life, to have been chosen to mother your legacy.

I'm on a lifelong journey of learning what it means to be your mommy, which is challenging to do from Earth, my daughter of Heaven. This I know: I promise to always be your voice and to honor you in any way I can for as long as I live. Your heart beats with every beat of my own, and you will live on through me until I breathe my last breath...even then your legacy will remain. Your legacy of how Jesus brings beauty from ashes, how He's in the business of completely restoring and redeeming lives.

No matter how many children I may have in the future, you will forever remain my first-born babe...please know that nobody could ever take your place. There's a special spot in my heart that will always be yours alone. You are forever woven into the fabric of my heart.

I have assurance that I will find you waiting for me at the gates of Heaven. On that day, our Jesus will place you in my arms of love where I will eagerly snuggle you to my nurturing mother's heart, sing to you, and smell your sweet baby smell, as I gaze deeply into your lovely blue eyes. Until then, I know you are in His perfect care. Until then, I will cling to the One who holds the world in His hands. Thank you for changing my life.

I will never forget you little one, my precious angel, of whom the world was not worthy,

Mommy

What if they were yours?

BY NATALIE N. BRUMFIELD

August 12, 2013 ([Bound4Life](#)) - I was a lifeguard at the local country club my senior year of high school. It was the one job I absolutely enjoyed and looked forward to every day. I would never have admitted it then but I loved being the one on watch to protect people, especially the children.

In my entire lifeguard career, I only rescued one little girl. It was the shallow end, her mom was literally an arms length away from her but was busy talking to a friend. I saw red curls floating around a little face quietly gurgling through the surface of the water. She was so gently drowning that my first thought was that it couldn't be real, she was only playing, but I quickly got down from the stand to make sure. When I was closer I saw she indeed was drowning. I didn't even blow my whistle, not wanting to embarrass her mother who was so close. I instantaneously hopped into the water and pulled her little arms up around me. I felt her coughing for air against my shoulder as I pulled us back to the cement edge of the pool. Her mom was absolutely shocked to find that her daughter was drowning soundlessly beside her and I felt so terrible for her. For the first time I had a thought that has effected me since, "What if the little girl was mine? What if I was that mother that didn't know her child was drowning?" It could have happened to anyone. A few minutes of distraction and then your child is under the water.

That wasn't the only time I had that thought that summer. There were five little boys that came every other weekend to the pool ranging in age from seven to eleven. This older lady would bring them and I assumed she was their grandmother. Boy were they a handful! I can see them now running, yelling constantly in excitement, and cannon balling into the deep end while other divers were waiting their turn to jump in from the high dive; all things that were against the rules.

As a lifeguard, I should have been annoyed by their disobedience but if I had to hide a smile once by their crazy behavior, I had to hide my laughter a thousand times. They were my favorite! I would often think, "What if they were your boys?" Well, if they were my boys I would want to love them well. If they were in "time out" (and often they were) on my breaks I would go and sit with them. I would talk to them about what they did, why they were doing it, and I would help sort it out. Mostly, I just wanted to know them and enjoy their company. They came to love me and whenever I was on watch they never broke a single rule. They were perfect angels on my shift (to the great annoyance of the other lifeguards). Those boys are the very reason I began telling my friends that I wanted five boys of my own one day. I never expected that they actually needed a mom of their own.

I was in the break area and heard one of the staff complaining that the boys had arrived. Just as I began smiling and heading out to the pool, I heard her call them orphans. I stopped walking. I turned and asked what she meant "Oh those boys live in the local boys home. That lady brings them here." She wasn't their grandmother. They don't have a family. The question, "what if they were your boys" became more real to me. My heart was broken. I watched them running and screaming into the pool area from where I stood. No smile came, just an overwhelming urge to love them even more, to teach them even more, and to be around them even more while I had the chance.

I never saw the boys again after that summer. I never saw the beautiful little red haired girl again, either. I went to college in the fall and went on with my life. But I never stopped thinking of them and the thought that never left my mind afterward, "What if they were yours?"

Twelve years later, and this is the very thought that keeps me watching and praying at the children's ministry, on the sidewalk outside of the abortion centers, and every Thursday night at the crisis pregnancy center.

A beautiful young African American girl walked into our crisis pregnancy center two weeks ago and told me she had decided on having an abortion. She was firm in her position, refusing to entertain the thought of other options. I sat there still and wondered what else I could do. That beautiful, perfect question from heaven immediately came to me, "What if she was your daughter?"

If this full grown, beautiful, intelligent, strong-willed woman was mine, then I would tell her the facts about her decision.

I said, "Ok. I understand you want an abortion. Can you tell me what you know about the procedure?"

She knew nothing, so I methodically told her the different procedures, the reactions her body would have, things to expect post abortion. I told her about the two centers in Birmingham and their past history of probation, law suits, and the women sent to the emergency room in the last year. I warned her of the center that is practicing without a license and the center that is open and entertaining the abortions of local prostitution rings including underage abortions. Facts. I repeatedly told her that I am telling her what I would want to know for an informed decision, and what I would want my own family to know. She sat there eyes wide and quiet for the first time since our session. I asked her what she was thinking.

