Fr. James F. Heyd was born and raised in Chicago and was ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of Chicago in 1989 by Joseph Cardinal Bernardin. Ever since high school days, he was drawn to pro-life work witnessing the life-saving efforts of Joseph Scheidler, Pro-life Action League. He studied at the University of Notre Dame and went on to receive his S.T.L degree in Theology from Mundelein Seminary in Illinois. His dissertation reflected on John Paul II's document "On Human Work."

Fr. Heyd responded to the call to minister to the needs of the growing Hispanic community and worked as associate pastor at St. Philomena's Parish from 1990-1995 in a largely Puerto Rican and Mexican neighborhood in Chicago. During this time, Fr. Heyd expanded his pro-life outreach and met Frs. Lee Kaylor and Frank Pavone. With Cardinal Bernardin's blessing, Fr. Heyd began to assist Fr. Pavone in developing Priests for Life into a national organization.

On a local level, Fr. Heyd organized and promoted the Holy Hour of Life, and brought together many lay associates in Chicago to the work of Priests for Life and assisted pro-lifers with sidewalk counseling and prayer in front of abortuaries. "These were very exciting though challenging times, trying to galvanize the clergy to speak out and be prophetic on pro-life issues," Fr. Heyd says, "in truth, we were supported and encouraged by John Paul II's encyclical "The Gospel of Life."

From 1995-1997, Fr. Heyd worked at St. Joseph Seminary of Loyola University as a vocations director and instructor of Theology. His work brought him in contact with pro-life students and seminarians who desired to raise an awareness of the sanctity of life to their confreres. He also began to collaborate and write for Seminarians for Life. Fr. Heyd states, "It is my firm belief that the pro-life movement fosters solid vocations to the priesthood and religious life, and strengthens the life and belief of the church."

Fr. Heyd was one of Cardinal Bernardin's Masters of Ceremonies assisting the Cardinal with liturgical functions. Fr. Heyd has also served as associate pastor of St. Athanasius Parish in Evanston, Illinois directly north of Chicago.

In 2005, Cardinal Francis George gave Fr. Heyd permission to work with Priests for Life full-time. Fr. Heyd states, "It is a privilege to be a part of Priests for Life and be able to stand up for the voiceless preborn threatened by abortion. Father Frank Pavone has done a stellar job with this work and deserves the support of the entire church. This is not just the work of a few priests but of all of us who call ourselves Christian."

To arrange a media interview, contact Jerry Horn at (540) 785-4733, Email: media@priestsforlife.org

To invite Fr. Jim to speak in your area, contact our Travel Department at 888-PFL-3448, ext. 255, Fax: 718-980-7191 Email: travels@priestsforlife.org