



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: March for Life

Guest(s): Jeanne Mancini

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Dr. James Dobson: Well, hello, everyone. I'm James Dobson and you're listening to Family Talk, a listener-supported ministry. In fact, thank you so much for being part of that support for James Dobson Family Institute.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Hi, everyone. Dr. Tim Clinton. Welcome to Family Talk, the broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson family Institute. Today, we have a very important interview for you to hear as we begin 2022 together. We present to you an interview from late last year I had with Jeanne Mancini. She's head of the powerful pro-life organization, March for Life. Let's jump right in here on Family Talk. Remember, this month is Sanctity of Human Life Month. We hope you'll stand strong for life. Call us at (877) 732-6825 to find out how you can help us do that.

Hello and welcome to Family Talk, the broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Dr. Tim Clinton, president of the American Association of Christian Counselors and your co-host here on Family Talk. There's one issue that has made its way into the news cycle over and over during the last 12 months or so. That issue is abortion. From President Biden rescinding the Mexico City policy during his first month in office, to mail-order abortion pills being widely distributed during the height of the COVID pandemic, now the Texas Heartbeat Law, and the Mississippi abortion case, which some believe could overturn the Roe versus Wade decision. Set to be heard by the Supreme court in December.

In all, over 60 million babies have been senselessly murdered in the womb since that Roe versus Wade case was passed in 1973. If you consider the four million and babies that are born every year in the United States, that number of 60 million has a lot of gravity to it. Can't even begin to imagine the impact that those little lives would've had in our world today if they had been allowed to live.

Dr. Dobson has been on the front lines of the fight for life since the Roe versus Wade passage in '73 alongside many passionate Christian and conservative leaders. Our guest today has made it her life mission to fight against abortion and to fight for the lives of the pre-born. Her name, Jeanne Mancini. She is the president of the March for Life Education and Defense Fund. With her team,

Jeanne is committed to restoring a culture of life here in the United States. One of the ways they do that is by hosting the annual March for Life event in Washington, DC. Before taking her role as president of March for Life, Jeanne worked for the Family Research Council and before that, she worked for the United States Department of Health and Human Services in the Office of the Secretary. She holds an undergraduate degree in psychology from James Madison University, a master's degree in theology, a master's degree in the theology of marriage and family from Pope John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family. Jeanne, thank you so much for joining us today. Dr. Dobson, his wife, Shirley, they love you. They send their regards.

Jeanne Mancini: Oh, gosh. I'm such fans of Dr. Dobson and Mrs. Dobson. I mean, they've just been at the forefront of this issue and so many critical social issues in our culture. Just filled with gratitude for their leadership.

Dr. Tim Clinton: As we get started, everyone's heard of the March for Life, the annual March for Life event held in Washington, DC. It's quite amazing. I was there two years ago. Last year, of course, it was virtual, but the event, a tip of the hat to you and the amazing work of your team. Jeanne, tell us a little bit about what it is, how it got started.

Jeanne Mancini: What is it? It is literally the largest annual human rights demonstration worldwide with hundreds of thousands of people participating every single year. How it got started, I mean, it's really quite providential in one of these moments of good things coming from a really sad moment in the culture. Of course, Roe v. Wade and its partner Supreme Court case, Doe v. Bolton, were passed way back in 1973, January 22nd, to be exact, and so those decisions legalized abortion in all of the states around the United States, really, in all trimesters throughout the states. The March for Life began a year after that. Fast forward about seven, eight months after Roe v. Wade, Doe v. Bolton were decided, and there were some just ardent pro-lifers, Nellie Gray, our founder, being one of them. They gathered together at a meeting in Capitol Hill, in fact, just in her townhouse, around her kitchen table and said, "What are we going to do about this? We need to draw a line in the sand." Thus, the first March for Life was born.

The very first one was on a bright sunny day in Washington, D.C. in January, which I think that God was sort of having a good sense of humor on because it's never since that time been a bright, warm sunny day in Washington, DC in the middle of January. But anyway, the very first March for Life, then January 22nd, 1974, and we've marched every single year since then. The march has grown every year and its demographics have gotten younger over the years, so anybody who comes to the March for Life will see that it is, while we're commemorating the loss of life in America, and the fact that, as you mentioned, we've lost over 62 million Americans to abortion, but the march is still a joyful event because we know that we're there standing on up for the single most significant human rights issue of our time. These young people that attend are

just the best ambassadors for life. Their enthusiasm, their creativity with the signs that they bring and they hold up is just incredible.

Really, really want to encourage your listeners to come in person to the March for Life because I've heard from so many people that it's a life-changing event. It's very hard to put into words. It's like you study about God, you read about God, all this, but unless you know God and experience God, you don't really know what that means. Not to equate the March for Life to God, but reading about it, seeing pictures, hearing about it is very different than actually attending. It's really a life-changing experience and everybody should do it at least once in their life.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Jeanne, my wife, Julie, used to lead the Liberty Godparent Home in Lynchburg, Virginia, and she would take a team up to Washington every year.

