

- Many thanks to all of you who participated in our annual Life Chain last Sunday afternoon, which is a great opportunity to evangelize by witnessing publicly to the evil of abortion.
- I'm especially grateful to our Respect Life Ministry, which does such great work in advocating for a Culture of Life and for giving our parish opportunities to pray for and work for the Pro-Life cause and Pro-Life organizations.
- The Catholic Church has always been very clear in her Pro-Life teachings and in Her opposition to anything that is an affront to life or cheapens the dignity of the human person.
- While there are many gravely sinful actions that are an affront to life and cheapen human dignity, there is one threat that looms larger than the rest: abortion. As October is Respect Life Month for the Church, I'd like to address this issue today.
- While the number of abortions has been dropping in the past decade, there are still about 2300 babies killed by abortion in America every day. That's well more than 800,000 deaths per year!
- Keep in mind that the leading cause of death in the US: heart disease, kills only about 650,000 people each year. So, if you were born in 1974 or later, one-third of your generation has been killed by abortion before they were even born! It's an amazing statistic!
- The Church has always held that abortion is a grave sin and has prohibited Catholics from cooperating in or procuring an abortion. Direct abortion is *never* a morally tolerable option because it is always a grave act of violence against a woman and her unborn child.
- Since the Supreme Court imposed abortion on our country with *Roe vs. Wade*, there have been an estimated 62 million unborn American children killed through abortion.
- In 2019 alone there were 42 million abortions worldwide! It's absolutely horrifying. To think: 42 million children last year never made it out of the womb because they were aborted.
- To compare evil to evil, the Nazis killed only 11 million people in their time. Despite all that the Church did to stand up to the Nazis, many still complain that the Church didn't do enough in World War II. Yet are we Catholics doing enough to fight abortion?
- We consider ourselves a civilized country, and yet we put up with this heinous crime, with many people celebrating abortion as a "right" and demanding that our tax dollars pay for it.
- This is why the bishops of the United States have repeatedly stated that abortion is the preeminent moral and political issue of our time.
- It's why we stood outside last Sunday for Life Chain and prayed for an hour; it's why we have the signs that we do and our memorial for those who've died because of abortion in front of our church right now.
- It's why we have a Pro-Life Mass every 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of the month followed by a Holy Hour of Reparation, and why so many of us go regularly to local abortion mills to pray.
- It's why we regularly raise money and collect diapers and other material goods for our local Pro-Life organizations like MiraVia, and why we started a spiritual adoption program last Sunday for abortion-vulnerable babies.
- There is no greater evil in our society today than the willful killing of the unborn, who are the most innocent and vulnerable members of our society.
- Perhaps the most profound voice to speak against abortion is Mother Teresa. While not an American, she loved our country, and she saw the evil of abortion for what it is.
- Some of her more important quotes on this issue include: "Any country that accepts abortion, is not teaching its people to love, but to use any violence to get what it wants."
- "It is a poverty to decide that a child must die so that you may live as you wish."

- And most notably, she had this to say in the *Wall Street Journal* in 1994:

*America needs no words from me to see how your decision in Roe v. Wade has deformed a great nation. The so-called right to abortion has pitted mothers against their children and women against men. It has sown violence and discord at the heart of the most intimate human relationships. It has aggravated the derogation of the father's role in an increasingly fatherless society. It has portrayed the greatest of gifts -- a child -- as a competitor, an intrusion, and an inconvenience. It has nominally accorded mothers unfettered dominion over the independent lives of their physically dependent sons and daughters. And, in granting this unconscionable power, it has exposed many women to unjust and selfish demands from their husbands or other sexual partners. Human rights are not a privilege conferred by government. They are every human being's entitlement by virtue of his humanity. The right to life does not depend, and must not be declared to be contingent, on the pleasure of anyone else, not even a parent or a sovereign.*

- This is why in our battle against the culture of death, it is not enough for us to simply say that abortion is wrong. We must do something about it. So what can we do?
- As always, our first step as Christians is one of charity. While we are called to speak the truth clearly, we are also called to speak it in love. So we should we make it a point to embrace those whose lives have been touched by this horrible sin.
- There is always so much guilt and pain associated with this sin, and we need to reach out to those who have committed it to show them the love of Christ.
- It would be a very easy thing to self-righteously condemn those women who have had abortions and the men who have pushed them into it. But that's not the way Christ handles any of us. While He is always quick to let us know when we've sinned, He also offers us forgiveness, love and healing.
- So to anyone here who has had an abortion or helped procure one, I beg you, if you haven't done so already, please go to confession. It's the only place to find the relief from sin.
- In addition to embracing those who've had or procured abortions, we must also stand publicly against this terrible sin, which is why Life Chain and praying at abortion mills is important.
- But as this is also an election year, we must vote for Pro-Life candidates.
- There are Catholics who think there are other issues just as important as abortion when it comes to voting, yet it's hard to think of abortion as just one issue among many when considering its consequences. What other issue results in the death of well over 800,000 innocent American children each year? Not immigration, not health care, not the death penalty.
- That's why we Catholics have a duty to vote for pro-life candidates.
- I bring this up not to tell you who to vote for, but because it's my sacred duty to help you form your conscience. So you must understand that voting for a pro-abortion candidate, when there is a pro-life candidate on the same ballot, makes you an accomplice in the moral evil of abortion.
- In the bulletin this week there's a great article that can help you understand your duties as a Catholic voter. I hope you'll take the time to read it and form your conscience on this issue.
- Lastly, and most importantly, to battle the evil of abortion we must pray. I especially encourage you to pray the Rosary to end abortion. There is nothing more effective than prayer, and more than ever we need to pray for life, for our country, and for an end to all the evils we've embraced as a nation.
- My dear friends, we know that at the end of time Christ will be victorious over evil, and over sin and death itself. He has already won the war. But we must still fight evil now, and it's difficult to conceive of a greater evil in our midst than abortion.
- Let's each be good soldiers for Christ by doing all we can to end the moral travesty of abortion that has so divided our nation, killed so many Americans, and wounded so many other.

- Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary, pray for us!