

Abortion:

How to respond to people who are Pro-choice...



“We pray for the day when the human being inside the womb has as many rights as the human being outside the womb...”

- Fr. Mark Matthias

(Revised, October 7, 2024)

Thank you for taking the time to read this very important booklet! *Abortion* is a serious topic because it involves the lives of human beings—the *mother*, the *father* and the *baby*.

Most people view themselves as either being “Pro-choice” or “Pro-life.” Both have very passionate views about *why* they consider themselves to be one or the other. The goal of this booklet is to explain the reasons why people choose to be pro-life. You may not agree with these reasons, but as the old saying goes, “*We find comfort among those who agree with us; understanding among those who don’t...*”

My own Pro-life beliefs begin with the “Divine Law,” or as society calls it, “The Golden Rule,” which states, “*Do unto others as you would have done unto you*” (see, Matthew 7:12). It is from this rule that we begin to understand why every human being has the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. And it shouldn’t matter *how* a person was conceived—whether wanted or unwanted—a human being *inside* the womb, should have the same *right to live* as the human being *outside* the womb.

Roe v. Wade

In the early 1800’s, laws to protect the rights of the unborn were enacted in the Constitutions of each State. The United States could claim it was truly a defender of *human rights*. That ended in 1973, when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that a human being *outside* the womb had a “fundamental right” to end the life of a human being *inside* the womb due to the “right to privacy” derived from the 14th Amendment (*Roe v. Wade*).⁽¹⁾

On June 24th, 2022, the U.S. Supreme Court overruled its own decision in *Roe v. Wade* citing that the U.S. Constitution does not contain language that explicitly grants someone a



“fundamental right” to have an abortion due to the privacy of their body (see, *Dobbs v. Jackson*, https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/21pdf/19-1392_6j37.pdf).

There are, in fact, at least two bodies present in every pregnancy. This truth dictates that the rights of the unborn need to be taken into consideration as well...

From 1941 to 1945, over 6,000,000 human beings were killed in Nazi concentration camps. Since 1973, over 65,000,000 million human beings have been killed in abortion clinics throughout the United States.⁽²⁾ *Abortion* is America’s great holocaust. Shouldn’t our laws “protect the innocent” rather than kill them? How many more human beings must die before we put an end to one of the greatest injustices our country has ever known?

We must always remember that even if the law of mankind gives people the “right” to end the life of a human being in the womb, the Law of God still says, “...do not slay the innocent...” (Exodus 23:7; 20:13).

I hope you will take the time to read this booklet in its entirety to better understand the reasons why more and more people are becoming *Pro-Life*. I hope you will then share what you have learned with all those around you...

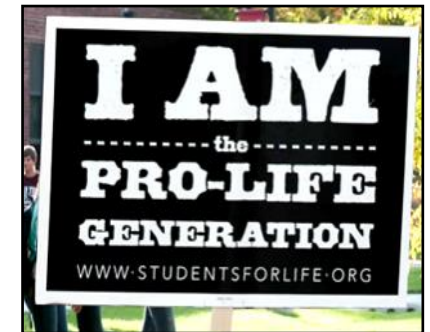
In Christ,
Fr. Mark Matthias

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Are you “Pro-choice” or “Pro-life?”



The starting point of trying to understand the *Pro-life* position begins with understanding the *Natural Law* that exists in every human being. This *Natural Law* dictates that we “do unto others, as we would want others to do unto us...”

In society, the *Natural Law* is referred to as the “Golden Rule” which is based on the *Divine Law* found in Chapter 7 of St. Matthew’s record of the Gospel when Jesus says, “*Whatever you wish that people would do to you, do so to them...*” (v12).

Science reveals to us, that at the moment of conception, a new human being is formed with its own unique DNA.⁽³⁾ Size doesn’t matter when it comes to human rights. If that tiny human being could speak, it would say what we all would say to someone much bigger than us, “*Please don’t hurt me! My life has just begun and I want the chance to grow and live just as you had the chance to grow and live...*”

The next reason why people choose to be Pro-life is based on the *5th Commandment* which says, “*Thou shalt not kill...*” (Exodus 20:13).

The word “kill” in Hebrew means *murder* (רצח). *Murder* is the killing of an innocent human being. Therefore, this command can be rephrased to say, “*You shall not kill the innocent...*” Paragraph 2261 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* supports this interpretation when it says:

“Scripture specifies the prohibition contained in the Fifth Commandment: “Do not slay the innocent and the righteous.” The deliberate murder of an innocent person is gravely contrary to the dignity of the human being, to the Golden Rule, and to the holiness of the Creator...” (CCC 2261)

No matter how a baby is conceived—whether wanted or unwanted—the child is *innocent* of the circumstances by which it was conceived. This is why the Catholic Church seeks to *protect the innocent* by forbidding all forms of abortion...

Why is human life so precious?

The Pro-life position maintains that all human life—from *conception to natural death*—is precious and dignified because of the uniqueness and abilities of human beings. We believe this uniqueness comes from having a *rational soul* that has *thinking* and *creative abilities* far beyond any other creature.



The Bible tells us that we are made in the “*image and likeness of God*” with our soul being composed of the *essence* of God—*His Spirit*. God’s essence enables us to think and create like God and be in communion with Him if we choose to be (see, Genesis 1:26-27, Genesis 2:7; and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, paragraphs 364-366, 1700-1701).

At the moment of conception, we see the vibrant beginnings of *human life* as the DNA from the *mother* and *father* combine to produce trillions of new cells that form our heart, our brain, our circulatory system, our nervous system, our digestive system, our respiratory system, our reproductive system and excretory system. These biological systems work together in unison with our soul to sustain our *mortal life*, while our *soul* sustains our *eternal life*.⁽⁴⁾ This means, *all* human beings, regardless of their skin color, eye color, hair texture, body shape or cultural heritage, possess a dignity and sacredness that needs to be cherished and protected.

“We hold these truths to be self-evident...”

Many people who are Pro-choice do not believe *human life* begins at the moment of conception. This is why they think abortion is not really killing a “human being,” but simply destroying “tissue” growing in the womb—sort of like removing a tumor or a cyst.



However, *science* reveals the truth about the extraordinary contents of that human “tissue.” The following is a link to over 41 top medical journals that state: “*human life begins at the moment of conception:*”

www.lifenews.com/2015/01/08/41-quotes-from-medical-textbooks-prove-human-life-begins-at-conception

At the moment of conception, DNA testing reveals that the fertilized ovum cell (*zygote*) is either a male or a female. When we talk about defending “women’s rights,” shouldn’t we also be

talking about defending the *rights* of the female *inside* the womb?

The truth is, there was a time in America when the person *inside* the womb had just as many rights as the person *outside* the womb. These rights were based on the second paragraph of the *United States Declaration of Independence* which states:

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness....”⁽⁶⁾

Notice how it doesn't say, “all people are *born* equal”—it says, “all people are *created* equal”—as at the moment of their conception, not at their birth into the world.

When our country was founded, our Constitution was based on the wisdom of God's Laws—not mankind's. And because God made us in the dignity of His image and likeness, every person has a God-given right to “*life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.*” These rights should apply to *every* human being—including those living in the womb.

However, in 1973, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that a “right to privacy” under the Due Process Clause of the 14th Amendment, gave a person the *right* to have an abortion.⁽⁷⁾ When we look at the reality of this decision, the U.S. Supreme Court gave an *adult* permission to end the life of a defenseless *baby* living inside the womb of its mother. Our laws are

“The zygote, formed by the union of an oocyte and a sperm, is the beginning of a new human being...”

-Keith L. Moore, *Before We Are Born: Essentials of Embryology*, 7th edition. Philadelphia, PA: Saunders, 2008. p. 2.⁽⁵⁾

supposed to *protect the innocent*—not kill them.

The rationale to make abortion legal in the United States was decided by men and women who concluded that *adults* have more rights than *children*. However, if we were able to ask the children to be aborted how *they* felt about the Supreme Court's decision, we can be confident that every one of them would say they were “dead wrong!”



Since 1973, over 60 million children have been killed by abortion in the United States.⁽⁸⁾ How can our government claim that “*all people are created equal,*” and have the right to “*life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness,*” and then pass laws that “legally” kill almost one million of our people each year?

It should not matter *how* a baby was conceived—forced or unforced, wanted or unwanted; according to our *Declaration of Independence*, every person has the *right* to *life, liberty* and the *pursuit of happiness*. Prior to 1973, the courts clearly understood this to *include* the person living inside the womb...

