



SAINT LOUIS ABBEY



Homily for 26th Sunday of the Year 26 September 2010 Father Ralph Wright O.S.B

Last Sunday, 19 September 2010, Pope Benedict beatified Cardinal John Henry Newman to the great joy of many Catholics throughout the world who for many years have prayed for and longed for this event. One brief sentence from an article by Robert Imbelli in the September 27 number of America magazine goes to the heart of Blessed John Henry's theology:

“Christianity is not adherence to propositions (though they are necessary), nor is it reducible to moral dictates (though they are crucial). Christian faith is to adhere to, to dwell in him who is savior of the world and head of his body, the church.” This dwelling in him who is savior of the world is what I would like to talk about this morning.

In the version of the opening prayer of this mass for the 26th Sunday of the year, our monastic office uses the term “fill us constantly with your grace”. This is another way of describing our “dwelling in him who is the savior of the world” for grace *is* the presence in us of the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is this presence in us that enables us to understand the meaning of such simple statements as “God is Love” and “Christ died for all men”. It also enables us to understand that each person created by God, from the day of Adam to the last person conceived on our planet before the Second Coming of Christ, is created as a unique person for a unique relationship with God. Each person is destined to share the life of the Holy Trinity in a unique way because each *is* unique. With our minds “constantly” enlightened by the Holy Spirit, by grace, to understand this truth we would live in constant joy and would reverence each human being that we meet. This truth is at the heart of building peace in our world. It is also at the heart of Respecting Life from conception to natural death.

Last Wednesday, 22 September, saw the beginning in our city of the 4th 40 Days For Life program. This program, that has now spread as far as Australia, England and Denmark, to say nothing of some 238 sites in our own country, involves 40 days of Prayer, Fasting and Vigils outside abortion clinics for an end to abortion. I would like to close this homily by calling your attention to five facts or ‘sound bite facts, relevant to abortion, that through grace, we may understand more deeply. and so perhaps respond to their implications with greater intensity.

SOUND BITE ONE

Back in the third century before Christ Hippocrates, called the Father of Medicine, had his physicians take an oath that they would never give a pregnant woman a medication, potion, to provoke the abortion of her unborn child. When the abortion laws were changed in the 20th century this part was removed from the text that physicians use when taking this oath.



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SOUND BITE TWO

Dr. Jerome Lejeune, a french pediatrician who spent his life studying chromosomes and was awarded the Kennedy Award for his work in this field, wrote back in 1982 in Rutger's magazine "...to accept the fact that after fertilization has taken place, a new human has come into being, is no longer a matter of taste or opinion. The human nature of the human being from conception to old age is not a metaphysical contention, it is plain experimental evidence." He died in 1994 and, when Pope John Paul came to World Youth Day in Paris in 1996, he took a helicopter to the village where Dr Lejeune is buried to pray at his grave.

SOUND BITE THREE

Currently, since 2000, we in the United States abort over a million of our unborn children each year. The total since Roe v Wade in 1973 is over 40 million.

SOUND BITE FOUR

Blessed Mother Teresa in 1979 as part of her acceptance of the Nobel Prize for Peace, called abortion the biggest "destroyer of peace in the world" because . I quote, "if a mother will destroy her own child what is there to stop me destroying you." This month we celebrate the centenary of Mother Teresa's birth. The new 44 cent stamp just issued commemorates her work for the poorest of the poor in our world.

SOUND BITE FIVE

This summer we heard a woman in Jefferson City at the capitol testify that she saw her role as a pregnancy counsellor as, I quote, "Introducing the mothers by ultrasound to their children." Over 80% of the mothers pondering an abortion change their minds when they see their ultrasound and choose to bring their child to birth.

May Christ, the savior of the world, in whom we dwell and who is the head of his body the church, lead us to understand these truths more deeply and act more tirelessly for the respect of each human being in our world from the moment they are conceived.