Jeanne Mancini: Neat.

Dr. Tim Clinton: She would say, "Tim, you have got to go. You've got to go." Couple years ago, I got baptized in my first experience up there, and Jeanne, it was amazing. You said "hundreds of thousands of people." It's true. The mall was packed. But I was sobered by I and excited about the young faces I saw. They were everywhere. Jeanne, that millennial, that Gen X group, they were en masse, and I'll tell you what, they had a lot of energy. What is it that you think is pulling that generation?

Jeanne Mancini: Young people have this desire to do the good, right? They're social justice warriors and they're human rights warriors and what have you and they haven't had the experiences maybe that some of us who are a little bit older can be a little bit cynical towards change and culture and what have you. They've also grown up seeing the sonograms and the ultrasonography, pictures of their little brothers or their little sisters, their friends, and so they see that a developing child is not a lifeless blob of tissue, but it's actually a developing child in its earliest stages. I think that they're just drawn to the good. Social justice begins in the womb and they seem to get that and to know it and to want to put all of their eggs in that basket. They want to do everything possible to abolish abortion. They are the generation that's going to abolish abortion, as they say, and it's so attractive

Dr. Tim Clinton: Jeanne, since that infamous decision, Roe versus Wade, some 62 million babies, we've talked about that already have been lost to abortion. You call abortion "the single greatest human rights abuse of our day." Explain that a little bit more to us.

Jeanne Mancini: Listen, there are a fair number of human rights abuses going on out there. I mean, we could delve into that. You've got trafficking issues.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Sure.

Jeanne Mancini: You've got all sorts of poverty issues, some true racial issues, and what have you. I mean, we could really go on to that. But it's impossible for the human person to fully flourish in any of those other sort of what I'd call "periphery issues," as important as they are, if they're not given the most basic human right, which is just the right to come to term, to be born, so it's sort of the preeminent human rights issue. If someone is not able to be born, it's just impossible for them to experience anything else and to fully flourish as a human being.

If we focus so much on those other issues, which they're very important, and people are called to focus on those other issues, and thanks be to God for that, but we can sometimes, I think, lose sight of the fact that the single important issue needs to be taken care of. Our country gets comfortable with legalized abortion. It's like we almost forget or think that lives are erased, but no, every single day we are losing human lives to this scourge, and we have to remind ourselves of that significant human rights abuse.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Jeanne, I wonder what goes on in your heart and in your mind as you see all this stuff happening and all those issues you've been battling cycle right back around again and hit the forefront of a lot of what everybody's talking about and battling over.

Jeanne Mancini: Okay, so the bigger challenge, and the laws are so important, and that's why we were founded at the March for Life, but the bigger challenge is changing hearts and minds in this issue, creating a culture where abortion is unthinkable. I just want to focus on that for one minute. The abortion rate, believe it or not is that it's lowest ever since Roe v. Wade, so we are going in the right direction. I say that with some fear and trepidation just in the sense of, while we are going in the right direction, there's still over 800,000 abortions every single year in our country, so there's very many, but the abortion rate has decreased, and then the abortion incidents has decreased, so it's like the rate itself has decreased, but the actual number of abortions has also decreased, so those things are good.

More people self-identify as being pro-life than ever before and most Americans would limit abortion much more than it's limited in our country. They would limit abortion, at most, to the first three months of pregnancy. That's like eight out of 10 Americans for well over a decade. The polling information has shown that. That's very different than 20, 30 years ago.

Another massive victory in changing hearts and minds is that we mentioned young people. When you look at the general social survey data, for example, young people, that demographic is the single cohort that shifted most in the direction of life, so we've got young people again on the side of life when we were talking about this. Pregnancy care centers are flourishing. There are well over 2,000 pregnancy care centers around the country and they collectively give over \$100 million in free resources to women and men facing unexpected pregnancies every year. That's up. There were only about 500 in the early '80s.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Sure.

Jeanne Mancini: So, we're well over 2,000. The opposite has happened with abortion clinics.

Dr. Tim Clinton: They're closing.

Jeanne Mancini: In the '80s, there were well over 2,000 abortion clinics. Now, there's less than 700, so we're seeing all of these shifts, these massive cultural shifts in the direction of life. Oh, by the way, we do have this thing called the Supreme Court, and they're seeing some pretty exciting cases this year, and so there's a lot of hope and excitement around that, too. That's my very long answer to your question.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Jeanne, at the end of the day, you would say, "Hey, we're winning. Life is winning." While we've got a few hurdles here in front of us, there's a lot of energy and a lot of movement going in the right direction. Jeanne, I wanted to say with that, you quoted some statistics. 77% of Americans say that they're against taxpayer funding of abortion overseas. Seven in 10 Americans want limits on abortion. That's a lot of people.

