January 26, 2020: Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

A primary issue of our faith arises every January when we remember the Roe v Wade decision made by the US Supreme Court in 1973. For many in our congregation, I know this is a sensitive subject, but it is one that needs to be addressed. The teaching of the Church is clear: all life is sacred from the moment of conception. The reason for this belief is centered in the fact that all life comes about as a creative act of God and is endowed by God with dignity. God gives to each person particular gifts intended to further his plan for salvation. We believe, therefore, that our unique relationship with God begins in the moment He speaks our name. God has to make a specific choice for life to begin, and He does so with the intention of creating a particular and unique individual. Our creation is not simply a whim by God, but rather, God has a specific purpose for what He is doing. God speaks us into being and establishes a personal relationship with us. We simply need to look at the lives of Moses, David, Mary, John the Baptist, and others in the Bible to appreciate this truth.

Moreover, human life needs to be seen in light of the Incarnation. I believe that too often we do not contemplate enough the profound meaning of what the Church calls the hypostatic union: the fact that Jesus is fully and completely 100% human and fully and completely 100% God. In the one person of Jesus resides two complete natures; one is the second person of the Trinity and the other is a human being. We believe that in the moment Christ was conceived, or as we say in the Creed ‘made incarnate by the Holy Spirit’, this union was formed. This wondrously profound act by God of uniting himself to us in the person of Christ speaks to how He views human life. The inherent dignity and sacredness of human life from the moment of conception is made apparent at the Annunciation. The angel Gabriel announces to the Blessed Mother that the Holy Spirit would overshadow her and she would conceive the Son of the Most High.

The destruction of human life, without grave cause, from the moment of conception until natural death is a rejection of the sacred dignity God has endowed it with, both by his particular creative act and the Incarnation. Hence, to destroy human life is one of the gravest acts in which a person can engage. To abide by the idea that human life can simply be destroyed by human choice is to say that the human will is of greater value than the divine will. It is also a rejection of the inherent meaning of the Incarnation and, therefore, a form of rejecting Christ himself. Therefore, as Catholics we must do all we can to ensure that nothing abridges the sacred dignity of all persons. This teaching is not simply about abortion. Rather, it calls us to use our gifts and talents to uphold the dignity of each person, and work to ensure that all people can live a life that allows them to enjoy God’s gifts to humanity.

It is important to realize that our responsibility does not end once a person is born; being pro-life is not simply being anti-abortion. Being pro-life calls us to work for a more just world that makes proper use of all the goods God has bestowed on us. We must recognize that when inequalities exist in the world, we are all negatively affected. Not only are the poor made to suffer, but those who have more are truly endangering their immortal souls by not sharing God’s bounty. The goods that God bestows on us are not simply for our own need. When a person makes use of more than they truly need, they are essentially stealing from the poor.

Many people have asked me why God allows people to die of famine and other such issues. The truth is that there is no reason for anyone in our world to starve to death. There exists enough food to feed every man, woman and child on this planet. We simply choose not to do so. We have a government policy that pays people not to grow food, or to grow food for fuel. It is a way to keep food prices higher, or to give farmers another way of making money. Think about what that means. As a society we are making these kinds of decisions all the time, and they impact the lives of people around the world. I am not saying this is a good or bad policy; these are very complicated questions and I do realize that. But what we need to understand is that the choices we make can endanger the lives of others—that the policies we choose should not only be based on “what is best for me”, but also on how they will impact others. Our society is a flawed system, but that does not mean it is a bad system. Rather, it means we need to ensure that we make up for the built-in flaws of the system. We need to Christianize it to ensure that our policies uphold the basic dignity and respect due to all people. If we are not willing to do that, then we are not truly pro-life: we are not upholding the basic dignity and sacredness of life. We must remember that we are our brother’s keeper and we have a responsibility to care for all the people of the world.
If you have any questions about anything please do not hesitate to ask me directly or send your questions to me at frmahoney@saintfrancis.net.

Please keep me in your prayers.

In Christ,

Fr. Brian