She said, "I had no idea about all that. I wasn't expecting you to tell me about abortion or any of those things."

She was thankful for knowing the facts and felt differently about the casual decision she had made before. In that moment she was my daughter; strong-willed, stoic, and informed. In that little session I got to love her, teach her, and just enjoy her company like that summer sitting with the five boys. I thought about her baby too. Was this little unborn child like the quietly drowning beauty with her mom right beside her?

Not wanting to blow my whistle to shame or embarrass, I embraced the moment, and I prayed with her before she left. When we had finished praying, I asked her daringly if she would like to make an appointment for a sonogram. My bold, strong-willed daughter looked me full in the face with tears in her eyes and said, "Yeah. I do."

So I'm asking all of us, "What if they were yours?" How would you see differently? How would you love them better? How much more time would you give? *God the Father* has given all of His searching children to us, His ambassadors. He has called us to this glorious duty of searching them out, holding their hands as we teach them what we have been taught by Him, and above all else loving them well. For the love is what they remember. And maybe, just maybe, this will be the difference between Life or death.

There are millions of us out there watching and praying on the wall. But the opportunities are all around us to get off our stands for a while, go down to the water, or over to the ones in trouble. It will go from being another job to a holy moment when you begin living your life as though they were yours.



The author, Natalie Brumfield

The true story of Silvia Aguilar Gonzalez, Mexico's unknown pro-life 'saint'

BY MATTHEW CULLINAN HOFFMAN

GUADALAJARA, August 9, 2013 (LifeSiteNews.com) - Five years have passed since Silvia Aguilar Gonzalez, a housekeeper from a small town in the Mexican state of Jalisco, passed away from brain cancer at the age of 37, abandoned by all of her immediate family, and completely destitute. It was the price she had paid, willingly and joyfully, for saving an unborn child from abortion.

For five years, I have kept Silvia's story to myself, waiting for an opportunity for more interviews and documentation that I was never able to obtain after losing contact with witnesses. After so long a delay, I believe the time has come to tell her story based on the information I received from conversations with Silvia's close friend, Maria Hernandez, as well as an in-law relative who was at her side as she died in 2008.

Silvia's suffering and joy began several years earlier, when Maria became pregnant by a boyfriend who refused to take responsibility for his child. Maria wanted to have an abortion, a procedure that is illegal but sadly available in the city of Guadalajara, where the two were living and working.

Silvia and Maria were immigrants to Guadalajara from the same small town, and were laboring as housekeepers to send money back to their families, sharing the same apartment. Their resources were meager, and their families unsupportive, but Silvia was unstinting in her determination to save Maria's unborn child.

"Your child is going to live," Silvia insisted to her friend. "We will care for it together."

Silvia's family was enraged. The decision to have and care for the child, a little girl who was soon born to Maria, threatened the income the two were sending home, and Silvia's family was outraged that she was taking responsibility for someone else's daughter.

According to Maria, they mocked Silvia and would have little to do with her, accusing the two of being lesbians. "Before God," Maria told me, "it isn't true. She just wanted to help me care for my daughter."

Undeterred, the two began to jointly raise the little girl, pooling their meager incomes for the purpose, while still managing to send some money home. For several years they managed to make ends meet. Silvia and the child she had saved grew close, and Maria would later say that her daughter was more attached to Silvia than to her. "I tell Silvia that she's her real mother," Maria told me once, laughing.

However, one day in 2007, when Silvia tried to rouse herself from bed, she found that she was unable to walk. A slow-growing and incurable brain tumor, which would eventually metastasize and take her life, was destroying her mobility.

For over a year, Silvia was confined to a bed and wheelchair, while doctors sought to diagnose her problem. Maria worked to support them both, and her young daughter, now walking and talking, remained with Silvia during the day. When the cancer metastasized and Silvia was admitted to Guadalajara's Civil Hospital, Maria quit working and joined her there, living at a local shelter for poor visitors.

I recall my shock when I visited Silvia in the hospital as she was dying, and found that not a single member of her immediate family had come to help her or even visit her. Only a cousin and his wife were present along with Maria. I had come in response to a newspaper article about the case, which noted the desperate financial situation of the two -- with no income, they were unable to pay for an operation for Silvia's cancer. Fortunately, a generous and anonymous donor had already intervened to pay for the operation.

It was in meeting and talking to her friend Maria that I learned about Silvia's heroic decision to sacrifice her relationship with her family to save and care for a child that was not her own. Soon we learned that the operation had done little good, and her cancer was incurable. At the age of 37, Silvia had only days to live.

I visited Silvia and Maria once more, on the evening of Silvia's death. She lay peacefully in bed, although her breathing was increasingly labored. Maria spoke into her ear at length, thanking her for all she done. The next morning I called and was told that Silvia had just passed away.

I verified with Maria that, as a believing Catholic, Silvia had received the last rites. And I must say that although I have no authority to pronounce on such a topic, Silvia Aguilar Gonzalez seems to me to be one of the countless saints unknown to the world, but famous in heaven, where their names are written in the book of life.