Jeanne Mancini: A lot of people.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Most of them, you said they want it limited to the first three months of pregnancy. Let me go a step further. Six in 10 are against domestic taxpayer funding on abortion. Here's my question: How in the world, then, are we drifting into this extremism that we're seeing right now, abortion on demand up until the birth of a child, basically infanticide? How do we go from where the public is at to these kind of battles in our government?

Jeanne Mancini: What we're seeing on the left with pro-abortion members of Congress and elected officials is this very extreme view that you just described and it's horrifying, really.

Dr. Tim Clinton: It is.

Jeanne Mancini: I mean, in my own state, Virginia, our governor who's currently our governor actually said on a radio interview that he thinks that babies, and he's a pediatrician, by the way, that babies should still be allowed to be aborted after they've been born. I mean, this is crazy. Any abortion is crazy, but even most pro-choicers don't agree with this.

How do we fix that? I think one of the most important things is to keep talking about this because even though maybe you and I are steeped in the issue, a lot of people don't really know where politicians stand on this. Then let your member of Congress and your elected officials know where you stand on that. I mean, the value of a call, a letter, an email to your elected official is so important. I think sometimes people think they get lost, they don't listen to it, et

cetera, but no, working closely on the Hill, I can tell you that those things really do matter.

That's something that we emphasize at the March for Life. We have our 501(c)(3) March for Life Education and Defense Fund and then we have March for Life Action so that we can do the lobbying on the Hill and that we can take the collective voice of the marchers every single day. When there is a good bill or a bad bill, we can take those hundreds of thousands of voices and push the elected officials to make the right decision. These things do really matter. Then always, I would just say prayer and fasting. I mean, this is a spiritual battle.

Dr. Tim Clinton: It is. Jeanne, what do you think it is that makes abortion such a polarizing issue? What's the motivation, I guess, maybe behind politicians to push for funding support for abortion versus, say, supporting moms, doing pregnancy clinics and things like that? I mean, it just doesn't even seem logical to me.

Jeanne Mancini: Well, I certainly agree. Let me first just underscore the significance of what you just asked and say how much I agree with you, that it is polarizing. I've been very blessed to be able to meet a lot of people who are steeped in the media, so we'll meet, not in terms of an interview, but we'll get coffee and get to know each other in advance of some big thing happening, and then we're interviewing. I've been blown away by the secret pro-lifers in the media and the stories that they've shared with me about how this is the single most divisive issue and they're just not allowed to use certain language. They absolutely can't report things a certain way. I mean, it's just unbelievable. I mostly want to underscore, oh, yeah. This is about as divisive as gets.

Why? Probably because we live in a culture of walking wounded. Many women and men have been engaged and involved in an abortion. We know that reality is not arbitrary when you take the life of a baby, that you can say, "I'm pro-abortion," and that's fine, and that's a woman's right, but it doesn't change reality. The truth is that the woman and the man still has the sad consequences, not that they can't be healed, there's always hope and healing in God, but it doesn't change the reality that a life was taken and that they still live with that tremendous burden on their heart.

I think, even I could see in marriage, when something is very emotional, it's because there's a wound underneath it and we have to get at it and talk about it and communicate when we're talking. I say that because I think that we live in the culture of the walking wounded right now and that lots of people are responding and carrying some of that sad baggage that, again, can always be healed by God's grace, but the truth of taking a life of a child is significant, and that you carry some sad consequences with you on that.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Jeanne, I think most of the people I talk to are with you. They agree. According to the Guttmacher Institute, they say some 40%, some suggest 1 in 4 of American women have had an abortion. Jeanne, what's your thought on that?

Jeanne Mancini: Yeah. Okay, so the Guttmacher data, I'd have to see the specific study, but I think that's about right, one in four women in our country, which is just heartbreaking. Yes, I think every time we talk about this, we absolutely have to approach it from the perspective of we know that there are people around us right now, people in our families that have been through this, and we just want to remind you that there's hope and healing and always approach it along those lines, and what can we do to accompany women along the way? When they're facing an unexpected pregnancy, what a woman most needs is to be told, "You got this. You can do it," and she needs the emotional support, the financial support, the other kinds of support, but what she most wants to hear in that moment is, "You got this. You can do this. You have this within you." She needs someone to accompany her through that, so basically, I couldn't agree more.

