

Law, Politics, Abortion, Culture

It is for good reason that the issue of protecting human life from conception to natural death is at the very top of the list of moral considerations given us by the bishops of the Church. Respect for the gift of life, itself, is at stake when, at its most innocent and vulnerable stage, it is destroyed. Indeed, the vulgarity and horror of Abortion was really brought home to me at our parish screening of the movie *Unplanned*. The image of the unborn child being dismembered by the medical instruments haunted me for days, (certainly a computer generated facsimile in this case).

Thus, the issue of overturning *Roe v Wade* and instilling in society a profound respect for human life, at all stages, is the top of a hierarchy of values. I am not sure of the enumeration of the values after the first but we are, of course, concerned about economic justice, care for the poor, stewardship of the natural environment, human rights, equality among citizens, government ethics and other values.

Or, is it the case that the Life issues are not part of a hierarchy of values, as I have expressed it, but that they stand alone, outside-of and above all the others? We cannot compromise on the sanctity of human life. But, in our political system, we can expect that we will not get representatives whose values will perfectly align with the Faith. We do not live in a “Catholic-Confessional State:” Our governmental system is a Liberal Democracy, (liberal in the older sense of the word). We will have no choice but to compromise on some or many issues.

No compromise is acceptable in the cases of Abortion and Euthanasia. But, what compromises are permissible in the area of human rights, economic justice, the environment, racial justice, the care of migrants, and all the others? How much do we compromise? If called upon, would we compromise every other value for this most fundamental one? Does this then become an “*ends justifies the means*” sort of calculation? In this vast, secondary, list of values, we are still dealing with human lives and, of course, the world into which we want to welcome the unborn. For anyone with any streak of idealism in his/her blood, the political system is too cynical and, well, too ‘political.’

Outlawing abortion is a laudable and important goal from the standpoint that the law expresses what sort of people we are, and that the law also teaches values. But the mere act of declaring abortion illegal will not end abortion; it will probably drive the practice underground, in some form or other. I realize that this is a talking-point of the Pro-Choice types and is used as a scare tactic. But, apart from some radical change of hearts and minds, it is probably true that there are people who will continue to find a way to attack nascent life.

This doesn’t mean that we shouldn’t do all that we can to change the law, but it indicates that unless hearts are changed and help for cases of unwanted pregnancies and child care are clearly at-the-ready, we can expect the practice, and the loss of innocent lives to persist. And to say this is merely to put the role of politics and laws in this matter into a fuller perspective.

For this writer, the political situation in our country is beyond depressing. I will not say anything more than this: My conscience is my own, and you have yours. Please don’t assume anything from this reflection. But, as evidenced by last week’s article, I am getting downright apocalyptic about where things are and where they are going in our country. Along with the unborn, the truth about many things is also the victim.



Secular society doesn’t understand that we see the issue of Abortion as equal to infanticide. Of course, this needs to be qualified in terms of the circumstances which radically affect the clarity with which mothers, under the stresses of an unplanned pregnancy, may see their situation. We are not unsympathetic to a woman in crisis and in distress. The goal would be to create a society where clear avenues to help and comfort are available. This will only happen with some new, divine inspiration to fall upon the Body of Christ to help us shine the light and to change hearts. Politics and the law will only provide us one part of the solution.