

Defending Life – There's No Better Choice

Fr. Dean McFalls, Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, Lathrop, January 19, 2008

On Saturday, January 19th, thousands of pro-life advocates gathered in San Francisco. They came from across the western United States, and beyond, in order once again to proclaim the good news that all human life is sacred. They declared in word, song, prayer and procession that every human being has, from the moment of conception to the time of natural death, inalienable dignity. The “right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” articulated by the Declaration of Independence finds its echo in the Walk for Life. In Washington DC, in San Francisco, and elsewhere, we defend those who have no public voice from the “choice” of those who have the power to terminate.

Thursday's “good news” about declines in abortion nation-wide was, on the surface, encouraging. “The number of abortions has plunged to 1.2 million a year,” announced the Los Angeles Times. This is “down 25 percent since hitting a peak in 1990.” At that time, “nearly one in three pregnant women chose abortion,” according to the highly reliable Guttmacher Report. Now, it appears that only one in five have recourse to surgical termination of what is currently called an “unintended” (elsewhere called “unwanted”) pregnancy.

The fact is, this trend in part is due to the increased ability of women to end their pregnancies in other ways. Stephanie Simon's article admits: “women looking to end early pregnancies are gravitating to medication abortions, in which they take two pills under a doctor's supervision to induce miscarriage. This approach lets them avoid surgery – and the protesters who often picket clinics – and expel the embryo in the privacy of their homes.” Added to what promoters call “emergency contraception”, a cocktail of powerful hormones which also can cause the death of a newly-conceived embryo, RU486 and its chemical relatives accounted for more than 13 percent of abortions in 2005.

This means that the total number of human beings killed in their mother's womb, or in the process of implantation in the womb, has not decreased as much as the statistics might indicate. But even if there were a true decrease, isn't 1,200,000 still a horrendous number? In two years, American doctors

still legally destroy nearly as many human beings as the entire number of Americans killed in action during all our major wars since 1776 (2,757,196).

Every day, American doctors put to death, in the sanctuary of their mother's womb, more babies-in-gestation than all the casualties of the demonically inspired terrorist attacks of 9-11. And the negative side-effects of chemical abortions – in addition to knowing that one has killed the life within that one was created to nurture – have been largely ignored by defenders of abortion.

A public radio feature January 17 allowed one brief report detailing hidden statistics of RU486, which has killed a number of women and caused many hemorrhages which required emergency treatment and surgical intervention.

Yet we continue to remain willfully blind as a society. And, in a betrayal of their party's self-proclaimed stance for justice in society, all the Democratic forerunners are pro-abortion (which is an accurate translation of "pro-choice" since the only "choice" we pro-lifers protest is the choice to kill a child). I personally don't identify myself with any party, but I don't want the supreme authority of my country, still the most powerful nation in the world, to allow the Supreme Court's most despicable decision to dictate their conscience.

January 22nd, 2008, marked the 35th anniversary of Roe v. Wade. We know now that this decision was influenced by inaccurate statistics, falsified data, and the exploitation of a deeply wounded woman named Roe who later came to regret, publicly, her involvement with the case. And yet the veil of lies, rhetoric, and secrecy still obscures the most obvious truth that abortion is a grave evil, because abortion is murder. It attacks the soul of a woman as it destroys the child in formation within her womb, because she was made to be a giver, a sustainer, and a protector of life. For this reason, we who walk go face-to-face with hundreds of people who cannot stand to hear our message.

We, for our part, must take a stand. We walk because there are millions who cannot make a public appeal on behalf of their own threatened lives. Once the innocent child has no protection, then inevitably the elderly, the severely disabled, the uninsured, and the unwanted in society also lose their defense.

Jesus Christ, on his part, came to us as a baby. Conceived by the Spirit in the Virgin's womb, he was threatened from the start. Born in a stable because

“there was no room for him” (Luke 2:7), “he came unto his own, but his own did not receive him” (John 1:11). Nearly murdered by an authority who felt threatened by his birth (Matthew 2:16-18), he was rescued by parents who knew his dignity. Finally, though, he was condemned and crucified because he called God his Father and thus identified himself with God. But, before he was betrayed by one of his trusted companions, Jesus promised his disciples that he would go before them to prepare the way. “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life,” he told them. “No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6). In his resurrection, Jesus confirmed everything he had taught.

Some of Jesus’ most beautiful teachings concerned the defenseless. “Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such as these belongs the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 19:14). The same gospel concludes Jesus’ public ministry with a strong warning: “Whatever you did to one of the least of these, you did it to me.” (Matthew 25:40, 45). In fact, our eternal destiny for salvation (heaven) or condemnation (hell) depends, in this exhortation, entirely on whether we treat the vulnerable with compassion or not. In the light of Jesus’ teachings and example, and in the testimony of all of sacred scripture, there is absolutely no room for abortion in any civilized society.

And yet the United States has the highest per capita rate of abortions of any country in the Western World, according to that same Public Radio broadcast.

Are we missing something here? What’s wrong with this picture? I’ll tell you what’s wrong. We have swallowed, as a society, the lies about who we are and where we’ve come from, about what our purpose is here on earth and about where we’re headed for in the end. From the Biblical perspective it’s all very simple. “...For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well” (Psalm 139:13-14).

There is no other reason for our being here than the generosity of the Creator who formed the universe and bestowed on us the highest dignity. Whether or not we choose to believe this makes all the difference. But, whatever our “choice”, the medical evidence is abundantly clear: a conceived human being is, all the same, human, and alive. We walk for life because life is sacred.

May Mary, the mother of all who love and follow Christ, intercede for us.