Dr. Tim Clinton: You're listening to Family Talk, a division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Dr. Tim Clinton, co-host. Our special guest today is Jeanne Mancini. She's the president of the March for Life Education Defense Fund. She leads that amazing event every year up in Washington, DC. A strong voice for life. Delightful conversation today. Jeanne, as a part of this, it all boils down to in the debate, if you will, the personhood issue. When is a child declared a human, a person? Can you help us understand that? Because I think people sometimes get lost in all the debate and the ruckus going on around this issue that they don't even really understand what the core issue is that we have to understand.

Jeanne Mancini: Yeah. A lot of people have different ideas about the best strategy to legally end abortion and many people think that having personhood amendments is the best approach. You've got sort of school of thought. I have a different school of thought, but I don't disagree, per se, with that. I just think I'm not sure what's legally going to end it. But as for the deeper philosophical question about when does a human life begin, listen, we know that God is most powerful, He's our Creator. All the theological reasons that life begins right at the moment of conception, but guess what? We can just look at science. A human being's DNA is there at the moment of conception. They've got everything in that moment that they need to be a full human person. Essentially, science, more than anything else, proves that a person is a person from the moment of conception.

When I was working in the office of the secretary at HHS, I was not among a lot of friendly people on this issue. In other words, many people were pro-choice and I did have a scientist from NIH one day quietly pull me aside, whispered to me, "I know you're pro-life. I just was wondering, are you pro-life because of your religious beliefs?" I said, "Well, my religious beliefs support me and give me strength because of this but I think science is on the side of life." And he said, "I'm not a religious person. I'm an atheist but I don't see how any scientist in good standing could say otherwise. It's so clear that life begins at conception from a scientific perspective. It just is."

Dr. Tim Clinton: Because the debate pushback is, "No, this is my body. My choice." No, no, no. You're talking about something that is not your body. This is a child. That's really the heart of the issue. Jeanne, let's end, we're fighting time here, where we

started. There's a lot of energy. There's a lot of excitement. I've been there, I've seen it, and it's amazing what God's doing. If someone's listening right now and they say, "Well, I'd like to learn a lot more about March for Life and I want to get involved in the movement," what can they do? How can they find out more? How can they learn more about you?

Jeanne Mancini: First of all, mark their calendar, January 21st, 2022, and plan to come to Washington, DC that day for a life-changing experience. But check us out. We've got so much information on our website, marchforlife.org. You can also check out our state march initiative there as well, where there's lots of exciting things happening around the country.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Jeanne, one last thing before you go, too, and if someone's listening and their heart's broken because as they listen to this they reflect back to their past and it brings tears to their eyes and they've prayed many times to God asking for forgiveness and grace and they want to stand with you strong on this issue, can you give us a closing word to each and every one of them?

Jeanne Mancini: Please come. We always have a very special testimony of a woman who will share her story and we will have that again this year. We haven't announced who that person is. At the end of the March for Life, we have women stand in front of the Supreme Court and men sharing their testimonies and they are silent no more about their testimonies, but absolutely, if you have even the slightest doubt that there's hope or healing or a future for you, that is not from God. Shame is not from God. I mean, really, God wants you to live the fullness of who you are and to be able to be released of any darkness. Just know that there is hope and healing in Jeremiah 29:11, "'For I know well the plans I have in mind for you,' says the Lord, 'plans for good and not for evil, plans for a future full of hope.'"

Dr. Tim Clinton: Yeah. He forgives you. Great words. I'm reminded of Edmond Burke, "All that's necessary for evil to triumph is for good men," and I'll say, "and women to do nothing." Jeanne, it's been a delight. On behalf of Dr. Dobson, his wife, Shirley, the team here at Family Talk, we again tip the hat to you and salute the amazing work that God's doing in and through you and the great March for Life. Thank you for joining us.

Jeanne Mancini: Thank you so much. It was a joy.

Roger Marsh: Well, this concludes our insightful interview for today. You've been listening to our own Dr. Tim Clinton with a special guest, national anti-abortion defender Jeanne Mancini, president of the March for Life Education and Defense Fund. A reminder, the National March for Life Day is coming up on Friday, January 21st. Make plans to get out and let your voices be heard. This is Sanctity of Human Life Month here at Family Talk. Your gift to us can go a long way towards saving the lives of pre-born in the womb. Your gift of any amount in support of our ministry goes a long way towards saving the lives of the pre-born. Find out how

to support the cause at drjamesdobson.org. That's D-R James Dobson dot O-R-G.

Here's a suggestion. How about a resource for you and your family or to pass along to a friend? That's right, this month only, we offer the Standing Strong for Life three-track CD, yours for a donation of any amount. Go to drjamesdobson.org/standforlife. I'll repeat that, it's very important. D-R James Dobson dot O-R-G forward slash S-T-A-N-D-F-O-R-L-I-F-E, or call us at (877) 732-6825. Well, that's all the time we have for today. Keep standing up for the sanctity of all precious human life and we'll see you tomorrow right here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Announcer:

This has been a presentation of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute.