

“My brothers and sisters, show no partiality as you adhere to the faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ” (Jas 2:1). The Apostle James tells his followers that they are to make no distinctions between the rich and poor. If anything, they are to favor the poor. “Did not God choose those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom that he promised to those who love him?” (Jas 2:5).

On May 19th, the governor of Texas signed a law that recognizes a fetal heartbeat so that human life in the womb may be protected. The governor sighted the Declaration of Independence: “Our creator endowed us with the right to life, and yet, millions of children lose their right to life every year because of abortion. In Texas, we work to save those lives, and that’s exactly what the Texas legislature did this session... The law ensures that the life of every unborn child who has a heartbeat will be saved from the ravages of abortion.”ⁱ

In fact, the Declaration of Independence refers to the right to life as unalienable. What does that mean? An unalienable right is a God given right. It does not come from a single individual, nor can the state mandate a law to take it away. Every human being has a fundamental right to life from the moment of conception until a natural death. (CDF, *Donum vitae* III). Our Catechism teaches us life begins much earlier than the 6-week mark when we can detect a heartbeat. “Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception. From the first moment of his existence, a human being must be recognized as having the rights of a person - among which is the inviolable right of every innocent being to life” (CCC 2270).

This past week, the Supreme Court showed no partiality when they refused to hear a challenge to the Texas law. It should come as no surprise that abortion providers challenged the law in court making an emergency appeal to the Supreme Court to halt the law from going into effect on the 1st of September.ⁱⁱ By showing no partiality, the Supreme Court allowed the law to go into effect.

This past week hearts ached when the United States’ humanitarian effort to rescue civilians in Afghanistan ended. Over 120,000 souls were evacuated, and we know that many more could have escaped to freedom had there been a deadline past the 31st of August. There is great fear over the brutality of the Taliban and the loss of freedom for men and women alike. The Texas heartbeat law is aimed at “the brutal reality that abortion always extinguishes an innocent human life.”ⁱⁱⁱ

As the nation mobilizes to provide humanitarian aid for those who have fled Afghanistan with nothing more than the shirts on their back, as the nation responds to those who have lost everything from Hurricane Ida, we must not forget the women who will be impacted by a law that compels them to give sanctuary to the life of the unborn in the womb. We must actively help women facing unexpected pregnancies to safely bring new life into the world and to nurture each child as a gift from God from the moment of conception to a natural death. We must help fathers to take responsibility for the life they have helped to create and to embrace a lifetime of nurturing care and support for the child and mother.

“Jesus proclaimed the Gospel of the kingdom and cured every disease among the people” (Mt 4:23). The Gospel of Life compels us to protect not only the unborn child in the womb, but to advocate for life for the poor and impoverished wherever they are oppressed. “In addition to the ancient scourges of poverty, hunger, endemic diseases, violence and war, new threats are emerging on an alarmingly vast scale” (EV 3). The list goes on, we must protect life against murder, genocide, abortion, euthanasia, ... whatever violates the integrity of the human person, ... attempts to coerce the will itself; whatever insults human dignity, such as subhuman living

conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, deportation, slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children; as well as disgraceful working conditions, where people are treated as mere instruments of gain rather than as free and responsible persons; all these things and others like them are infamies indeed. They poison human society, and they do more harm to those who practice them than to those who suffer from the injury. Moreover, they are a supreme dishonor to the Creator” (GS 27).

What would Jesus do if he were among us today? He would look up to heaven and groan, saying, “Ephphatha!”— that is, “Be opened!” (Mk 7:34). The heartbeat of Jesus’ redemptive mission is to help us to be open to life. Jesus says: “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly” (Jn 10:10). “In truth, he is referring to that ‘new’ and ‘eternal’ life which consists in communion with the Father, to which every person is freely called in the Son by the power of the Sanctifying Spirit. It is precisely in this ‘life’ that all the aspects and stages of human life achieve their full significance. Man is called to a fullness of life which far exceeds the dimensions of his earthly existence, because it consists in sharing the very life of God” (EV 1,2).

When we speak of human rights, we must be open to God’s plan for our lives. A rich and full life on earth is filled with struggles and temptations. Amidst the crosses in our own lives, we learn about forgiveness, and mercy and sacrifice. This unalienable right to life reaches its full realization in eternity when God shares his Divine Nature with us. “Ephphatha!” let us always be open to the gift of life.

ⁱ catholicnewsagency.com/news/247712/texas-governor-signs-heartbeat-bill-into-law

ⁱⁱ catholicnewsagency.com/news/248844/as-texas-abortion-law-goes-into-effect-pro-life-groups-pledge-action

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.