

January 20, 2019

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Isaiah says, "For Zion's sake I will not be silent, for Jerusalem' sake I will not be quiet"

If we are not pro-life everywhere, we are not pro-life anywhere

You will have noticed a brochure in your bulletin celebrating life - your life, my life, everyone's life, including the vulnerable and the unseen. This brochure is calling on us this weekend to renew our efforts to protect the lives of the unborn.

I received an article recently which made me aware of the different aspects that are related to this important issue. Its urgent title is, "*New Pro-Life Movement: 'No' to Partisan Politics.*" It was written by Peter Feuerherd and is in the current issue of the NCR. I would like to share some of its concerns and insights. This is a difficult and painful topic to address, but it is too important for us not to. The article states:

"There are some who feel that the current Pro-Life Movement against abortion has been captured by conservative culture warriors who promote a certain brand of politics. This observation comes from what is called a New Pro-Life Movement against abortion which thinks that the methods of the mainstream pro-life movement have largely failed to address the issue adequately, that there is too much time spent arguing with the social and political figures who support abortion and not nearly enough time spent helping the women who actual have them."

The Manifesto of this New Pro-Life Movement is founded on these eleven pillars:

1. All humans have an absolute, inherent right to life from conception to natural death.
2. Seek to prevent abortions through greater access to healthcare, pre and post-natal care, job protection, and stronger comprehensive support systems.
3. Spend less time arguing with those who support abortion and more time helping the women who are considering one.
4. Support every attempt to eradicate the culture of pervasive sexual harassment, violence, and prejudice against women.
5. Support every effort to prevent assisted suicide.
6. Reject the 'war hawk' mentality and fully support diplomatic solutions to international conflict.
7. Replace the death penalty with modern prison infrastructures and resources.
8. Provide universal access to proper medical care for everyone regardless of class, status, or income.
9. Seek realistic pathways out of poverty, resisting any legislation that reduces wages, cuts benefits, or restricts labor rights.

10. Protect the environment, combat climate changing and care for the world to protect and sustain all life from conception to natural death.
11. Support common sense measures to help reduce gun violence while respecting the right to bear arms,

This approach invites us to work, not only to stop abortion as important as that is, but also to protect the lives of the newly-born who are equally vulnerable. It seeks to protect all life at all levels.

To begin doing so, there are certain attitudes we can oppose which are in opposition to supporting life, such as:

- † Indifference to the well-being of the mother
- † Acting as if abortion were the only moral crisis we face
- † Showing no concern for the newly born
- † Using the issue of abortion to gain political advantage

There are also certain attitudes we can embrace because of their attempt to support life, such as:

- † Alleviating the conditions which cause expectant mothers to feel hopeless
- † Offering support to any mother who is considering or had an abortion
- † Seeing the connection between abortion and the poverty and helplessness in our society
- † Seeing protecting life as the hallmark of what it means to be a follower of Christ

This is a difficult and painful topic, which is all the more reason for us to speak as Isaiah did:

"For Zion's sake I will not be silent, for Jerusalem' sake I will not be quiet"

Neither can we. We cannot remain passive and distant from protecting all life.
If we are not pro-life everywhere, we are not pro-life anywhere.

*Let us stand and turn to Mary, the mother of all living,
and ask her to help us support all life in our world by praying ... "Hail Mary..."*