

**Anniversary of Roe v. Wade
January 21, 2011**

Pro-Life Sermon

My children and grandchildren are growing up in a society which is much different than the one that existed in my youth. When I was young, there was consistency in the message I heard in church, the one I heard from society, and the one expressed by our laws. Living together without being married was wrong. Homosexuality was wrong. And abortion was wrong. But now, while my church continues to preach that all these things are still wrong (as she has preached for the last 2,000 years), my society and its laws now say that they are acceptable. There is no longer agreement between what is morally acceptable, what is socially acceptable, and what is legal.

Abortion was illegal when I was young, but 38 years ago today the Supreme Court struck down laws that made abortion illegal in the infamous Roe vs. Wade decision. The court determined that there is no way that we can know when human life begins. They said that there is no basis for our faith definition that life begins at conception. And since that time, over 50 million unborn babies have been killed in the United States. Last year in New York City, 40% of all babies conceived were aborted. That is, for every three babies born, two were killed. Nationwide numbers are coming down from highs of 30% in the mid-eighties to about 20-25% today. But that still is way too many, about 1.2 million babies per year.

A woman who finds herself with an unintended pregnancy has some choices today. She can choose to have the baby and hopefully bring the child up in a loving family with the father. This may not be possible, so she may choose to have the baby and raise him by herself or maybe place him for adoption. These are also good, acceptable choices. And unfortunately for the last 38 years, she has the legal choice of having her baby aborted, and this is obviously not an acceptable moral choice.

Today is a day that we rally and pray to turn our society and its legal systems back to a sound moral foundation and put an end to the practice of abortion, the killing of innocent unborn children. Many from across the country will be travelling to Washington, DC this weekend to march Monday in support of unborn children who cannot fight for themselves. I know many from this parish will be making the trip. They will witness to their belief in the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death. But most pro-abortion politicians will not pay attention because their hearts are hardened. The biggest impact from the March for Life is the unity of prayer being offered by people of all ages, colors, and denominations. And they will be energized to continue the fight when they return. But what can all of us do throughout the year.

We ultimately need to change our laws to make abortion illegal. We need to pray to God, we need to fast, to ask God to soften the hearts of our legislators. We need to support and vote for pro-life candidates for public office. We need to be active in the political process. But before we can accomplish much on the legal front, we need to change hearts so that abortion is no longer socially acceptable. If, for example, the Roe vs. Wade decision is reversed, it will not automatically make abortion illegal; it would only allow states to enact anti-abortion laws if they so choose. In many states, abortion would remain legal.

Smoking cigarettes was once considered glamorous. Women were encouraged to smoke as a means of controlling their weight and staying attractive. The government subsidized tobacco farmers. But after many years, the dangers and evils of smoking became better known and those who smoked were ostracized and relegated to smoking outside in the cold. It is no longer

fashionable. And now the legal system is enacting rules against smoking. The government sues tobacco companies instead of subsidizing them.

I can see the same progression in the fight against abortion. We have to make sure that the truths about the evils of abortion and the abortion industry become known. The tobacco companies tried to hide the truth about the dangers of smoking. And the abortion industry, especially Planned Parenthood, is trying to hide the truth about the reality of abortion; what it is, how it's done, and the serious impact to the physical and emotional health of the mothers. We need to be informed and share what we know with our friends and neighbors. We need to boycott companies that support Planned Parenthood, the leading abortion provider.

And so we need to work in any ways that we are able to make abortion socially unacceptable and also illegal. But until that time there is something else that can be done, and it needs to be done on an individual basis offering women who are considering the immoral option of abortion another better choice. And this is the work being done by pro-life workers in crisis pregnancy centers. They are the unsung heroes in the fight against abortion and they need our help.

When I was doing some investigations, I ran across this quote from the researcher David Reardon: ***“70% of women undergoing abortion believe that it is morally wrong. They are acting against their consciences because they feel they have no other choice.”*** The pro-abortion advocates talk about freedom of choice, but most women having an abortion are coerced, they are not making a free choice. Federica Mathewes-Green stated: ***“No woman wants an abortion as she wants an ice cream cone or a Porsche. She wants an abortion as an animal caught in a trap wants to gnaw off its own leg.”*** For many, abortion is an act of despair when no other choice appears to exist; when they feel trapped.

And so I encourage you to support your local crisis pregnancy center by offering your time or financial donations. Or maybe you can investigate the possibility of becoming a sidewalk counselor and encouraging and enabling women to make good choices.

They are many opportunities to work to put an end to abortion in our country. There are legal, political, educational, and charitable avenues for you to pursue based on your skills and resources. Pray to God that you can know your role and for the courage to act out that role. Pray for our politicians. Pray for all pro-life workers. Pray for all mothers that they make good choices. Pray for our country that the people can see the truth. Pray for those who support abortion that their hearts be softened.

Pray! Pray! Pray!

Deacon Joe Hulway