Understanding the Pro-choice position



Now that we have a better understanding about the dignity of human life, let us address some of the reasons why people consider themselves to be either *Pro-life* or *Pro-choice*...

A woman's right to choose...

Let's make something perfectly clear... This booklet is all for women's rights! This includes the rights of the *future woman* inside the womb...

The gender of a person is determined at the moment of conception.⁽⁹⁾ If you claim to be for "Women's Rights," you cannot ignore the rights of the woman inside the womb...



When a couple gets pregnant, our society has taught us they now have a "choice" to make. They can either give birth to the child, or end the life of the child. However, there is another person who should have a say in this decision—the *one whose life will be affected the most by the decision*—the baby! If given a *choice*, I am confident the "baby-woman" inside the womb would *choose* to live! And I am confident everyone reading this would say the same thing if *they* were in the womb.

Justice dictates that when we make a decision, we should consider how our actions will effect others—especially in life and death situations. Would you want someone making a life and death decision for you without you having a *choice* in the matter? Of course not! In the same respect, we should *do unto others as we would want done unto us!*

When someone begins to make decisions for others, that's where *injustices* can occur if the person does not apply the "Golden Rule" of how to treat others as they would want to be treated.

Herein lies a key difference between the mindset of those who are *Pro-life*, and those who are *Pro-Choice*. The difference between their views is often based on whether they are looking

at an abortion from the view of the person *outside* the womb, or the person *inside* the womb.

Contrary to popular belief, those who are *Pro-life* are staunch supporters of Women's Rights and Women's Health. However, they also believe the female *inside* the womb has just as many rights as the female *outside* the womb (and the male as well)...

The main reasons why women choose to abort their child...

In 2005, an article published by the Guttmacher Institute revealed three major reasons why people choose to abort their child (see page 9, for more info). These reasons are:

1. *Having the child would interfere with their ability to care for their existing children;*
2. *Having the child would interfere with their work or school responsibilities, and;*
3. *Having a child would create financial hardships for them.*⁽¹⁰⁾



"Financial hardships" and feeling "overwhelmed" should not be the criteria to end the life of another human being. Many people are overwhelmed by the responsibilities of life. This does not give them the "right" to rob a bank and kill the witnesses so they have more cash to make their life easier.

When the responsibilities of life begin to overwhelm us, we need to prioritize what is most important in life and let go of

those things that are not more important than life itself. It is also wise to seek help from family, friends, your Church, or the various government agencies that help people through difficult times.

The Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC) is available in all 50 States and territories of the United States. For more information, please see: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic>).

There is also Food Stamps and other subsidies available to families from the government (please see: <http://foodstamps.org> and <https://www.healthcare.gov/>).

Many people think that unless they can shower their child with the latest gizmos, clothes and entertainment, their child won't be happy. The truth is, the enjoyment we get from the material things of this world only lasts for a little while. True and lasting happiness comes from being in loving relationships.

What every child really wants is to know that their parents love them and the people around them love them too. Take away a child's toy, they will be sad for a day; take away the people a child loves, they will be sad for a lifetime!

In reality, most people in this world get through life as best they can with what little they have. Unless you are a millionaire, you

“There is just no way I could be the wonderful parent to all three of them and still have enough left over to keep the house clean and make sure the bills are paid and I’m in bed on time so I can be at work on time. It’s impossible,” said a 30-year-old unmarried survey respondent with two children, living below the poverty line...

(Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health, page 117)

TABLE 1
Percentage of women reporting that specified reasons contributed to their decision to have an abortion, 2004

Reason	2004 (N=1,160)
Having a baby would dramatically change my life	74
Would interfere with education	38
Would interfere with job/employment/career	38
Have other children or dependents	32
Can't afford a baby now	73
Unmarried	42
Student or planning to study	34
Can't afford a baby and child care	28
Can't afford the basic needs of life	23
Unemployed	22
Can't leave job to take care of a baby	21
Would have to find a new place to live	19
Not enough support from husband or partner	14
Husband or partner is unemployed	12
Currently or temporarily on welfare or public assistance	8
Don't want to be a single mother or having relationship problems	48
Not sure about relationship	19
Partner and I can't or don't want to get married	12
Not in a relationship right now	11
Relationship or marriage may break up soon	11
Husband or partner is abusive to me or my children	2
Have completed my childbearing	38
Not ready for another child†	32
Don't want people to know I had sex or got pregnant	25
Don't feel mature enough to raise a(nother) child	22
Husband or partner wants me to have an abortion	14
Possible problems affecting the health of the fetus	13
Physical problem with my health	12
Parents want me to have an abortion	6
Was a victim of rape	1
Became pregnant as a result of incest	<0.5

Research done in 2004 by Lawrence B., Finer, Lori F., Frohworth, Lindsay, A. Dauphinee, Susheela Singh and Ann M. Moore, the Guttmacher Institute, New York. Volume 37, Number 3, September 2005 pg. 113. Retrieved April 25, 2018, <https://www.guttmacher.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/journals/3711005.pdf>

will never feel you have enough to provide everything you want for your children. But when we think about it, do we really need a lot of money to be happy? The fondest memories we have in life is when we struggle together as a *family* to get through life.



The bottom line is, we don't need a lot of material things to make our kids happy, or give them a "better life." Simply *giving* them *life* and teaching them how to live a *simple life* is one of the best gifts we could ever give them!

In Chapter 18 of the *Book of Leviticus* we read how parents sacrificed their children to the demon, *Molech*. In return, they believed Molech would give them a better life (Leviticus 18:21; 20:1-5). Isn't this the same promise Molech makes in people's minds today? That if they sacrifice their children by aborting them, they too will have a better life?

"I'm not ready to be a parent, or don't want 'him' or 'her' to be the parent of my child..."

The decision to be a parent was automatically made when your DNA mixed with the DNA of your partner and a new human being was conceived. Knowing, that half of the genetic information in that child is yours, it should motivate you to want to care for the child just as much as you would care for yourself.



"It is a poverty to decide that a child must die so that others may live as they wish..."

- St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta

Throughout our lives, there will always be times when we will not feel prepared, don't not have enough time, don't have enough money, or don't have enough skills to do what needs to be done. In none of these situations are we legally permitted to end the life of another human being in order to make our life easier *except* when it comes to abortion. Why is this?

Although there are many valid reasons to be concerned about raising a child, is ending the life of a child really the *choice* we want to live with for the rest of our lives?

To care for any child involves a radical change in our lifestyle where we place the needs of the *child* before our own. Life is no longer about enjoying our old lifestyle, but enjoying our *new* lifestyle as a parent. This means "dying of ourselves" so that our child may have a lifestyle of their own one day.

"For whoever wishes to save his life, will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake, and the sake of the Gospel, will save it..." -Matthew 16:25

Christians are called to place the needs of others before their own. This is why Jesus said, "*No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you...*" (John 15:13-14).

Having a baby may be expensive, stressful, time-consuming, inconvenient and life-altering but if we claim to be a follower of Christ, then our lives require sacrificing for the good of another, just as Christ sacrificed himself for us. (Luke 9:21-26; 22:19; Matthew 16:24-25).

It is through following Christ's example of placing the needs of others before our own that we go from being *self-centered*,



to being *self-giving*; from being *selfish* to being *selfless*. And it helps to remember that Jesus doesn't ask *us* to do anything that *he* has not already done when it comes to making sacrifices...

“I don't want to put my child up for adoption...”

When an unexpected pregnancy occurs, society tells us that we now have a “choice” to make—either we keep the baby, or we abort it. According to the *Divine Law* of “do unto others as you would have done unto you,” that “choice” was made the moment the baby was conceived. And it doesn't matter *how* the baby was conceived—whether through love, incest or rape—the child has a right to live just as you and I had the right to live when we were conceived.

Choosing to end the life of another human being should never be one of the “choices” we have in order to get through a difficult time in life. If a person, or a couple does not want to face the financial hardships of having a child (or more children) then why not consider putting the child up for adoption so another couple can experience the joy that child can bring?

Sadly, there are those who would rather *abort* their child rather than give it up for adoption. When asked *why* they would rather

abort their child rather than give it up for adoption, they say, “Because I wouldn't want someone else raising *my* child.” How can someone feel so attached to their child that they wouldn't want another person caring for their child, but not attached to it enough to save it's life?

