

Office
of the
Abbot
Nullius



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On January the 22nd, 1973, God was mocked and there occurred the greatest setback for humanity and civil rights in the Nation's history. As a result of the United States Supreme Court's tragic and immoral opinions on abortion, protection of the right to life for the unborn is impossible.

The Court has blatantly defied and ignored science, for scientific evidence shows that the human fetus is a human being in the earliest stages of development.

The Court has rejected the truths contained in the Declaration of Independence, for it has denied the self-evident truths which that great Document enunciates, namely, that "all men are created equal and that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among

God Was Mocked...

these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

Most of all the Court has mocked God, for God is the Author of life and the Source of law, and no human law, if it is to be valid, can contradict or supersede the Divine Law. Neither the Court, sentimentality, the will of the majority, nor social concern can change God's law.

Court's decision has already made the great massacres in the history of mankind seem small in comparison to the great slaughter that is now taking place daily in our hospitals and abortion clinics. God, however, will not be mocked. If this country is to prevent God's wrath from descending upon it and to receive God's fullest blessings, all Americans, irrespective of race, color, or creed, must join in an un-

precedented effort to change the environment which allowed this decision to be nurtured. Judges reflect the mentality of the age, and the Supreme Court decision reflects the sad condition of morality that is prevalent in our Nation. Permissiveness has replaced moral standards and blatant materialism has led men to conclude that the end is all that counts.

Abortion is not a "Catholic" issue; it involves principles which cut across religious lines. The life of every human being is sacred from conception to death. This is so because God has created each of us and because each of us shares in the redemption of Christ our Lord. No court, no legislative body, no individual can assign less value to the life of any individual or class of human beings.

In holding that the unborn

child is not a human person and deserves no legal protection during the first six months of existence in the Mother's womb the Court clearly exceeded its competence. It also set the stage for the formulation and enactment of bad laws throughout the land. North Carolina is no exception. Scholars who have studied the Supreme Court's opinions in the past year conclude that the only practical way to provide a Constitutional basis for legal protection of the right to life of the unborn child is now to amend the Constitution of the United States. Amending the Constitution is not a matter to be taken lightly. Yet the issue at stake, namely, human life, is so precious that one can have no doubt that this is the course of action that must be taken. A Constitutional amendment to protect the life of the unborn child is essential and urgently needed, and every American should encourage members of Congress to conduct hearings and move speedily to pass a pro-life amendment. Likewise, politicians who advocate abortion should be rejected at the polls.

by Abbot Joseph Gerry, O.S.B.

It is ironic that the Supreme Court's decision backing abortion-on-demand, for at least the first three months of pregnancy, should be made at this time. For we live in a period of history when serious minded men agonize over the loss of life involved in modern warfare; over the serious ethical questions raised by recent scientific and medical advances; over the implications of pollution on our environment and the long-range effects of drug use. We live in a period when legislative policies generally express a concern for identifying and protecting the rights of individual citizens. Yet this decision by the Supreme Court constitutes an abandonment of this direction and removes the only legal protection the unborn child had for its very life.

Recognizing the unique, delicate and dependent status of the unborn child, we would have expected the normal reflective human decision to be one of granting special protection under the law. And yet the legal decision being imposed upon our society does not recognize or protect the value of the unborn child until some arbitrary period of time has elapsed, as if conception initiated a process whose purpose was the realization of something other than a human person.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a Lutheran theologian who was hanged by the Nazis in 1945, expressed very simply what is here at stake. He said: "Destruction of the embryo in the mother's womb is a violation

of the right to live which God has bestowed upon this nascent life. To raise the question whether we are here concerned already with a human being or not is merely to confuse the issue. The simple fact is that God certainly intended to create a human being and that this nascent human being has been deliberately deprived of life. And this is nothing but murder."

The law as teacher, the law as creating the moral tone of the community it regulates, the law as assisting citizens in assessing the value of specific acts, is ignored by this recent court decision. We live in a society that seems to think every man is a philosopher king. Yet in point of fact the majority of men stand in need of the guidance of wise leadership. We live in a society that seems to think that all that is necessary is to make non-moral legislation. Yet this attempt to write a "neutral" law, to take a "neutral" stance regarding the unborn child, has in fact initiated immoral legislation for it ignores man's responsibility towards life, an area in which man cannot be neutral.

No amount of legal decision-making can turn evil into good. Let us stop and reflect on what has happened. The Court authorizes a national policy which sanctions the violent deaths of millions of unborn innocent children. By its decision the Court has determined that steps may be taken to exclude the helpless and unwanted child from the family table. This is the moral tone established for our

society by the majority of the United States Supreme Court. Is it possible for us to speak of this decision as neutral, as taking no side in the moral issue of life?

One of the dangers of our technological society is a tendency to adopt a limited view of man and to see him only for what he does or produces. Our society tends to overlook the source of men's dignity, namely the fact that man is made in the image of his Creator, can be elevated to adoptive sonship in Christ, the God-man, and that from the moment of conception man is worthy of the full support of the human family of which he is a member. The judgment of the Church on the evil of terminating life is a sacred gift from God, that men are not the masters but the ministers of life. As St. Paul so simply stated: "If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord, so that alive or dead we belong to the Lord." (Rm. 14:7, 8) Moreover, the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council declared: "...whatever is opposed to life itself, such as any type of murder, genocide, abortion, euthanasia or willful self-destruction, whatever violates the integrity of the human person...all these things and others of their like are infamies." (GS, 27)

We profess that one aspect of our authentic Christian witness is a deep respect for the dignity and uniqueness of the person, a profound awareness of the sense and meaning of life. Recall how Benedict in his Rule reverences all ages, especially the young and elderly. This means that our

Christian life-style should proclaim the value of all creation, but above all it should provide for the realization and fulfillment of the supernatural dignity of the human person. This means that the attitude we assume, especially our interpersonal relations, must always represent true Christian convictions, not mere desire for popularity or human esteem. This places the grave obligation upon us always to exercise genuine Christian brotherhood in work and in deed to all men, of whatever condition of mental or physical development.

Our Christian witness to the sacredness and dignity of life must be significant, this is, a living sign. One who has never read the gospels or the Rule of St. Benedict should nevertheless be able to experience that Christian moral tone captured in the Sermon on the Mount or Benedict's instruments of good works. They should observe as part of our normal life-cycle the reverence we show our own person, the reverence we manifest towards others in the real situations of our life. Ours is the task to raise the moral tone be it in the monastery, on campus, in our office or neighborhood. One guide as to how we may strive to bring this about is described by St. Benedict: To see Christ in the sick, the aged, the guest, the superior. To reverence all men. To visit the sick. To assist those in trouble. To console the sorrowing. Not to give false peace. Not to be jealous. Not to harbor envy. To pray for our enemies in the love of Christ.

Fidelity to this way of life will teach as well as lead others along the right way. For, as St. Paul tells us: The law is fulfilled in this: that we have love one for another.

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