

25th Sunday in Ordinary Time 18 September 2016
2nd Reading 1 Timothy 2: 1-8

“This is good and pleasing to God our Savior,
who wills everyone to be saved
and to come to knowledge of the truth.

...For this I was appointed
preacher and apostle

— I am speaking the truth, I am not lying — teacher
of the Gentiles in faith and truth.”

Today 18 September 2016 it is my duty, like the apostle
to the Gentiles, to speak the truth about one of the issues
that faces each of our Catholic citizens in our country’s
elections this coming November. Our bishops instruct
us in

their document “Forming Consciences for Faithful
Citizenship” to “Address the
moral and human dimensions of public issues.” And to
“Share church teaching on human life, human rights, and
justice and peace.” I have chosen to speak in this
homily on the most important of these issues— the right
to life.

As the bishops describe it in an earlier version of their
document this ‘right to life’ is the *most fundamental*
human good and the condition for all others. Archbishop of

Philadelphia, Charles Chaput, described it writing recently as ‘ a brother in faith not as teaching from an Archbishop “The right to life undergirds all other rights and all genuine social progress. It cannot be set aside or contextualized in the name of other “rights” or priorities without prostituting the whole idea of human dignity.”

St John Paul expressed it cogently with this one sentence: “The Gospel of God’s love for man, the Gospel of the dignity of the person and the Gospel of Life are a single indivisible Gospel.” (Gospel of Life #1)

The Gospel of Life was issued by Pope John Paul II on the feast of the Annunciation March 25 1995 since this time we in America have aborted over a million of our children every year, totaling some 21 million.

Digesting and comprehending these facts will help you see why I believe that the tragedy of abortion— a tragedy for both the mother and her child— is the single most important issue that faces our country in this election.

And the bishops have charged me with the pastoral mission of telling you why!

In his encyclical, the *Joy of Loving*, Pope Francis expressed it as follows:

“Here I feel it urgent to state that if the family is the sanctuary of life, the place where life is conceived and cared

for, it is a horrendous contradiction when it becomes a place where life is rejected and destroyed. So great is the value of a human life and so inalienable the right to life of an innocent child growing in the mother's womb, that no alleged right to one's own body can justify a decision to terminate that life, which is an end in itself and which can never be considered the "property" of another human being." (*Amoris Laetitia* #83)

Mother (now Saint) Teresa of Calcutta on the occasion of her receiving in Oslo the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1979 said: "I feel the greatest destroyer of peace is abortion....Because if a mother can kill her own child, what is left for me to kill you and you kill me-- there is nothing in between."

So if we have St John Paul, Saint Teresa and Pope Francis teaching us about the horrendous phenomenon that is abortion, how is this to affect our voting in November?

We are not allowed to commend individual candidates in our preaching but we can refer to individual people who are not in the arena for election because they are already in office. This I shall now attempt succinctly to do.

You wont need to be reminded that it was our Supreme Court in *Roe v Wade* in 1973 that legalized in our country the killing of unborn children from conception right up to the moment of birth. It will be the Supreme Court, we

pray, that will one day reverse this decision. The precedent of the reversal of the gravely erroneous Dred Scott decision gives us hope. Our constitutional law of abortion rests on the shoulders of five of the current Justices. Three of these who in their votes have proved their support of Roe v Wade are entering the evening of their reign — Justice Breyer is 78; Justice Kennedy is 80; Justice Ginsburg is 83. The oldest Justice in the history of the Supreme Court, Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr, retired at 90. Even with the huge advances in health care the next 8 years could see the retirement of at least two of these; and of course the chair of the late Justice Scalia has yet to be filled. The implications of the above facts are considerable for those who understand the role of this court in the formation of the culture, one might even say the morality, of our nation.

A final thought to remind you even more trenchantly of the culture of death that we have wittingly or unwittingly embraced in our country. This involves the manipulation of language. What do I mean by this?

The bishops document spoke of:

“Bad law and defective moral reasoning produce the evasive language to justify evil.”

This may seem a little harsh. But consider this...

As you know often a mother does not experience the tragedy of her abortion until later. She may have been told

that it is “only a blob of tissue”. How often is she informed by the abortion provider that the heart of her baby is already beating at some 20 days after conception? Or that if she is eleven weeks into the pregnancy the baby already has fingerprints that could be detected with a magnifying glass?

Technology has brought whole new vision to the earliest stages of the life of a human being. The terms ‘termination of a pregnancy’, ‘blob of tissue’ or “neonaticide”(killing a newborn on the day of his or her birth) are a subtle use of linguistics to deny the reality of the human person and to justify the act.

But taking this one step further.

At a recent Archdiocesan Pro-Life convention a survivor of abortion spoke eloquently of her life. When the abortion procedure failed and she was born alive, one of the nurses rescued her from being left to die and she grew up to be the inspiring person who addressed us. I looked up LIVE BIRTH in Wikipedia

And the text stated that because of the complicated situation that develops in the case of late term abortions the action recommended to the physician performing the abortion is described in three words: INDUCE FETAL DEMISE.

When resisting the huge deception that our culture has been subjected to thru making legal the abortion of approximately 1,000,000 people a year, a courageous

examination of these three words should be enough to persuade a Catholic to vote in a way that will bring this ongoing slaughter of God's children in the wombs of their mothers closer to an end.

But let us close with our Mother Mary.

Whenever we honor Mary we are lost in the wonder that our God should have chosen to become a human being in the womb of one of his creatures.

All facts pale in comparison with this fact, this event, that our faith tells us happened about 2000 years ago. Wonder at, contemplation of, this fact is at the heart of our thankfulness as Christians. This truth with its implications is enough for us to ponder for an hour, a day, a lifetime. But it has its spin-off too — it leads us to wonder about our own being

WHO-AND-WHAT-ARE-WE?

WHO-AND-WHAT-AM-I?

This fact — Mary carrying God in human form in her womb — tells us that we are brothers and sisters of God by being brothers and sisters of Jesus. Blessed John Paul calls this our 'almost divine dignity' Awareness, grateful awareness, of this almost divine dignity is at the heart of our joy.

(words 1292

LET YOUR FACE SHINE ON US

*You came
in Mary's womb
that we might see
Your face.*

*"To see me, Philip,
is to see the Father."¹*

*We
choose
to terminate
our children
before they might see
even their mother's
face?*

*And in her
see You,
O Jesus.*

Ralph Wright OSB