In 1973, the U.S. Supreme Court decision on *Roe v. Wade* gave a person the “right” to have an abortion. However, just because we have the “right” to do something does not mean that it is the *right thing* to do... The right thing to do is to *choose life* and give that child up for adoption so it can experience all the joys in life that we do. Thousands of couples who cannot conceive their own child would love to have your child...

“Abortion must remain legal to protect the mother's life or health...”

One of the major reasons why people believe abortion must remain legal is because they believe the mother should have the right to end the life of her child, if her own life is at risk. However, studies reveal that the vast majority of abortions performed in America are not due to this reason.



In 2004, the Guttmacher Institute conducted a survey of 1,160 women who had an abortion. When asked *why* they had an abortion, only 2.5% of the them said it was due to concerns for either their health, or the health of the baby (please see, Table 1 on page 9). This percentage has been the same for as long as records have been kept on abortions in America. This means that 97.5% of the time, perfectly healthy women are aborting perfectly healthy babies...

“What if the mother is diagnosed with cancer during her pregnancy?”

Cancer of course, can appear any time in our life and even during pregnancy. This poses a question: “Is it always necessary to abort the child in order to treat the cancer?”



Dr. Amos Grunebaum a New York obstetrician and gynecologist and Professor of Clinical Obstetrics and Gynecology at Weill Cornell Medicine says, “No...” Dr. Grunebaum specializes in high-risk pregnancies with over 30 years experience in his field. On his website, *BabyMed.com* he states:

“Being diagnosed with cancer during your pregnancy is rare. Cancer diagnosis occurs in only a fraction of the population, about one in 1,000 pregnancies. Research is lacking, so there is very little proven fact to guide patients and doctors down the proper treatment path. We do know, however, that a woman who is diagnosed with cancer during pregnancy can carry the fetus to term and deliver a healthy infant. Cancers typically affect only the mother, though some forms have been known to spread to the placenta... Despite the fact that the placenta may be affected, most cancers will not affect the fetus.”⁽¹¹⁾

Although Dr. Grunebaum says aborting the child is not necessary to treat most cancers, he does point out there are times when more aggressive forms of cancer in the pelvic region may require the removal of the fetus in order to start the cancer treatment:

“In cases where pelvic radiation or aggressive chemotherapy are needed to treat the cancer (most often when the cancer is quickly advancing) the fetus may be aborted in order to start cancer treatments. While this can be devastating to the mother, the oncologist will be able to assure the mother of the necessity for the abortion. If an aggressive cancer is not treated with the best possible treatment quickly, the mother may not live to see the birth of the baby.”⁽¹²⁾



Although Dr. Grunebaum believes it may be necessary to abort the fetus, other medical professionals offer a different opinion. According to Dr. Frederic Amant, one of the leading oncologists in Europe, research has revealed that if radiation treatment is administered *after* the first trimester then the fetus does not appear to be affected by the cancer treatment. A woman may be able to delay radiation treatment long enough to save her child...

“When chemotherapy is administered after the first trimester of pregnancy, we cannot discern any problems in the children,” says lead author Dr. Frederic Amant, KU Leuven and University Hospitals Leuven in Belgium. ‘Fear about the risks of chemotherapy administration should not be a reason to terminate a pregnancy, delay cancer treatment for the mother, or to deliver a baby prematurely.’”⁽¹³⁾

Dr. Amant’s conclusions were echoed at the *Committee for Excellence in Maternal Healthcare* which was held on September 8, 2012 in Dublin, Ireland.⁽¹⁴⁾

Other leading medical experts speaking at the symposium came to the same conclusion. These conclusions were put forth by the *Dublin Declaration on Maternal Healthcare*, which state:

- *“As experienced practitioners and researchers in Obstetrics and Gynecology, we affirm that direct abortion is not medically necessary to save the life of a woman...”*
- *“We uphold that there is a fundamental difference between abortion, and necessary medical treatments that are carried out to save the life of the mother even if such treatment results in the loss of life of her unborn child...”*
- *“We confirm that the prohibition of abortion does not affect, in any way, the availability of optimal care to pregnant women...”* (www.dublindeclaration.com)

Professor Eamon O’Dwyer said that the symposium was timely due to the fact that attempts were being made to confuse legitimate medical treatment with defending the legalization of abortion in Ireland. He makes the following bold statement based on his extensive experience:

“During my 35 years as Professor of Gynaecology and Obstetrics at University College Galway, and Director of the Hospital Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, I delivered—with these hands—over 9000 children in Galway. From my experience, I believe I am entitled to say that there are no circumstances where the life of the mother may only be saved through the deliberate, intentional destruction of her unborn child in the womb.”

DUBLIN DECLARATION
ON MATERNAL HEALTHCARE

Another concern if the mother has cancer is whether it can spread to her developing baby. According to the *American Pregnancy Association*:



“There is little to no documentation of ovarian cancer spreading to the fetus, amniotic sac, or placenta during pregnancy, so this is likely not something to worry about. Your doctor can help you understand your specific situation and how your baby may or may not be affected. Treatments for ovarian cancer and their side effects are what typically pose risks for the fetus. This is why only conservative surgery is suggested during the pregnancy, and why gynecologic oncologists prefer to wait until after the 16-20th gestational week of pregnancy to do surgery. This is because of the higher rates of miscarriage (spontaneous abortion) when surgery is performed in the first trimester and early into the second. This is also why chemotherapy is not given in the first trimester and why doctors try to postpone chemo treatment until after birth.” (Source: <https://americanpregnancy.org/pregnancy-complications/ovarian-cancer-pregnancy/>. Retrieved 1/21/20.)

Before a physician begins to practice medicine they take the *Hippocratic Oath*. This oath dates back to ancient Greek physicians. One of the promises of the oath is *“primum non nocere.”* Translated, this means, *“First, do no harm...”*

When it comes to treating cancer during a pregnancy, we must remember that there are *two* patients involved—the mother *and* the baby. As such, all efforts should be made that no harm comes to either the mother, or the child...

The Church believes in preserving both the mother and child's life, but realizes this is not always possible...



The Catholic Church recognizes there are situations when the life of the child cannot be saved in order to save the life of the mother. One example is in the case of an *ectopic pregnancy*.

An *ectopic pregnancy* is when the fertilized egg does not attach itself to the mother's uterus. Instead, it attaches itself to the fallopian tube, cervix, or abdominal cavity, resulting in the life of the mother and the child being in danger. In such cases, the Church makes a distinction between *therapeutic treatment* and *abortion*. This distinction is made because of the *intention* of the procedure. If the intention of the procedure is to save the mother's life—and *not directly end the life of the child*—then the treatment is permissible. This teaching is found in the document *Ethical Directives for Catholic Health Care Services* published by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops which states:

“Operations, treatments, and medications that have as their direct purpose the cure of a proportionately serious pathological condition of a pregnant woman are permitted when they cannot be safely postponed until the unborn child is viable, even if they will result in the death of the unborn child.” (Directive 47, pg. 19)

Simply put, if the procedure is to deliberately harm the life of the child, then the Catholic Church will not support this type of procedure. However, if the procedure is to *save* the mother's life, but as a consequence, the child's life cannot be saved, then the Catholic Church will permit the procedure based on the *principle of double-effect*.⁽¹⁵⁾

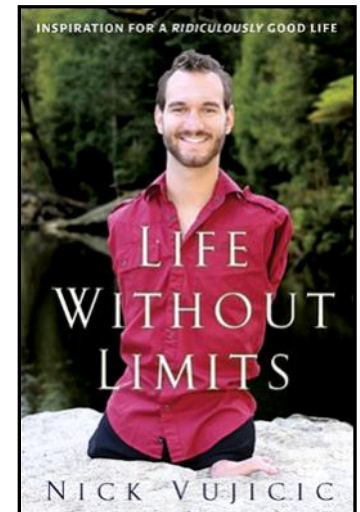
Beyond the circumstances described in *Directive 47*, the Catholic Church emphasizes that ending the life of a child—even if it's only in the embryonic stage—is never permissible:

“Abortion (that is, the directly intended termination of pregnancy before viability or the directly intended destruction of a viable fetus) is never permitted. Every procedure whose sole immediate effect is the termination of pregnancy before viability is an abortion, which, in its moral context, includes the interval between conception and implantation of the embryo.” (Directive 45, pg. 18)⁽¹⁶⁾

“What about the child's ‘quality of life?’ What if they have special needs?”

The answer to this concern is found in Psalm 139, *“For thou didst form my inward parts, thou didst knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise thee, for thou art fearful and wonderful. Wonderful are thy works...”* (vs. 13-14).

