

Thirty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time
October 30, 2022

In our never ending quest to better understand and embrace the heart and mind of Jesus, we look to the gospel today and try to place it in our time. Zacchaeus was a tax collector. Out of all the people that could be chosen for this story, it is a tax collector. He is the most despicable and disgusting person in town. He is an agent of the Roman, foreign occupying dictatorship. And he has a reputation of skimming off the top. He is a traitor, a cheater, and detested by everybody. Who would that person be in this day and age? I have a suggestion. Let it be the abortionist.

With all the rhetoric these days about abortion, a few observations are in order:

Abortion is the loneliest act that any human being can carry out. It is far away from God, far away from the child in her womb, far away from love. The pretext for having an abortion is the desperate attempt to overcome the crisis in her life. Pushed against the wall, often with the absence of the father, economic concerns, career, medical, and social problems, the mother is tempted by the so-called easy and expedient fix. The abortion turns the crisis into catastrophe.

The ludicrously of the law that gives no protection to an unborn child but at the moment of birth the child is magically given full status as a human being with all the rights of life liberty and the pursuit of happiness. One moment they want the law to say that the baby is only a blob of tissue, and then, instantly, at birth, a fully enfranchised human person.

Our sophisticated scientific knowledge that tells us that at the moment of conception the baby has its own unique DNA and chromosomes. The indignant pro-abortion rhetoric seems to indicate that it really doesn't matter if the unborn baby is a human person. Pro-abortion is based on a self-serving philosophy, what matters is what is good for me.

“What makes loneliness an anguish is not that I have no one to share my burden, but this: I have only my own burden to bear.” (Dag Hammarskjöld: 1961 Nobel Peace Prize recipient.)

What is very disconcerting is that legal or not, the majority of public opinion in the United States favors legalized abortion. This evidently includes a lot of Catholics. I suspect that this misguided thinking is motivated by well-intentioned compassion

for women in crisis. Clearly, we need to do more to help women with an unwanted pregnancy.

Greater enforcement on the accountability of the father, reinforcement of economic and social and medical support are urgently needed.

Abortion is the ultimate abuse of women. The unborn child, even when conceived under the most horrific circumstances, is innocent. The mother, every fiber of her being, is made to nurture and give life to her child. The self-righteous, self-serving rhetoric that skews this sacred reality needs to be countered.

In the 1950s there was a term widely used to describe the Communist movement. The term is brainwashing. That term fits well with the indignant public proclamations that abortion is a right. To have such a low regard for human life, to see it as expendable, diminishes us all.

I conclude with these words of Pope John Paul II from his 1995 encyclical entitled, the gospel of life.

It is also a question, in a certain sense, of the “moral conscience” of society: in a way it too is responsible, not only because it tolerates or fosters behavior contrary to life, but also because it encourages the “culture of death”, creating and consolidating actual “structures of sin” which go against life. The moral conscience, both individual and social, is today subjected, also as a result of the penetrating influence of the media, to an extremely serious and mortal danger: that of confusion between good and evil, precisely in relation to the fundamental right to life. (#24)