



THE DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE

Office of Human Life, Family and Bioethics



“Whatever You Do For the Least, You do For Me!”

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Since the recent Supreme Court decision that returned laws regarding abortion back to the authority of the individual states there has been a tremendous amount of political rhetoric. Much of this rhetoric has been misleading and at times just plain false. The Supreme Court did not outlaw abortion. In its decision, **the Court maintained that it is a State’s issue not a Federal one since there is no mention of abortion in the Constitution. It should be noted that even Justice Ginsberg maintained it was a poorly decided ruling. Justice Brennan, the author of the 1972 decision, maintained in the ruling itself, it could face significant challenge as growth in science and biology continued to improve. Ultrasounds didn’t exist in 1972. There have been significant developments in prenatal childcare and in the definition of viability.** The media acted as if the Supreme Court never reversed itself. Which is not true, the reversal of the Dred Scott is a perfect example. It’s just that the media didn’t like the decision. The Court ruled that there is no right to an abortion in the Constitution. It also needs to be pointed out that surgeries addressing ectopic pregnancies have not changed, nor were outlawed, as was maintained by the media. In a sad perverse note California is running abortion ads using scripture to justify their pro-abortion laws.



For many years the pro-abortion rhetoric was always “safe, legal and rare” or the personal opposition argument. That is now long gone. In recent times, there are those campaigning for elective abortion for all nine months, and those who oppose abortion are anti-women and anti-American. I’ve even heard the comments that they are proud of their abortions. Never before, have Supreme Court Justices had their lives threatened (or their families for that matter), because they decided what a faction of the country doesn’t agree with. Only two countries in the world allow abortions to take place through all nine months; Communist Korea and Communist China. Every western European country limits the time to fifteen weeks or less. Well prior to viability. It should be noted that our own State, New York and two other states have joined with these two countries and allow abortion through nine months. The NY law allows a “birthing parent” to decide to have an abortion while in the process of delivery. I say “birthing parent” since according to the rules adopted by the current administration not all those who give birth are women, which is also problematic. In Virginia, the former governor was campaigning for post birth decisions, by the

“birthing parent”, if the child survived the attempted abortion. I should also point out that such procedures were called, and rightly called, infanticide by the Sen. Patrick Moynihan.

It’s a sad reality today, but animals have more rights than an unborn child. Currently, there are laws on the books that make it a crime to interfere with a dog giving birth to puppies, a cat being declawed or eating duck liver. A “birthing parent” can now, up through the ninth month of pregnancy, determine whether they want to see their child born. This is infanticide. The procedures are gruesome and too disgusting to describe. In some areas of our country, one may not refuse to perform such procedures as Conscience Objections laws are being repealed. The current administration is attempting to remove Conscience Protection laws and is moving to require medical personnel and Catholic Hospitals to perform medical procedures that violate moral law and their conscience. **There are those who would argue that the Church’s teaching on life is new and is being used as a political tool. This is not true, from the writing of the Didache, one the Church’s earliest writings, the taking of human life in the womb was clearly viewed as an act against the natural and moral law.** The Didache is a first century Christian document.

Even in the infamous Roe v. Wade decision, room was made for future advances in understanding the development of human life, which could alter the ruling by future court decisions. One only must view an ultrasound to see and find a greater understanding of the development of human life in the womb. **The Supreme Court has reversed itself before because morality demanded it. The infamous Dred Scott decision denied rights and citizenship to human beings who were held in slavery. If this were the law today would one say this is the law of the land and must be followed? No! One would protest for the rights of these human beings. It took political courage and moral fortitude to correct a moral evil. We are lacking this today.** What makes this worse, in watching political advertisements, is the only platform some candidates appear to be campaigning on is on the termination of human life in the womb. They like to call it choice. The right to life issue has been redirected as a right of choice. Not all choices are moral. But in framing the issue in this way it has become easy to remove the child from the argument and make it about freedom and choice.

October is Respect Life month. The Scriptures remind us that we have been wonderfully made in the image and likeness of God who has created us in His love. Before we were in the womb, he knew us and loved us. **Being Pro-Life means that we are for something not against something. Not all moral issues are equivalent.** This issue is about mothers and babies and the concern for both in the womb and after giving birth. These points have been echoed among Pope John Paul II, Pope Benedict and most recently Pope Francis.

The Church nor the Parish takes positions on a particular party or candidate. What the church and parish will continue to do is to point to various moral issues that need to be addressed, in which it might hold particular office holders or candidates accountable. That is the Church’s right. Separation of Church and State does not mean that the Church must be held silent when it sees an issue that requires clarification or correction. **While the Church will not endorse a particular candidate, it is permitted to point out when a candidate takes a position that would violate natural law or infringe upon the right of the Church to be the Church.** For example, if a candidate for office were to say or campaign for a law that would require a priest to violate the

seal of confession, the Church would and should speak out against that law. That is a clear violation of the separation of Church and State.

A more pertinent example today might be abortion. (This is a moral issue, which by natural and moral law, is a clear violation to voluntarily end a child's life in the womb by choice.) Any candidate that espouses a position in favor of taking human life will be challenged on that position. A candidate who is Roman Catholic and takes such position has placed themselves outside of communion with the Church. If one were to vote for a candidate explicitly for taking this position, they too place themselves outside of communion with the Church and are also morally responsible for the consequences of a law being enacted. It becomes cooperation with an intended evil. The person who helps to enact such laws bears greater moral responsibility. One cannot hide behind "I am personally opposed". Either the child is or is not a human person and deserves the protection of law.

One cannot compromise their conscience for votes. Moral principles are not subject to opinion polls. What exactly is being championed today by those running for office is abortion on demand without restrictions, consequence, and for all nine months and what has been seen recently even beyond that. This is the sad situation of our politics today. To be "for life" you are classified as "anti" and to be for abortion you are somehow enlightened and for something good. The Gospels see it another way – the Lord always took a child, who was without rights and legal standing in His time, and reminded us, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these little ones, you did it for me." (Mt.25:40)