

A Message from Father Arul on Respect Life Month

The beginning of Respect Life month, I would like to talk about the respect for Life. "Each of us is a Masterpiece of God's Creation", says Pope Francis. Pope Francis is a masterpiece of God's Creation.

In reference to pregnant women, the term "with child" occurs twenty-six times in the Bible. The term "with fetus" never occurs. The Bible never uses anything less than human terms to describe the unborn (Exodus 21:22-23). In Luke chapter one, verses 36 and 41, we are told that Elizabeth conceived a "son" and that the "babe" leaped in her womb. God does not say that a "fetus" leaped in her womb! Elizabeth greets Mary (in her early pregnancy) as "my Lord's mother."

If God allows a child to be conceived, then God obviously has a plan for unborn children (Jer.1:5; Lk.1:13-17; Gen.4:25; Jud.13:3-5), and so to abort an unborn child is to stop a plan of God: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I dedicated you, a prophet to the nations I appointed you... Psalm 139:13: You formed my inmost being; you knit me in my mother's womb. I praise you, so wonderfully you made me; wonderful are your works!"

What Catholics most clearly offer the rest of the world is our inherent and deep belief that every human being is a masterpiece of God, from womb to tomb. We hear these words all the time and they are powerful. What is even more powerful is when these words become our own. Then we become walking billboards of this inherent dignity message to the world. How do you become this walking billboard? By the transformation of your heart by God. That's how a transformed heart changes your views on everything. A transformed heart changes your views not just on somethings, but on all things.

The horrifying truth is this: we live now in a culture that not only does not respect life, but discards it like trash — not only at the beginning of life, but also at the end, and every place in between. What has happened to us? Life has become disposable. I like to give you some facts. The number of unborn children slaughtered in the wombs of their mothers in the last 25 years is 1200 million in the world and 37 million in the U.S.A. (4400 per day in the U.S.). Almost half of the women in the US over the age of 40 have undergone an abortion, with or without the consent of the baby's father. Hundreds of

old or terminally ill people are killed in advanced countries under the names "mercy-killing" or euthanasia. Suicide is the eighth leading cause of death for all U.S. men. It took the lives of 30,622 people in U.S.A. in 2001.

Why should we respect life? The Bible teaches that life is a gift of God and, hence, we have to respect it from womb to tomb. Abortion attempts to destroy a work of God. Based on the word of God, the Church teaches that an unborn child from the moment of its conception in its mother's womb is precious because he or she carries an immortal soul. It is God's commandment that we shall not kill. Ex.20:13: "You shall not kill." The circumstances of how the baby was conceived do not change the evil of abortion: it is still a baby who is killed.

Every tiny human embryo can grow into a child, and modern medical technology can enable the unborn child to survive outside its mother's womb after five and one-half months. At two weeks' pregnancy, the baby can move alone. The baby's heart starts beating from the 25th day and the baby's brain starts functioning on the 40th day. International Law forbids the killing of innocent, defenseless people. Abortion is the killing of a defenseless child in his or her safest abode, the womb, by his or her own mother, mostly for selfish motives.

Abortion harms women physically, emotionally, psychologically, socially and spiritually. 93% of the abortions in America are for convenience. The mother's health is an issue only 3% of the time, and the baby's health is an issue 3% of the time. Rape and incest are issues only 1% of the time. Ninety-three percent of all abortions in America are performed because of selfishness, just because someone doesn't want a child!

Advocates of pro-choice follow a dangerous principle of far-reaching consequences in the society. If it is justifiable to kill unwanted children by abortion, then the old, the sick, the handicapped, the mentally ill, and the retarded can also be killed. It is all against the 6th commandment.

Pope Francis, who has captivated the world by his own beautiful heart said, "even the weakest and most vulnerable, the sick, the old, the unborn and the poor, are masterpieces of God's creation, made in his own image, destined to live forever, and deserving of the utmost reverence and respect"

We need to respect and protect all forms of human life from conception to natural death; we need to work and pray vigorously to end the culture of death. We need to speak and act against abortion in private and public forums.

The Church cares about the women who have had abortions, forgives them, heals them, brings them peace with God, with their lost children and with themselves. The Church promises any woman who has had an abortion that if she truly repents of her sin, she will find welcome and forgiveness.

Prayer to End Abortion: Lord God, I thank you today for the gift of my life, and for the lives of all my brothers and sisters. I know there is nothing that destroys more life than abortion, Yet, I rejoice that you have conquered death by the Resurrection of Your Son. I am ready to do my part in ending abortion and never to stop defending life until all my brothers and sisters are protected, and our nation once again becomes a nation with liberty and justice, not just for some, but for all. Through Christ our Lord. Amen!