Every child conceived is given a soul by God. And that soul is to be formed more and more into the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:27). We may not all have the same *physical* abilities, but we all have the same *spiritual* abilities to know and love God...



“I have the choice to be angry at God for what I don't have, or be thankful for what I do have... I am God's creation, designed according to His plan for me...” – Nick Vujicic, “Life Without Limits” (2012)

Some people believe that if your quality of life is not as good as their own, then *your* life is not worth living. If you are one of these people, here is a question to ponder: “Is it more dignified to eat soup with a *spoon* or through a *straw*?”

The answer is: “Both are equally dignified.” Why? Because as long as it's a human being eating the soup, the act is dignified by the *human being* doing it!

If you doubt the truth of this statement, then ask someone who actually eats soup through a straw to see if they think life is worth living. If they are anything like Nick Vujicik, the answer will be an emphatic, “*YES!*”

Nick Vujicik is a Serbian Australian who was born with *tetra-amelia syndrome*. This is a rare disorder characterized by the absence of arms and legs. Nick has been through many trials in life. His book *Life Without Limits* is full of many inspirational insights given to him by God to help him through his ordeals. It is a must read for anyone who believes “quality of life” is based on how active you can be in life, rather than, how active you can be with God.

Nick went through a period in his life where he was bitter and angry with God for his condition. His anger created a darkness in his soul. Nick's outlook in life changed when he decided to turn *toward* God for answers, rather than *away* from Him in anger. This is when he began to focus on what he *could do* in life, rather than what he *couldn't do*, and what he quickly discovered was that there was *a lot* he could do!

Today, Nick is a highly successful author and international motivational speaker. He has inspired millions of self-conscious teens who feel they are “inadequate” because they were not born “beautiful, rich or athletic.”

Nick is also a Christian Evangelist who teaches people that true and lasting happiness does not come from what we can achieve with our body, but what we can achieve in our soul by being in right-relationship with God. This truth is what motivated Nick to tell his fans one day:

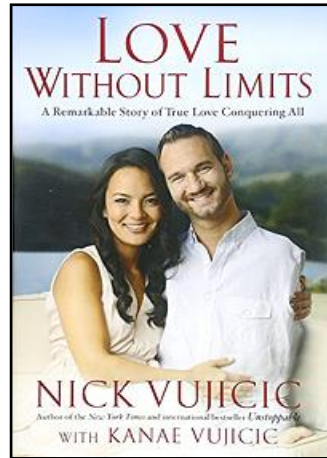


“You and I cannot see what God has in store for us. That is why you should never believe that your worst fears are your fate or that when you are down, you will never rise again. You must have faith in yourself, in your purpose, and in God’s plan for your life. Then you must put fears and insecurities aside and trust that you will find your way. You may not have a clue of what lies ahead, but it’s better to act on life than simply let life act on you. If you have faith, you don’t need proof—you live it. You don’t need to have all the right answers, just the right questions. No one knows what the future holds. Most of the time, God’s plan is beyond our grasp and often beyond even the reach of our imaginations. As a ten-year-old boy, I never would have believed that within the next ten years, God would send me to travel the world to speak to millions of people, inspiring them and leading them to Jesus Christ. Nor could I ever have known that the love of my family would one day be matched and even surpassed by the love of the intelligent, spiritual, fearless, and beautiful young woman who recently became my wife. That boy who despaired at the thought of his future is at peace today as a man.”

I know who I am, and I take one step at a time, knowing God is on my side. My life is overflowing with purpose and love. Are my days free of worry? Is every day blessed with sunshine and flowers? No, we all know life doesn't work that way. But I thank God for each and every moment that He allows me to walk the path He has set out for me. You and I are here for a purpose. I've found mine, and you should take my story as an assurance that your path awaits you too...

— Nick Vujicic, “Unstoppable,” 2012

Kanae Miyahara saw the beauty of God's presence in Nick. She fell in love with him and today they are married with children. They give thanks to God every day for blessing them with such a wonderful life!



When people receive something that is *new*, they expect it to be in *perfect* working condition. This is understandable when it comes to a cell phone, a car, or a new house. However, one should re-think relying on the same criteria when it comes to human beings. Just because a person is not in “perfect working condition,” does not mean their life has no value. Human beings are not “toaster ovens” to be discarded if one or more of their parts is not working “like new...”

Knowing there are millions of people with disabilities enjoying their lives who are *we* to decide what *their* “quality of life” should be? Who are *we* to decide if *their* life is worth living?

“What if my child has Down syndrome (Trisomy 21)?”



Down syndrome is a genetic disorder resulting from a defect in the nucleus of a cell. Typically, the nucleus of each human cell contains 23 pairs of chromosomes, half of which are inherited from each parent. Down syndrome occurs when a person has an extra copy of *chromosome 21*. This is why Down syndrome is also referred to as *Trisomy-21*.

A few of the common features among people who have Down syndrome are small stature, an upward slant in the eyes, and slower learning abilities. According to the *National Down Syndrome Association* (NDSA), Down syndrome is a *condition*, not a *disease*. People *have* Down syndrome, they do not *suffer* from it, and they are not “afflicted” by it.

Each year in the United States, about 6,000 babies are born with Down syndrome—roughly 1 in every 700. Down syndrome occurs in people of all ethnicities. Older women have an increased chance of having a child with Down syndrome. A thirty-five year old woman has about a 1 in 350 chance of conceiving a child with Down syndrome, and this chance increases gradually to 1 in 100 by age 40.

Many families look at the challenges of living with a child with Down syndrome as the reason they choose to abort the child. Children born with Down syndrome can experience a range of cognitive impairments and increased risk of health conditions, including respiratory and hearing problems, congenital heart defects, leukemia, celiac disease and thyroid abnormalities.

Caring for children with these conditions takes extra time and love .

And yet, when we discover a child has special needs—whether it is Down syndrome or some other medical condition—shouldn't we think of ways to *help them* rather than *discard them*? If the child was born without an arm, wouldn't we help them by giving them a prosthetic arm?

In the same respect, if a child is born without the ability to learn as quickly as other children, shouldn't we simply *accommodate* the speed at which they learn?

Also, if we are willing to help a child with developmental needs *outside* the womb, why wouldn't we help a child with developmental needs *inside* the womb as well?

When we think about it, if the criteria for ending a person's life is how physically or mentally *fit* they are, what's preventing us from ending the life of someone who was in an accident and is now physically or mentally challenged? Or what about an elderly person who develops Alzheimer's or has a stroke and isn't as mobile or mentally proficient as they used to be? This is what logicians refer to as a "slippery slope argument." If one form of reasoning applies to one situation, what's to prevent it from being applied to similar situations?

According to a review published in 2012 by *Prenatal Diagnosis*, between 60% and 93% of pregnancies with children diagnosed with Down syndrome in the United States were aborted from 1995 to 2011. Even more alarming, it is



Actor, *Chris Burke*, best known for his character "Corky" on the television series *Life Goes On...*

being reported by medical professionals that 100% of the babies diagnosed with Down Syndrome in Iceland are now being aborted in an effort to eradicate people with Down syndrome from that country.⁽¹⁷⁾

The truth is, although children with Down syndrome require more time and attention, many grow up to lead very productive lives. Below are excerpts from an article that appeared on *LifeNews.com* in November of 2014.⁽¹⁸⁾ All of the people mentioned in the article have Down syndrome. Their achievements prove that people with DS contribute to society in a variety of ways while enjoying their life like anybody else:



Angela Bachiller: *In 2013, Bachiller became the first person with Down syndrome ever to be elected councilwoman in Valladolid, Spain. She worked for three years in Social Welfare and Family as an administrative assistant, and loves reading and traveling.*

Megan McCormick: *The first person with Down syndrome to graduate with honors from a technical college. McCormick attended Bluegrass Community Technical College. She wants to work in education at the elementary level. She proves that with the right support and resources, people anywhere can reach their goals.*

Tim Harris: *Tim is the owner of his own restaurant called Tim's Place. In high school he was elected homecoming king (by the highest margin of votes in the school's history), and was named Student of the Year as well. He dreamed of owning a restaurant, so*

he found jobs in the industry to learn as much as he could. And according to the Tim's Place web site, the store's revenue went up during Tim's shifts. He graduated from college with certificates in Food Services, Office Skills, and Restaurant Hosting. In addition, Tim recently created Tim's Big Heart Foundation to help other people with disabilities start their own businesses.



