

The Defense of Life

The overturn of *Roe* and *Casey* on June 24, 2022
Ave Maria Catholic Church, June 26, 2022 - Fr. David M Vidal

On June 24, the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, we witnessed the triumph of the Sacred Heart. We saw how the heart of men can be changed with God's grace. Then, after 49 years of painful suffering at the cost of many innocent lives, the Supreme Court affirmed that "*The Constitution [of the United States] does not confer a right to abortion [and that] Roe and Casey are overruled.*"

This is a most historic event in the life of America. For this reason, we must pause for a moment and reflect. It took 49 years of prayer and sacrifices. It took 49 years of formation of consciences and active debate. It demanded the courage of people who were criticized, censured, or in a word, canceled. But, as we know, God can turn evil into good. And now we can celebrate God's mercy for allowing us to see this ruling in our lifetime.

Is this the end of our work for the defense of life? Unfortunately, it is not. We know that the enemy of humanity, the devil, a liar and a murderer, will continue the work of destruction. We must not be complacent. There is much to do!

There is an enormous amount of work to be done. There is much to do for the education of minds and hearts. And if we do not take that work seriously, even the victory that we celebrated last Friday can be stolen.

We must keep reflecting and teaching the value of human life. The Pro-Life Marches and the Pro-Life Days of Prayer allowed us to value the gift of life. We learned to value, love, and be grateful for the gift of life: the life of the unborn child, the life of children and youth, the life of adults and elders, the life of those who are healthy, and the life of those who are sick or have special needs.

However, we know that we face a fierce battle for the defense of life. Nobody has described this battle better than St. John Paul II. This is how St. John Paul II presented the battle in his encyclical letter, *Evangelium Vitae*, 17 (*The Gospel of Life*), given on March 25, 1995:

"Humanity today offers us a truly alarming spectacle, if we consider not only how extensively attacks on life are spreading but also their unheard-of numerical proportion, and the fact that they receive widespread and powerful support from a broad consensus on the part of society, from widespread legal approval and the involvement of certain sectors of health-care personnel . . . The twentieth century will have been an era of massive attacks on life, an endless series of wars, and a continual taking of innocent human life. False prophets and false teachers have had the greatest success . . . We are facing an objective 'conspiracy against life,' involving even international Institutions, engaged in encouraging and carrying out actual campaigns to make contraception, sterilization, and abortion

widely available. Nor can it be denied that the mass media are often implicated in this conspiracy, by lending credit to that culture that presents recourse to contraception, sterilization, abortion, and even euthanasia as a mark of progress and a victory of freedom, while depicting as enemies of freedom and progress those positions which are unreservedly pro-life.”

Nobody describes it better. This campaign against life is so powerful that today many people of goodwill still believe that the world is overcrowded and that without massive sterilizations in the five continents, in a few years, there will not be sufficient space for the inhabitants of this planet.

But the truth is that the opposite is happening. Some countries are walking towards extinction. Some societies are committing suicide for the lack of children. At this point, 51 countries that represent 44% of the people of the planet are not able to replace their generations. These are countries that are facing extinction.

What does the Church propose to us? How do we fight the culture of death and bring forth a culture of life?

First, we need to be grateful for this gift: Life is a miracle, and we must be grateful for the miracle. The mother of the heroic Maccabees describes the miracle of human life with these words: *“I do not know how you came to be in my womb; it was not I who gave you breath and life, nor was it I who arranged the elements you are made of . . . It is the Creator of the universe who shaped the beginning of humankind and brought about the origin of everything,”* (2 Macc. 7:22-23).

Put all the scientists of all ages together, give them all the resources and time they wish, and they will not be able to create the gift of human life. They might manipulate it but they can never create it. This is a gift coming from God, and we must be grateful.

Second, we must respect and defend this gift: We are not the owners of the gift of life but the administrators. We must respect the precious gift of life in ourselves and others. We must not say, “It is my life, and I do what I want with it.” That is not wise. We should say, “My life is God’s gift to me, and I must use this gift with wisdom and courage to make my life beautiful.” We must also respect the precious gift of life in others. Then, it will never be our right to kill innocent people.

And since we know there is an attack against human life, we must be ready to defend it from conception to natural death. There are so many things that must be done. Where to start? I would make these suggestions:

Educate yourselves: Immediately after the decision of the Supreme Court was released, the mass media machine inundated the media world with comments and teachings in favor of

abortion. Let us not consume lies; let us educate our consciences by bringing the light of truth. Let us study the arguments to bring clarity to our minds and let us be ready to give an account of what we learn.

Be ready for martyrdom: To be an ambassador of truth costs much. We can ask St. John the Baptist how much that costs! And yes, we must be ready for it. We must prepare our hearts by the daily acceptance of what is good. Day after day, we must say as we make good choices: *"My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready!"* (Psalm 108).

Answer with love: Evil will never be conquered by evil, but evil will be conquered by good, (Rom 12: 21). We must not use the tactics of the world. Jesus is our model to follow, and Jesus told us that evil is conquered with love and sacrifice.

Let us finish these thoughts with a prayer. It is the prayer with which Saint John Paul II concluded his encyclical letter on *The Gospel of Life*.

O Mary,
Mother of the living,
to you do we entrust the cause of life
Look down, O Mother,
upon the vast numbers
of babies not allowed to be born,
of the poor whose lives are made difficult,
of men and women who are victims of brutal violence,
of the elderly and the sick killed
by indifference or out of misguided mercy.

Grant that all who believe in your Son
may proclaim the Gospel of life
with honesty and love to the people of our time.

Obtain for them the grace
to accept that Gospel
as a gift ever new,
the joy of celebrating it with gratitude
throughout their lives
and the courage to bear witness to it
resolutely, in order to build,
together with all people of goodwill,
the civilization of truth and love,
to the praise and glory of God,
the Creator and lover of life. Amen