



Bulletin from the Diocese of Santa Rosa



Being Catholic is being Pro-Life

October, 2011

My Dear People of God:

The First Sunday of October is set apart each year by the Catholic Church in the United States as Pro-Life Sunday. This year is no exception.

We are very much aware of the ongoing destruction of pre-born human beings through various abortive means, and it is vital that we never grow complacent in the face of this national tragedy. We acknowledge that abortion is legal throughout the world -- but this begs the question. It is still morally unacceptable. The direct taking of the life of an innocent human being, however small, is a crime against humanity even if vast numbers of adults fail to acknowledge the moral seriousness of the crime.

There are a number of things we must keep in mind: First, a pre-born baby, however small, is a being of human origin. This is not opinion or conjecture; it is a scientifically verifiable fact. This fact has consequences. Second, as said so well by Fr. Robert Spitzer, S.J., "When in doubt, err on the side of assuming and according personhood to every being of human origin, whether or not the activities of that being manifest" otherwise clearly obvious qualities of personhood. This seems to me to be a morally and logically sound principle. Third, the state has a duty to defend and protect human life. When the state arbitrarily denies "personhood" and the associated inalienable rights to a being of human origin, it does unconscionable harm to the vulnerable persons most in need of civil protections. Fourth, taking a pro-choice stance, either as a government leader or a Catholic, is indefensible. Someone who claims a personal "pro-life" conviction while simultaneously avowing a "pro-choice" philosophy chooses a position of indifference to the humanity of the pre-born child. Catholic indifference to the destruction of millions of innocent pre-born children is not an acceptable option. Fifth, it is critical that our pro-life convictions, as they specifically apply to the pre-born child, inform and even determine our judgment about the suitability of individuals for public service, particularly in executive or legislative offices. Sixth, in the final judgment we will be held accountable both for what we have done and for what we have failed to do. It is difficult to imagine that Jesus would support, condone, encourage, facilitate, participate in or even give silent assent to the gravely serious action of taking an innocent pre-born human life through abortion.

September 11 (2001) marks a day when something was done, as if to all of us. Many question the legitimacy of the various responses which seem to flow from that singular event. January 22 (1973) marks a day when something was done, as if by all of us. From the day of that singular decision a war of enormous proportions has been waged against innocent human life in the womb. It is a war which need not be fought against an innocent who is no enemy. Yet, we continue to elect and re-elect those who profess a desire for, or at least an indifference to, this slaughter of innocents. I fear our age will be remembered for its indifference in the face of large scale, commercialized abortion. Generations hence may well wag their heads in wonder at the thought that America could allow such disregard for the intrinsic dignity of a human person to persist for so many years.

For more reading on this I highly suggest Fr Robert J. Spitzer's *Healing the Culture: A Commonsense Philosophy of Happiness, Freedom and the Life Issues* from Ignatius Press.

Asking every good grace and blessing of God upon you, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ Jesus,

Most Reverend Robert F. Vasa
Bishop of Santa Rosa