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Pro-Life Freedom Rides Begin in Birmingham, July 23




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[Click here to listen to the New Pro-life Anthem](#)
"The Least of These"
 written for the Pro-life Freedom Rides Campaign!
[Click here to read the lyrics to "The Least of These."](#)
 Join with hundreds of others who will sing and commit themselves to **The Least of These** at the Pro-life Freedom Rides Assembly, Friday evening, July 23, Birmingham, AL.
THE LEAST OF THESE
 Jamie Owens Collins
 ©2009 Fairhill Music, Inc.

[Click here to see images from Pro-Life Freedom Rides events](#)


"My Uncle Martin had a dream that Protestants and Catholics and Gentiles and Jews would join together and sing the age old spiritual 'Free at Last,'" stated Dr. Alveda King. "At Priests for Life, we will be singing and praying on the Pro-life Freedom Rides. We urge all people of good will to join us as we link the Civil Rights Movement of the 20th Century to the heart cry for life in the 21st Century."



Dr. Alveda King, who is a full-time member of the Pastoral Team of Priests for Life and niece of Martin Luther King, Jr., will be leading "Pro-life Freedom Rides" in the coming months, building on a method that the Civil Rights Movement used effectively forty years ago.

In that movement, thirteen individuals boarded a bus in Washington DC in 1961 and headed for New Orleans. Their intent was to test the enforcement of a Supreme Court decision the previous year that outlawed racial segregation in the restaurants and waiting areas of bus terminals that served interstate travelers.

That one ride led to dozens of others in various parts of the country, with hundreds of people getting involved.

Now, Dr. King and the team of Priests for Life believe it is time for a "Pro-life Freedom Ride," a peaceful, visible expression of the commitment of people around the country to work for freedom for the unborn. The rides will choose cities with strategic significance for the movement. While pro-life activists ride the buses, all pro-life people nationwide will be invited to participate simultaneously in concrete activities that will call for freedom on various levels: freedom from the lies that permit abortion, freedom from the despair that leads to and follows abortion, freedom from the fear that keeps people from fighting abortion, freedom from the political oppression that robs the unborn of their rights before the law.



A video message from Dr. Alveda King about the Pro-Life Freedom Rides (3:70)



Fr. Frank Pavone and Alveda King Discuss the Pro-Life Freedom Rides (10 min. 29 sec.)



Watch a music video for our new pro-life anthem, *The Least of These*.

Bishop Robert Baker of Birmingham endorses the Freedom Rides (pdf)

Proclaim Freedom for the Unborn

The pro-life movement is all about freedom. That's why Priests for Life, with the leadership of our Pastoral Associate Dr. Alveda King, is launching "Freedom Rides" for the unborn to galvanize pro-life activity across the country.

During the Civil Rights movement, the "Freedom Rides" constituted a distinctive moment of resolve and unity. The Supreme Court, in its 1960 decision *Boydton vs. Virginia*, had outlawed segregation in bus terminals and restaurants serving interstate travelers. So the following spring, thirteen people – seven African-Americans and six whites – decided to travel by bus from Washington DC to New Orleans to test the enforcement of that Supreme Court decision.

Along the way, particularly in Alabama, they encountered opposition and violence from those who did not want desegregation. But having been brutally attacked, and some lying with wounds in hospital beds, the "Freedom Riders" vowed that the journey would continue. That's when others joined in, and the initial Freedom Ride became 60 rides across Southern states in the summer of 1961, with some 450 riders participating. And by the fall of that same year, the government issued orders for the enforcement of desegregation at the bus terminals.

The Civil Rights movement and the Pro-Life movement have the same heart and soul: a longing for equal justice for everyone, based on the inherent dignity of every human life. That's why, when Dr. Alveda King first walked with me at the annual March for Life and I asked her, "Does this remind you of the marches in the civil rights movement?" she declared, "Fr. Frank, this is the civil rights movement!" Both movements are movements of freedom.

It is therefore time for Freedom Rides for the unborn. The pro-life movement is more ready than ever to proclaim freedom...

Freedom from the lies and the deceit that allow abortion to continue...

Freedom from the fear of speaking up and taking action for the unborn...

Freedom from the shame and guilt of past involvement in abortion, so that those called to speak up and share their testimonies may do so as people who are "Silent No More"...

Freedom from the political oppression that tramples on human rights and denies equality before the law...

Freedom from violence and death itself.

People will be invited to participate in the Freedom Rides themselves. The bus rides are a symbol of the journey we are on, of the fellowship we share with each other, and of the fact that we are a *movement*. Major events in cities along the bus routes will be held, in which all the different facets of the pro-life movement will be invited to participate.

At the same time, people not on the rides or along the route can participate by being "Freedom Riders for the Unborn" and carrying out special projects that will be coordinated among Freedom Riders nationwide.

In his first public sermon, Jesus summarized his message and mission by saying he had come to "proclaim liberty to the captives..." As his disciples, as his People of Life, let us do the same!

Fr. Frank Pavone
National Director, Priests for Life

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