Christian Royal: School never came easy to Royal, but that is just fine because he holds a skill many of us admire. Royal is highly talented at making pottery. He sells his beautiful dishes and bowls online and at an art gallery in South Carolina.

Michael Johnson: A painter, Johnson is a self-taught Naïve Folk Artist. He has painted more than 500 commissioned portraits and had a solo exhibition at Vanderbilt University in 2001. His art has been featured in posters and on the cover of the American Journal of Public Health.



Sujeet Desai: A musician and graduate of the Berkshire Hills Music Academy. He plays seven instruments including the violin, piano, trumpet and saxophone. He has received numerous awards and was even featured in the Wall Street Journal and Time Magazine as well as on 20/20 and the Oprah Winfrey Show. In 2006 he married Carolyn Bergeron who also has Down syndrome.

Melissa Reilly: Reilly has had many accomplishments in her life. She has travelled the country as an inspirational speaker. She is a decorated, gold medal winning skier, cyclist, and swimmer and she has interned for a state senator. Reilly also teaches reading and math to preschoolers with Down syndrome. She says she loves her life 100%, and she proves that you can have a very fulfilling life with Down syndrome.

If you are someone who thinks the "quality of life" for someone with Downs syndrome is not worth living, or that it is "merciful" to abort someone who has a disability, why not ask someone who has Down syndrome or a disability if they feel *you* have the "right" to decide if their life is worth living?

"What about in the case of rape or incest?"

When it comes to the case of rape or incest, in order to understand the Pro-life position, we must remember that all people are created equal even if all people have not been equally created...



When a baby is conceived during rape or incest it is not the baby's fault of *how* it was conceived, just as it is not the woman's fault that she was raped—*both* are victims in this crime. However, many people believe that the *second victim* of this crime must be aborted so the *first victim* is not reminded of the crime over and over again; and they think the best way to "erase" the memory of the rape is to "erase" the baby. But when we stop to think about it, does eliminating the evidence of a crime really erase the pain and memory of the crime?

At first thought, it may seem like a logical solution to abort the baby in order to “erase” the memory of the rape. That is, until we realize that trying to reduce the mental anguish of the first *innocent victim* means ending the life of the second *innocent victim*. Suddenly, this “logical solution” is not so logical. A more positive alternative would be for the mother to bring the baby to full-term and then put the baby up for adoption. And of course, the mother can also keep her child since half of the DNA of the child is hers. This way, *both* victims of this crime get to live.

Here’s something else to think about... in the United States, a convicted rapist can get 10 years in prison for their crime; the woman can receive treatment and counseling; but the baby can get the death penalty. How is this justice?

Extensive research shows that rape victims who abort their baby often experience additional trauma...

Research has shown that abortion rarely alleviates the trauma of rape victims, but instead, *creates* a trauma of its own. In a survey conducted by the *Elliott Institute*, among 192 women who became impregnated due to rape or incest:



- *Nearly 80 percent of the women who aborted the pregnancy reported that abortion had been the wrong solution.*
- *Most women who had abortions said that abortion only increased the trauma they were experiencing.*

- *In many cases, the victim faced strong pressure or demands to abort: 43 percent of rape victims who aborted said they felt pressured or were strongly directed by family members or health workers to abort.*
- *In almost every case where an incest victim had an abortion, it was the girl’s parents or the perpetrator who made the decision and arrangements for the abortion—not the girl herself. In several cases, the abortion was carried out against her expressed wishes, and in a few cases, without her being aware that she was pregnant.*
- *None of the women who gave birth to a child conceived in sexual assault expressed regret, or wished they had aborted instead.⁽¹⁹⁾*



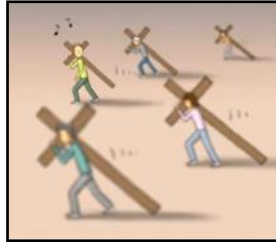
The research above comes from David C. Reardon, Ph.D., who is the director of the *Elliott Institute*. Dr. Reardon is widely recognized as one of the leading experts in the post-abortion trauma women experience after choosing to have an abortion.

Dr. Reardon has specialized in this field since 1983 and has written numerous articles on the subject. His book, *Victims and Victors: Speaking out about their Pregnancies, Abortions, and Children Resulting from Sexual Assault* is considered by many to be the most comprehensive study published on this topic.⁽²⁰⁾

Another expert in this field is Dr. Theresa Burke. In her book, *Forbidden Grief*, she shares the following insights from a woman who was raped and impregnated by her attacker:

"The rape was bad, but I could have gotten over it. The abortion is something I will never get over. No one realizes how much that event damaged my life. I hate my rapist, but I hate the abortionist too. I can't believe I paid to be raped again. This will affect the rest of my life..."

I have never been sexually assaulted, therefore, I cannot relate to the psychological and emotional pain that comes from being raped. Being a man, I also cannot relate to what it would be like to carry the baby of the person who raped me. However, I have learned from other tribulations in my life that when I do not feel I have the strength to endure my trials, if I turn to Christ and ask for his help, he *always* gives me his Grace to persevere.



It would be a very heavy cross for a rape victim to bring the child to full-term. It would require *dying of ourselves* so that another may live. But in doing so we would be drawn closer to understanding the heart and mind of Christ who taught us that *there is no greater love than to lay down our life for another* (John 15:13).

Without question, a person who has been victimized by rape or incest requires our utmost compassion and understanding. But we should also extend our compassion to the *baby* who is the other victim of these terrible crimes...



"Either we value human life, or we don't. There are no exceptions..."

Rebecca Kiessling is a successful lawyer and international Pro-life speaker who staunchly defends the rights of children conceived in rape. Why? Because she is one of them...



Rebecca Kiessling

During the 1960s, Kiessling's mother was raped at knifepoint and was impregnated by her assailant.⁽²¹⁾ Rebecca's mom was advised by her rape counselor to have an abortion from a back-alley clinic since the elective procedure was illegal in Michigan at that time. Rebecca's mom was afraid of the unsanitary conditions of these clinics so she decided to bring her pregnancy to full-term and give Rebecca up for adoption.

At age 19, Rebecca met with her birth mother, Joann. It was then Joann told Rebecca that her biological father was a serial rapist. Her mother also told Rebecca she was under a lot of stress when she considered aborting her. Years later, Rebecca's mother realized that anti-abortion laws *saved* her daughter's life.

In reflecting on the Pro-choice stance that abortion should be legal for those who are raped, Rebecca offers these thoughts:

"Have you ever considered how really insulting it is to say to someone, 'I think your mother should have been able to abort you.'? It's like saying, 'If I had my way, you'd be dead right now... And that is the reality with which I live every time someone says they are Pro-choice, or 'Pro-life except in cases of rape' because I absolutely would have been aborted if it had been legal in Michigan... and I can tell you that it hurts. But I know that most people don't put

a face to this issue—for them abortion is just a concept—with a quick cliché, they sweep it under the rug and forget about it. I do hope that, as a child conceived in rape, I can help to put a face, a voice, and a story to this issue.”

Now imagine that *you* are the child who was conceived during a rape. Do you think you should have the right to decide if you live or die, or do you think someone else—even *your own mother*—should have the right to decide if you live or die?

Today, Rebecca is a staunch supporter of the victims of rape and their babies. She wants everyone to know that pro-life laws in America prior to 1973 were responsible for saving her life. If her mother had been raped *after* the decision of *Roe v. Wade*, Rebecca would not be with us today...

“A human being is not really a ‘person’ until it is born, therefore, it has no rights...”

To say, “a human being is not really a person” is like saying “an apple is not really a piece of fruit.”



For centuries, the words “human being” and “person” have been intertwined to mean the same thing. These same words are even used in dictionaries to describe each other:

Merriam-Webster Dictionary — **person**: noun, “human, individual”

Oxford Dictionary — **person**: noun, “a human being regarded as an individual”

To believe “person” and “human being” no longer have the same meaning is simply playing *semantics*. With that said, there are those who believe a baby in the womb has no rights because

it is not a *person* until it is born. This requires us to pretend the baby goes through some sort of *metamorphous* from not being a person inside the womb, to suddenly being a person *outside* the womb. This is equivalent to saying that just because you can’t see your friend in the next room means they are no longer a *person* until they walk into the same room you are in...

Beyond the obvious fact that *human beings beget other human beings*, a sonogram clearly shows that the baby in the womb is a human being. The child is not a salamander evolving into a human being, or even a chimpanzee evolving into a human being. Genetic testing universally and unanimously concludes that from the moment of conception the DNA of the human zygote is uniquely and verifiably *human!*⁽²²⁾



Professor Micheline Matthews-Roth from the Harvard University Medical School affirms this when he says:

“It is scientifically correct to say that an individual human life begins at conception.... Our laws, one function of which is to help preserve the lives of our people, should be based on accurate scientific data...”⁽²³⁾

Professor Matthews-Roth is not alone in his conclusions. The following is a link to over 41 top medical journals that state, “human life begins at the moment of conception”:
<https://www.lifenews.com/2015/01/08/41-quotes-from-medical-textbooks-prove-human-life-begins-at-conception/>.

As you can see, to say that life begins at the “moment of conception” is not just a “religious belief” it is a scientific *fact*...

Size doesn't matter. Science proves you are a human being at the moment of conception...



What is the difference between the baby who was aborted inside the womb, and the baby who was born outside the womb? One person was allowed to continue to live, the other was not...

As we just read in the previous section, science reveals to us that human life begins at the moment of conception. A human being then continues to grow through different stages of development until it reaches physical maturity around the age of late teens to early 20's. This means every human being ever conceived went through gradual stages of development until they reached the age of maturity, and at no time during these stages did that person stop being a human being. This is why "size doesn't matter."

In 1981, some of the world's most prominent physicians testified before a U.S. Senate subcommittee that *human life begins at the moment of conception.*⁽²⁴⁾ All of the following quotes come directly from the record of their testimony:⁽²⁵⁾

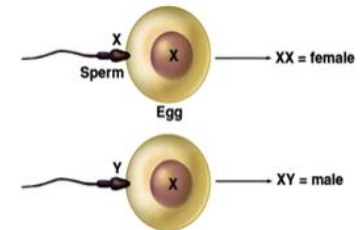
"I have learned from my earliest medical education that human life begins at the time of conception.... I submit that human life is present throughout this entire sequence from conception to adulthood and that any interruption at any point throughout this time constitutes a termination of human life... I am no more prepared to

say that these early stages [of development in the womb] represent an incomplete human being than I would be to say that the child prior to the dramatic effects of puberty...is not a human being..." (Dr. Alfred M. Bongioanni, professor of pediatrics and obstetrics at the University of PA.)

"...after fertilization has taken place a new human being has come into being... this "is no longer a matter of taste or opinion... not a metaphysical contention, it is plain experimental evidence... each individual has a very neat beginning, at conception." (Dr. Jerome LeJeune, professor of genetics at the University of Descartes in Paris)

"By all the criteria of modern Molecular biology, life is present from the moment of conception." (Prof. Hymie Gordon, Mayo Clinic)

Knowing that it is a scientific fact that a person is a human being at the moment of their conception, it stands to reason that *human rights* should begin when a *human being* comes into existence.



If we try to determine the *personhood* of a human being based on the size or delivery date of that person, this means we are trying to define their existence based on our *personal opinion* rather than on *scientific fact*; and the fact is, from the moment of conception a human being is a *human being* even if it is just one micrometer big.

To prove this point, in December of 2018, the world's smallest surviving premature baby known as *Saybie*, was delivered at the

Sharp Mary Birch Hospital for Women & Newborns in San Diego. Saybie weighed 8.6 ounces at birth.⁽²⁶⁾ Saybie is a perfect example of how “size doesn’t matter” when it comes to human life. A person six-feet tall should not have the “right” to determine if a person six-inches tall should live. Both are human beings who are simply at different stages in their development...

“I wouldn’t want someone telling me what to do with my body, who am I to tell another person what to do with theirs?”

In our American Culture we are taught that “freedom of choice” is our Constitutional Right. We base this claim on the gift of *free-will* which God has given every human being. Our desire to exercise our free-will is very strong. We believe no one has the right to interfere with our choices. And yet, we are not free to do whatever we want if our choices affect other people.



The moral compass for exercising our free-will choices is based on another characteristic that God engrained on our soul—the *Divine Law*. This law is also known in society as the *Natural Law*, or *The Golden Rule*. This law helps to guide the heart and mind to, “Do unto others as you would have done unto you...” (Matthew 7:12)

It is because of the *Divine Law* written in our soul that the *free-will* choices we make must take into consideration the effect our choices will have on those around us, which in reality, governs the amount of freedom we actually have. To illustrate this point,

although we have the *right* to have a driver’s license, we do not have the *right* to drive 60-mph through a neighborhood full of children playing near the street; although we have the *right* to free speech, we do not have the *right* to yell, “*Fire!*” in a crowded movie theater when there is no fire.

Simply put, just because we have a *right* to do something, does not mean it’s the *right thing* to do. And although we are *free* to do what we want, this does not mean we have unlimited freedom to do *whatever* we want. We have to respect the rights of others just as we would want them to respect ours.

Now that we have a clear understanding of the parameters of *free-will*, it is safe to say that each human being has the *right* to decide what happens to their own body. The question is, does this *right* apply to the human being in the womb? If not, *why*?

If we firmly believe no one has the *right* to tell us what to do with *my* body, why would I suddenly think I have the *right* to decide what to do with someone else’s body?



One of the more popular Pro-choice campaign slogans is, “A Woman has the Right to Choose!” This slogan has made many feel they do not have the right to tell a woman what to do with her body. But shouldn’t this *right* also apply to the body of the “little woman” inside the womb? Have we ever stopped to think about this simple truth—that the baby in the womb has *its* own body, just as the mother has *her* own body?

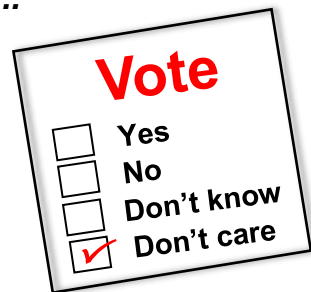
The reality is, there are at least *two bodies* present in a pregnancy, not just one. And since half of the babies born are female, I am confident they would say that no one has the *right* to tell them what to do with *their* body (or the male’s body either).

There was a time in America when our laws protected the rights of the “little woman” and “little man” in the womb. These laws were necessary because the baby could not speak for itself. As such, anti-abortion laws were put in place to speak for those who could not speak for themselves. These laws also protected the innocent which is what laws are supposed to do.

However, after *Roe v. Wade* in 1973 the rights of the female and male inside the womb were taken away. And now that *Roe v Wade* has been overturned, there are States passing laws to keep abortion legal. How can our lawmakers continue to be so blind to the truths guaranteed in our *Declaration of Independence* which states, “*all people are created equal*” and have a right to, “*life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness?*”

“I personally would never have an abortion, but if someone else chooses to have one, that’s their business, not mine...”

When it comes to exercising our free-will in America there is an unspoken rule to “mind your own business.” However, there should be exceptions to this rule...



Imagine if we decided to “mind our own business” when Nazi Germany was rampaging through Europe? Or when terrorism is being conducted in different parts of the world? There are times when we should get involved in “other people’s business” if the preservation of human life is at stake. And yet, some people don’t want to get involved in a person’s decision to abort their child because they feel it’s “none of their business.”

However, when we stop and think about the consequences of *not* getting involved with abortion, we have just given someone our “permission” to end the life of another human being. It is then we should be motivated to make “their” business “our” business. After all, wouldn’t we want someone to save us if our life was in jeopardy? And in the same respect, wouldn’t we want someone to talk us out of taking the life of another human being so we didn’t regret our decision for the rest of our life?



To help illustrate the need to step out of our “comfort zone” at times, imagine if you were at a playground where dozens of children are present. You notice a parent not paying attention to their child. At one point, the child begins to wander into traffic where a truck is speeding towards them. Are you going to say to

yourself, “Well, I’m not sure I should get involved. After all, it’s not my child...” Of course not... You, like any decent person, would race to save that child’s life.

Like the truck, we can see abortion coming from a mile away. The question is, are we willing to do something to stop this tragedy from happening?

Every day in America, over 2000 babies are cut apart in their mother’s womb by a surgeon’s scissors and then sucked out through a tube. If we were that child in the womb—or on the street—wouldn’t we want someone to save us?

During the *Penitential Rite* of the Holy Mass, Catholics recite a prayer of repentance known as *The Confiteor*. In this prayer we say:

“I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do...”

The day will come in our life when we will stand before God and give an account of our life to Him. We will be judged on what we did, and what we *failed to do*. We need to remember this the next time we have the chance to save a life, but choose to do nothing...

“Isn’t it more ‘merciful’ for a child to have never been born then for it to be born into poverty?”

When I was a teenager, I used to think it was more “merciful” for a child not to be born, rather than born into poverty.



“... as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me...” (Matthew 25:40)

Quite often, we project our own “quality of life” as the standard for others to live by. We believe that if someone doesn’t have the same comforts or advantages that we do, then *their life* is not worth living.

However, as I grew older and met people who actually grew up in poverty, they didn’t regret being *born*, they regretted the *conditions* they were born into—conditions Jesus taught us to help change in their lives. I came to realize it wasn’t “merciful” to kill someone who would be born into poverty; it was *merciful* to *help* that person out of their poverty...

One of the biggest surprises one might have when visiting a poor country is how happy people can be despite having very little. It’s then we begin to realize there are two kinds of poverty: those who are *materially impoverished* and those who are *spiritually impoverished*.

Despite being *materially impoverished*, people can be *spiritually rich* if they spend more time focusing on their relationship with God, rather than on the things will never own.



There is an old saying that goes, “*The more we own, the more it owns us...*” One of the downfalls of having a lot of possessions is that our entire life can be spent maintaining the things we own, or working towards buying new things to own that we think will finally make us happy.

However, the person who makes their relationship with God a priority in their life, will quickly discover that the joy, happiness and peace they experience from being in the company of *God* is far more satisfying than being in the company of what God has *created* (see, Romans 1:25). This is because we can never completely satisfy that which is eternal (*our soul*) with that which is temporary (*a person, place or thing*) God has created. Only that which is *eternal (God)* can completely satisfy that which is eternal—*our soul!* Saint Augustine of Hippo understood this when he said, “*Thou hast formed us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless until they find rest in Thee...*” (*Confessions, Ch. 1*).

Those who rely more on their wealth, rather than God to get them through life, can sometimes fall into a false *sense of*

security thinking they don't really need God. This may be why Jesus warns us about the dangers of riches (see, Matthew 6:24; Matthew 19:21-24; Luke 16:19-26).

If you ever visit a country that has many poor people, stop and ask someone, "Do you think your life is worth living even though you are poor?" Despite not having many of the comforts we Americans enjoy, I'm confident most of them would reply, "Yes!" Why? Because their happiness doesn't come from *what* is in their life, but from *who* is in their life— their *family*, their *friends* and most importantly, *God*.

As followers of Christ, when we come across someone who is in need, our mission is to help that person with the basic necessities of life; not assume their life is not worth living...

"There are too many people! We must reduce the population to save the planet!"

Some people believe that the Earth's natural resources are quickly being depleted due to overpopulation. They fear there will not be enough food, water or land for the generations to come.



In truth, environmental experts disagree all the time about how many people the Earth's natural resources can support. In fact, due to advances in cultivation, the acreage needed to grow crops has decreased over the years (Source: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/196104/total-area-of-land-in-farms-in-the-us-since-2000/>).

The oceans are also an abundant source of food. Biologists say there are over 3.5 *trillion* fish in the world's oceans along with

billions of crustaceans that grow beneath the surface (Source: <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/how-many-fish-are-there-in-the-ocean.html>).

As such, there is no accurate scientific model to calculate if the planet is truly "overpopulated." This is also due to the fact that at times, the number of people dying is greater than the number of people being born. And currently, there is a worldwide trend for couples to have less children than in previous generations (Source: https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/five-myths-about-the-worlds-population/2011/10/26/gIQArjSWmM_story.html).

For some, the solution to what people perceive to be a "population crisis" is to reduce the number of people on the planet by aborting them. This is their plan to ensure a better life for those who currently live outside of the womb...



Adolf Hitler believed in reducing the number of people in the world as well. He murdered people who were physically disabled, mentally ill, had low intelligence, or belonged to a particular ethnicity or religion. This was all done so members of the Nazi Party could have a "better life."

Reducing the population of the planet through abortion may sound like a "quick fix" to a potential problem. However, the reality of this plan means the genocide of *human beings* just as the Nazi Party did in the 1940's. They thought their plan for population control was a "good idea" too, that is, as long as it didn't happen to them...

Without question, there has been a steady increase in the population of our planet over the last few centuries. Current data

shows a worldwide population of approximately 8 billion people.⁽²⁷⁾ Although 8 billion is a big number, it does not mean the planet cannot feed and support many more people, especially if the natural resources are properly managed.

Also, with advances in building mega-skyscrapers and undersea colonies (after all, two-thirds of the planet is under water) the possibility of people inhabiting different parts of the earth is becoming more and more a reality.

The bottom line is this... if we believe that killing another human being is a viable form of “population control,” this mentality reduces the integrity of humanity to being no more evolved in its thinking than one animal fighting for survival over another animal at a watering hole.

From my experiences, the majority of human beings are *thinking, rationale, civilized and caring people*. We should not be killing each other like animals to survive. We should be

Is the earth close to being “over populated?”

Many specialists believe the fear of a “population explosion” depleting our planet’s natural resources is not based on any accurate scientific model.

An article published by the *Washington Post* in 2011 stated that demographers, economists and population specialists hesitate to use the term “overpopulation” because there are many factors affecting the population growth at any given time. This includes the number of people dying in the world being greater at times than the number of people being born.⁽¹⁾ There is also a worldwide trend of couples to have less children than previous generations. In fact, a recent Pew Report shows how the world’s population will actually slow down in 2050 and begin to decrease in 2100.⁽²⁾

(1) Nicholas Eberstadt (11/4/2011), *Washington Post*, “Five myths about the world’s population.” http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/five-myths-about-the-worlds-population/2011/10/26/gIQAjSWmM_story.html. Retrieved 12/07/19.

(2) Anthony Cilluffo and Neil G. Ruiz, (6/17/19), World’s population is projected to nearly stop growing by the end of the century. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/06/17/worlds-population-is-projected-to-nearly-stop-growing-by-the-end-of-the-century/>. Retrieved 1/23/20.

working together as a world community to come up with solutions where *every* human being can experience and enjoy life—not just the ones already enjoying it...

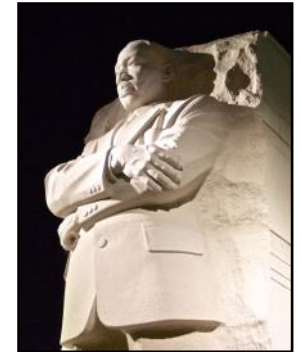
Slavery was acceptable in America at one time, just as abortion is today...

Before *Roe v. Wade* in 1973, the greatest violation of human rights in the history of America was *slavery*. Slavery was legal in the States from 1619 to 1865.⁽²⁸⁾ For 225 years, one human being was allowed to do whatever they wanted to another human being. That was the law!

In 1776, the leaders of British Colonial America declared their sovereignty from England when they signed the *Declaration of Independence*. The second paragraph of this declaration says, “All men are created *equal*...”

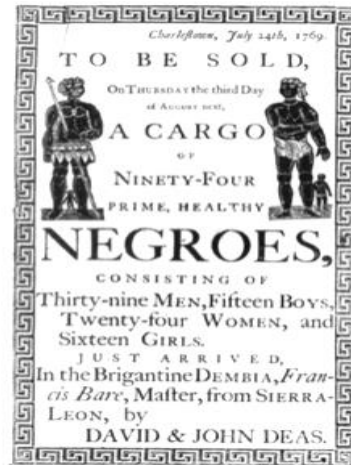
This one line brought scrutiny to a great injustice that was happening in America. People of African descent were not being treated *equally*. The reason why many people in America did not believe Africans were “created equal” was because they did not consider Africans to be American citizens; others did not even consider Africans to be human beings.

The 16th president of the United States, Abraham Lincoln saw the great injustice in this kind of thinking. Lincoln fought to amend the *Constitution of the United States* and on December 6, 1865, Congress passed the 13th Amendment abolishing slavery.



“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”
(Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.,
“Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” April 16, 1963)

It's hard to believe that for hundreds of years many people in America did not view African Americans as their fellow citizens, or even as their fellow human beings. This may have been due to many State Supreme Courts ruling in favor of slavery. And of course, the famous *Dred Scott vs. Sandford* decision by the U.S. Supreme Court on March 6, 1857 may have also influenced their thinking. On this date, the Supreme Court ruled that the slave, Dred Scott was not entitled to be a free man just because he lived in a slave-free state for a period of time.



Today, we have a similar ignorance and injustice going on in America. Some people think the human being living inside the womb of a woman is not entitled to the same rights that they enjoy. DNA tests prove that the baby in the womb is in fact—a *human being*, just as a DNA test will prove that a person of African descent is in fact—a *human being*.

