

REJOICE in the LORD

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Archbishop of Newark



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Pray for an end to abortion. Act Now to Retain the Hyde Amendment.

On July 6, 2021, I issued a statement expressing my deep concern that the federal budget being considered by members of Congress would eliminate the Hyde Amendment. For the past 45 years, this important legislation has saved the lives of millions of unborn children by prohibiting the use of federal funds for abortion. My statement, which is reprinted below, calls all Catholics and people of good will to act now by sending a strong, clear message that the Hyde Amendment has far-reaching public support and should not be repealed.

In his apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* (“The Joy of the Gospel”), Pope Francis writes, “Among the vulnerable for whom the Church wishes to care with particular love and concern are unborn children, the most defenseless and innocent among us.” He laments that “nowadays efforts are made to deny the unborn their human dignity and to do with them whatever one pleases, taking their lives and passing laws preventing anyone from standing in the way of this.

“Frequently, as a way of ridiculing the Church’s effort to defend their lives, attempts are made to present her position as ideological, obscurantist and conservative,” the pope says. “Yet this defense of unborn life is closely linked to the defense of each and every other human right.”

“It involves the conviction that a human being is always sacred and inviolable, in any situation and at every stage of development,” the Holy Father says. “Human beings are ends in themselves and never a means of resolving other problems. Once this conviction disappears, so do solid and lasting foundations for the defense of human rights, which would always be subject to the passing whims of the powers that be” (#213).

We know that the decision to have an abortion is often tragic and painful. A woman who takes this desperate action is often under great duress, and is encouraged by social structures that are patently sinful. It’s our responsibility, as people who care deeply for all women who are struggling with unplanned or unwanted pregnancies, to make sure that other life-giving options are available.

As Pope Francis says, it is important to do more to “accompany women in very difficult situations, where abortion appears as a quick solution to their profound anguish, especially when the life developing within them is the result of rape or a situation of extreme poverty” (#214).

But the pope also makes it clear: “The Church cannot be expected to change her position on this question.” And he adds, “I want to be completely honest in this regard. This is not something subject to alleged reforms or ‘modernizations’ ” (#214).

As important as it is to always be merciful, compassionate and sensitive to the suffering of the individuals involved, we can never justify the deliberate killing of an unborn child no matter what the extenuating circumstances may be.

As St. John Paul II writes in his encyclical, “*Evangelium Vitae*” (“The Gospel of Life”), “Abortion is the deliberate and direct killing of a human being in the initial phase of his or her existence. The moral gravity of procured abortion is apparent in all its truth if we recognize we are dealing with murder, and in particular, when we consider the specific elements involved. The one eliminated is a human being at the very beginning of life. No one more absolutely innocent could be imagined. In no way could this human being ever be considered an aggressor, much less an unjust aggressor. He or she is weak, defenseless, even to the point of lacking that minimal form of defense consisting in the poignant power of a newborn baby’s cries and tears. The unborn child is totally entrusted to the protection and care of the woman carrying him or her in the womb” (#58).

As individuals and as a society, our solemn obligation is to defend the innocent and helpless unborn child.

Sacred Scripture repeatedly affirms the value of human life, reminding us that “from their mother’s womb” all human beings belong to God, who searches and knows them and who forms them and knits them together with his own hands (Ps 139).

The deliberate killing of an innocent human being in his or her mother’s womb is never permitted. “No circumstance, no purpose, no law whatsoever can ever make licit an act which is intrinsically illicit, since it is contrary to the Law of God which is written in every human heart, knowable by reason itself, and proclaimed by the Church” (“*Evangelium Vitae*,” #62).

“Given such a grave situation,” St. John Paul II writes, “we need now more than ever to have the courage to look the truth in the eye and to call things by their proper name, without yielding to convenient compromises or to the temptation of self-deception” (“*Evangelium Vitae*,” #58).

We must speak about this unspeakable evil using plain language as sensitively and compassionately as possible, but without compromising the fundamental truth that all life is sacred from the moment of conception to the experience of natural death.

As Pope Francis reminds us, “The practical, human and spiritual difficulties are undeniable, but it is precisely for this reason that a more incisive pastoral action is urgently needed to support those families who accept sick children. There is a need to create spaces, places and “networks of love” to which couples can turn, and to spend time assisting these families.”

Above all, we must act now to ensure that the Hyde Amendment remains in force so that all children have the right to life and liberty as human persons made in the image and likeness of God.

