

3<sup>rd</sup> Ordinary Sunday  
January 26, 2020  
“Life: God’s Choice”

Is 8:23 – 9:3  
1Cor 1:10...17  
Mt 4:12-17

My Brothers and Sisters in the Lord –

At the recent meeting of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, it was decided that abortion would be the first of the priorities that the American bishops should address. This superseded climate change, environmental concerns, immigration, poverty – as well as a number of other serious problems. Consequently, Bishop Soto has asked his clergy to speak on this very serious issue.

Since the Supreme Court decision on Roe vs. Wade, on January 22, 1973, the United States alone has averaged close to one million abortions each year. That’s 219 deliberate terminations for every 1000 live births – or 120 abortions every hour! This does not include the estimated 14 million terminated pregnancies from using abortifacient types of contraceptives.

Originally, abortion was approved to save the life of the expectant mother. It was usually performed during the first trimester of the pregnancy. But being the slippery slope that all evil is, it is now possible to kill the child anytime prior to or during the birth – and, in some cases, even after the actual birth itself!

Abortion is such a travesty because it dehumanizes everyone involved: the child, the mother, the father, those who urged the event, and the medical personnel who bring it about. With abortion, we become less than who and what God has created us to be as human persons made in His image. We become idols who serve and worship ourselves as supreme! Moreover, we open the door to other evils that disregard or deny the sacredness of human life – evils which also possess the soul that was meant for God alone!

All this being said, it might be helpful to look at the effects on most women who have experienced it. Project Rachel, started in the Catholic diocese of Bismarck, North Dakota, lists the following post abortion effects upon women:

- “90% suffer damage in their self-esteem.
- 50% begin or increase use of alcohol and drugs.
- 60% report ideas of suicide.

25% actually attempt suicide.  
20% suffer full-blown post traumatic stress disorder.  
50% report some symptoms of P.T.S.D.  
52% felt pressured by others to have the abortion.  
83% would have kept the pregnancy if encouraged by others.”

Moreover, often women do not connect many other problems with the aftermath of their abortion. Their repressed feelings can surface in other ways. Examples include: “eating disorders, alcoholism, self-destructive behavior, workaholism, promiscuity, difficulty with interpersonal relationships, sexual dysfunction, anxiety and panic disorders, clinical and post-partum depressions, flashbacks, and nightmares.”

For those who recognize the truth and the effects of their past mistakes, a call to Rachel’s Vineyard in Bismarck might be very helpful. Rachel’s Vineyard has even scheduled one of their healing retreats in Sacramento on May 15<sup>th</sup> of this year.

Moreover, we also have a pro-life center in Redding. Called *Life Light*, it is on Bechelli Lane and is open for pregnancy counseling and post-abortion counseling as well!

In fighting the tragedy of abortion, we must be counter-cultural in the bankrupt society surrounding us. We must always remember that erotic satisfaction belongs in marriage alone. Any attempt to short-circuit God’s plan for our sexuality is sinful. Hence, sterilization and contraception can never substitute for moderation, self-denial, and natural family planning!

Fortunately, there is no sin that God cannot forgive. God loves us despite the sometimes horrendous things we have done. Because the wages of sin is always death of some kind – the non-fatal deaths we suffer can remind us of what we have done and where we went astray.

Nevertheless, the suffering we experience because of our sins and mistakes can be turned back to God in reparation. It can help to make up for what we have done and restore some of the balance we have upset. Consequently, post abortion reparation has led some to militate against abortion and become champions for life. They can also walk with others who have suffered as they have and walk, likewise, with those who are bravely accepting an unexpected or unplanned child!

Brothers and Sisters, let us each examine ourselves today. How can we make things better for those who feel trapped by an unplanned pregnancy? How can we be a healing agent for those who took the life of their child and are now suffering? We are all related to each other because we are all God’s children and disciples of Jesus our brother.

So, let us pray that the Holy Spirit, the divine person of life and love, will guide us to do what we can to eliminate abortion – May we be willing to help those parents who, themselves, are victims of their own wrong decisions –

And may we always be pro-life in God's love!

Amen.

January 26, 2020

Msgr. Russell G. Terra