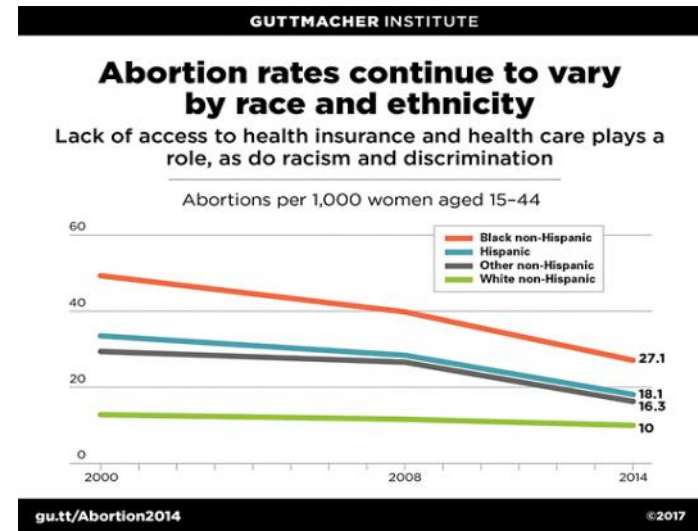
To believe that one person should have the “right” to determine if another person lives or dies is tantamount to saying,



“I believe I have the right to own another human being.” Imagine the public outcry from our politicians, talk show hosts and celebrities if someone were to say they believed *slavery* was “okay.” And yet, when it comes to abortion, many are silent on this injustice...

Minorities are aborted at a far greater rate...

In 2017, a study published by the Guttmacher Institute revealed the number of abortions in the United States by ethnicity.⁽²⁹⁾ 27.1% of the babies aborted were Black; 18.1% were Hispanic, 16.3% were Other Hispanic, and 10% were Caucasian.



Dr. Alveda C. King is the daughter of the late slain civil rights activist Rev. A. D. King, and the niece of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., as well as a Christian Evangelist. Her insights on abortion in the black community are profound.

“Today the new civil rights struggle of our time is for what may be described as ‘womb equality...’ As such, every American must face the reality that civil rights begin in the womb; as long as a baby can be legally killed before birth, there are no such things as civil, or other, rights.”⁽³⁰⁾



Caring for a child, even if you decide to put them up for adoption, is a sacrifice. But *sacrifice* is at the core of what it means to be a Christian...

One of the lessons Jesus teaches us is that if we hope to become a citizen of heaven one day, we must make the transformation from being a “self-serving” person to being a “self-giving” person.



Like any great leader, Jesus always leads by example. He never asks us to do anything, that he did not already do himself. Jesus “walked the talk” when he said, “*No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends...*” (John 15:13); and “*...if any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me...*” (Matthew 16:24).

If we are always seeking to preserve our life, rather than make sacrifices to preserve the life of another, then we have to ask ourselves, “Is this what Jesus would do?”

We cannot claim to be a follower of Christ and then not *do* what Christ has commanded us to do. Raising children requires sacrifices—no matter *when* you begin a family. Sometimes, these sacrifices come sooner than we thought. However, whether we make these sacrifices “sooner” rather than “later,” the outcome will be the same—a *family*.

Here is something else to consider... If you are not convinced you are ready to be a parent, please allow *someone else* to experience the love and joy of becoming a parent by putting

your child up for adoption. This way, you will have the peace of mind knowing that you made the sacrifice of preserving your child’s life, rather than ending it...

Mary’s unexpected pregnancy: Our Lady knows what it means to feel afraid, mocked, and rejected...



If you are a young woman who is pregnant and feels afraid or overwhelmed about how you are going to care for your child, please know that Mary, the Mother of Jesus, understands how you feel...

In the very first chapter of St. Luke’s record of the Gospel, we learn how Mary will conceive a child she did not expect. The advice from the Angel Gabriel was for her to have *faith* and not to fear the hardships she would face:

“Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end...” (Luke 1:30-33)

Although Jesus will be *great* because he is the Son of God, the truth is all babies are *great* because each one is made in the image and likeness of God who is the source of all greatness!

Despite the shame and judgment directed at Mary because she conceived a child under “suspicious” circumstances, Mary’s faith in God remained strong because she realized that God was the first person she could turn to for help. God then placed people in Mary’s life to help her through her pregnancy. God will do the same for us if we ask Him.

If you are someone who is pregnant, alone and frightened, please contact your local *Catholic Charities* to ask for help. (www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/about-us/find-a-local-agency/).

If you regret your abortion, please know God wants to heal you from your pain and sorrow...



According to an article published by *LifeSite News* titled, *Feelings after abortion: Post-abortion Syndrome* (<https://www.lifesitenews.com/resources/abortion/abortion-risks/feelings-after-abortion-post-abortion-syndrome>) many women who choose to have an abortion experience prolonged mental, emotional and spiritual stress. This stress comes after they realize the full impact of ending the life of their own child. As a result, women can experience years of regret, shame, anger and remorse for having an abortion. To quote *LifeSite News*:

“Some may even bury the associated negative emotions just in order to carry on with life, only to find that years—sometimes even decades—later, the unresolved negative emotions suddenly re-emerge, requiring healing...”



Like our own children, God the Father knows His Children will make decisions they will later regret. And as a loving Parent, He does not condemn us for making a bad decision. He opens His arms wide to help us cope with the consequences of our decisions. We see this truth taught to us in the “Parable of the Prodigal Son,” which has also been referred to as the “Parable of the Loving Father” (Luke 15:11-32).

The Catholic Church does not seek to pass judgment or condemn those who have suffered through an abortion. God wants to heal us of the guilt and shame that comes from our mistakes. This process begins by sharing our thoughts and feelings with Him. He then wants us to drain our hearts of the shame and remorse we feel so He can fill us with His forgiveness, mercy and love.

God’s Grace (*the indwelling presence of God given to us through the Holy Spirit*) is the #1 remedy for anyone who wishes to begin the healing process from the regrets we have in life. Our loving Father wants us to know that there is no sin too great where His mercy and forgiveness is not greater...

For those Catholics who carry the regret and remorse of having an abortion, the Church invites them to come before our Lord in the *Sacrament of Reconciliation and Confession* so they can hear from God's mouth to their ears through the Priest, "Your sins are forgiven. Go in peace..."



Help is available...

To help people heal from the emotional and spiritual wounds of having an abortion, there are organizations like *Project Rachel* who help people to cope with the regrets of having an abortion (<https://hopeafterabortion.com/>).



There are also organizations like *Catholic Charities* (www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/about-us/find-a-local-agency/) and the *Sisters of Life* (<https://sistersoflife.org/>) who assist

women during their pregnancy. They are here to help us to always *Choose Life!*

SISTERS OF LIFE

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- The New Catholic Encyclopedia provides four conditions for the application of the Principle of Double Effect:
1. The act itself must be morally good or at least indifferent.
 2. The agent may not positively will the bad effect but may permit it. If he could attain the good effect without the bad effect he should do so. The bad effect is sometimes said to be indirectly voluntary.

“And you shall know the truth,
and the truth shall set you free...” (John 8:32)

3. The good effect must flow from the action at least as immediately (in the order of causality, though not necessarily in the order of time) as the bad effect. In other words the good effect must be produced directly by the action, not by the bad effect. Otherwise the agent would be using a bad means to a good end, which is never allowed.

4. The good effect must be sufficiently desirable to compensate for the allowing of the bad effect (p. 1021).

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People conveniently forget that there are at least *two bodies* present in every pregnancy—the *mother* and the *child*. How can a person claim that no one has the “right” to tell them what to do with *their* body, and then decide for the *other* body living in them they do not have the *right* to live?

The big difference between being *Pro-Choice* and being *Pro-Life* is this: a person who is *Pro-Choice* seeks to preserve their lifestyle; a person who is *Pro-Life* seeks to ensure the baby will *have* a lifestyle.

It is a tremendous sacrifice to bring a child into the world and give it up for adoption if you don't want it. Jesus said, “No greater love is there than this, that a person lay down their life for another...” (John 15:13).

Jesus demonstrated his love for us when he sacrificed himself on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins; we demonstrate our love for Jesus when we sacrifice ourself for him, or another...

Now, ask yourself this question—and *really think about it*—when you were in your mother's womb, did anyone have the “right” to decide if you could live or die, even if it was your own mother?

We know deep down in our soul, the answer is, “No...”

- Fr. Mark Matthias