Sincerely yours in Christ the Redeemer,


Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R.
Archbishop of Newark

Statement from Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R., Regarding the Hyde Amendment and the Sanctity of Life

July 6, 2021

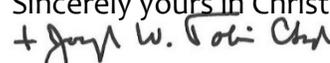
Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

I am deeply concerned that the proposed federal budget would eliminate the Hyde Amendment, which, for 45 years, has prohibited the use of federal funds for abortion. The Hyde Amendment is credited with saving the lives of millions of children. Now, the powerful pro-abortion lobby and members of Congress are calling for the elimination of this Amendment and the implementation of a policy that would designate billions of taxpayer dollars for elective abortions. Taxpayer-funded abortion represents a failure to recognize the sanctity of human life and promotes a culture in which human life in its most vulnerable moment is perceived as disposable. Such a proposal targets poor women as needing an expedient solution to a complex problem.

Pope Francis has said, “it is troubling to see how simple and convenient it has become for some to deny the existence of a human life as a solution to problems that can and must be solved for both the mother and her unborn child.” He notes that abortion “is not a primarily religious issue but one of human ethics.”

It is crucially important that we send a strong, clear message that the Hyde Amendment has far-reaching public support and should not be repealed. Members of Congress need to hear from as many of us as possible. Please read the Action Alerts posted by the New Jersey Catholic Conference at www.njcatholic.org/protecting-the-hyde-amendment, and join me in acting before July 16 to send this urgent message to Congress. Sign the petition at www.NoTaxpayerAbortion.com.

Know of my continued prayers for each of you.

Sincerely yours in Christ the Redeemer,

Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R.
Archbishop of Newark

A Message from Pope Francis: Words of Challenge and Hope

Sometimes we hear people say, “You Catholics do not accept abortion; it’s a problem with your faith.” No, the problem is pre-religious. Faith has nothing to do with it. It comes afterwards, but it has nothing to do with it. The problem is a human problem. It is pre-religious. Let’s not blame faith for something that from the beginning has nothing to do with it. The problem is a human problem. Just two questions will help us understand this clearly. Two questions. First: is it licit to eliminate a human life to solve a problem? Second: is it licit to hire a killer to resolve a problem? I leave the answer to you. This is the point. Don’t blame religion for a human issue. It is not licit. Never, never eliminate a human life or hire a killer to solve a problem.

Abortion is never the answer that women and families are looking for. Rather, it is fear of illness and isolation that makes parents waver. The practical, human and spiritual difficulties are undeniable, but it is precisely for this reason that a more incisive pastoral action is urgently needed to support those families who accept sick children. There is a need to create spaces, places and “networks of love” to which couples can turn, and to spend time assisting these families.



I think of a story that I heard of in my other Diocese. A fifteen-year-old girl with Down syndrome became pregnant and her parents went to the judge to get authorization for an abortion. The judge, a very upright man, studied the case and said, “I would like to question the girl.” [The parents answered:] “But she has Down syndrome she doesn’t understand.” [The judge replied:] “No, have her come.”

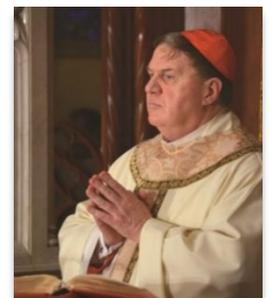
The young girl sat down and began to speak with the judge. He said to her: “Do you know what happened to you? [She replied:] “Yes, I’m sick.” [The judge then asked:] “And what is your sickness?” [She answered:] “They told me that I have an animal inside me that is eating my stomach, and that is why I have to have an operation.” [The judge told her:] “No, you don’t have a worm that’s eating your stomach. You know what you have? It’s a baby.”

The young girl with Down syndrome said: “Oh, how beautiful!” That’s what happened. So the judge did not authorize the abortion. The mother wanted it. The years passed; the baby was born, she went to school, she grew up and she became a lawyer. From the time that she knew her story, because they told it to her, every day on her birthday she called the judge to thank him for the gift of being born. The things that happen in life... The judge is now dead and she has become a public prosecutor.

See what a beautiful thing happened! Abortion is never the response that women and families are looking for. (A selection from Pope Francis’ address to participants in the conference, “Yes to Life! — Taking Care of the Precious Gift of Life in its Frailty,” Saturday, May 25, 2019.)

My Prayer for You

Tender and merciful Father, you want life, good health and happiness for all your children. Help us to always place our trust in you. Teach us to care for one another, as you care for us. May we always say “No!” to those who propose solutions that destroy life and “Yes!” to the precious gifts of life and love, which you generously bestow on us in the name of Jesus, your Son, and through the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.



Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R.