

Homily, 27th Sunday in ordinary time, Year A

In today's Gospel Jesus relates the parable about a landowner who sent his servants to get the produce of his vineyard from his tenants. When the servants were maltreated, he decided to send his own son thinking that they would respect him, but, the son himself was killed. This parable drives home the basic message of God's tremendous love for us, and our ingratitude and hardness of heart.

1st Sunday in October is Pro Life Sunday and suggest Priests and Deacons preach on this topic. Discussing abortion can be controversial. Even among Catholics there can be disagreement. However, the position of the Church: abortion is not a matter of choice but is the official doctrine of the Catholic Church. The first thing I think about are references to children in the New Testament. My first of two favorites is the visit of the angel to Mary. Here is a young woman, engaged to Joseph and the angel asks her to have a child who will not be Joseph's son. For a young Jewish girl, this creates problems. When Joseph learns she is pregnant, what if he refuses to marry her? She will be an outcast. She had a "choice". Her decision required great faith and her reply was simply, "Let it be done to me according to your word." She accepted the pregnancy knowing full well her decision could have dire consequences. She exercised a choice that has had a profound influence on the whole world.

The other bible reference I enjoy is the account of the children coming to Jesus. I can picture the apostles bustling about and saying, "Don't bother the Master. He's tired. Leave Him

alone.” Jesus scolded them and said, “Let the children come to me.”

Many in our modern society would not express the same sentiment that Jesus did. As a matter of fact since the Supreme Court declared abortion legal, more than 40 million unborn children have lost their lives here in the United States.

“Let the children come to Me!”

In Russia, 60% of all pregnancies end in abortion and in China, if women become pregnant with a second child, the government mandates the child be aborted and the woman sterilized.

“Let the children come to me!”

This is not a situation we can turn away from and say, “It doesn’t affect me or my life and if others have abortions that’s their choice.” We really don’t have a “choice” between what is right and what is wrong. We must make decisions based on God’s law and the teaching of Jesus Christ. Two individuals, Pope John Paul and Mother Teresa, “told it like it is”, so to speak. They said human life begins at conception. The medical experts know human life begins at conception. From the moment of conception, the only change in a baby in the womb is it’s size. All that happened to each of us in this Church this morning is that we have matured since OUR conception. The reason we are alive is that our mothers also said, “Let it be done to me according to your word.” Our mothers and fathers accepted us and allowed us to come into the world.

I say again, this is a difficult topic to discuss but I think we, as individuals, must recognize that we don't have the privilege or the authority to make the decision about whether or not anyone else will live or die.. not if they are 20, 30 or 40 years old or if they are just a few weeks old. At conception everyone is a child of God.

"Let the children come to me!"

When Jesus was on this earth He was not tolerant of actions that were wrong. He was specific and His words were directed to everyone, including all of us in this church this morning. He directed everyone to make every effort to change actions or concepts which are offensive to the Father. That means we must act. The killing of the unborn continues because it is legal in this country. Jesus might as, "Yes it's legalbut is it right?" His answer would be, "No, it is not right."

How can we become involved? First by praying, praying for those mothers and fathers facing this horrible decision that they may choose life for their child. Second, we must pray for those women who have had abortions and who, as surveys prove, suffer depression, guilt and a continuing anxiety because of their actions. But the anxiety is not necessary because Jesus has promised forgiveness to everyone who will ask and a visit to confession will end all anxiety. Jesus personifies love and forgiveness and He rejoices when anyone asks for His help. To third thing we must do is to vote. We must decide if we agree with Jesus when He said:

"Let the children come to me!"