

Promoting the culture of life

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With the approach of the mid-term elections at the national level and many important offices, including the governor, up for election at the state level a person of good will should stop and reflect on their responsibility as a good citizen and as a person of faith.

Each one of us needs to be informed about the issues and the candidates and exercise our precious right to vote. At the same time, while respecting the distinction between Church and state we can never forget the moral dimension to our choices.

The split between the faith we profess and the way we live out our daily life is a serious issue. For the Christian, the Scriptures are clear about human life and the dignity of every human person, marriage and family, war and peace, the needs of the poor and the demands of justice tempered with mercy.

As we learned during the civil rights struggle we have a moral responsibility to state the truth about the dignity of every human being regardless of race. It doesn't matter whether a particular politician or candidate for office agrees with us or not.

The same is true today!

As a leader in the Catholic Church, I must be a moral voice in our society and challenge people to consider the issues from a moral point of view. The Catholic Church has taught from the beginning that the killing of the unborn (burning them with a solution the doctor injects in the womb, cutting them up while still alive in the womb like so much meat or sucking out the brain in partial birth abortion) is intrinsically evil - murder - and can never be justified.

Those who perform an abortion and those who cooperate willingly in the action, if fully aware of the grave evil, cut themselves off from the church and separate themselves from God's grace. This is and has been the constant teaching of the Catholic Church.

The legal system itself cooperates in evil when it fails to protect the lives of those who have no protection.

When the Supreme Court interpreted that abortion on demand is a constitutional right, the justices failed to protect the lives of innocent and defenseless new members of the human race; a sin against the common good.

The morality that protects human rights and thus the common good is the first and best thing worth legislating. When a politician says, "I am personally opposed to abortion but don't want to impose my beliefs" or says something like "You can't legislate morality," he or she fails the common good.

When we bring our moral convictions into public life we do not threaten democracy and pluralism but rather enrich them and the nation. As the Catholic bishops said in their statement

on faithful citizenship, "The separation of Church and state does not require division between belief and public action, between moral principles and political choices, but rather protects the rights of believers and religious groups to practice their faith and act on their values in public life."

Today there are many who have bought in to the philosophical fallacy called relativism. It teaches that all things and issues are relative and up to the individual to decide which is of greatest importance. It goes hand-in-hand with the attitude, "whatever I think or believe, whatever I feel or desire must be correct."

This group would like to silence the moral voice: let popular opinion or feeling rule the day! Let me be perfectly clear - it is not a matter of one opinion verses the other opinion. Human life is sacred because from the beginning it involves the creative action of God. The direct and voluntary killing of an innocent human being (abortion and euthanasia) is always gravely immoral. When the unborn are not protected, the "very foundations of the state based on law are undermined."

- Most Rev. Robert J. Carlson
Bishop of Saginaw

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