



Election 2008, The Basic issue: The Sanctity of Life

Fr. Ralph Wright
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The Gospel of God's love for man, the Gospel of the dignity of the person and the Gospel of life are a single indivisible Gospel. The nearest I get to providing myself with a symbol of what this means is in this simple poem that came to me while I was jogging many years ago:

from all eternity
You made me
as if to be
your only spouse
in time
may I choose You

to be mine

It can't get more wonderful than that. This, our human destiny, 'infinitely surpasses', as Pope John Paul says in *Evangelium Vitae* 'our heart's expectations' or as we might have put it 'our wildest dreams'. This IS how valuable each person is in the sight of God.

The single most important role that the President of our country plays both for us in America and for the world is his selection of Supreme Court Justices. It was this Court that in 1973 interpreted our constitution to remove from our unborn children the right to live. I believed this when I was privileged to give the first homily in the Abbey Church in the new millennium at 12.00 midnight on December 31st 1999. I believe it now. A few weeks later, shortly after the March For Life in January 2000, I gave the following homily. It was the 27th January 2000. This is what I said:

**A year ago yesterday pope john paul
Quoted in his homily at the mass
In the two dome**

"the gospel of god's love for man, the gospel of the dignity of the person and the gospel of life are a single and indivisible gospel (gospel of life #2)

This was the text on one side of several posters that mr mohan, Ten priory students and i carried in the march for life in washington dc last monday.

In this homily i would like to highlight the enormous significance



Of this text for our new century and let you know why
I see it as so significant.

**If i had not come ,if i had not spoken to them,
They would have been blameless.
But as it is they have no excuse for their sin. John 15.22**

Statistics are funny things. We live in an age of stats. They are quoted every day for us to digest and be impressed by. Stats about employment and average income. Stats about poverty level stats about sexual behavior, stats about causes of death. We are mesmerized by stats so that sometimes we begin to wonder whether we can make sense of any of them.

I find it a bit like distances in space. All those thousands of light years that get quoted and all those hundreds of thousands of galaxies with hundreds of thousands of stars in each.

Once you've said 60 light years my mind is already drunk. Something travelling at 182,000 miles a second away from me for the whole length of my life! After that you can call it infinity as far as i'm concerned.

But there are a couple of stats that i think merit serious pondering and i will give them now. I was compiling them using a 1994 book of world information from the reference section of our library.

576,039 that is to say a little over half a million americans, have died in battle in all the wars that americans have fought in from the revolutionary war of 1775 to the gulf war of 1991.(216 years)(**insertion:the number of combat deaths by october 2008 is 742,403**) in the 13 years from 1980 to 1993, we in america aborted three times that number of americans **every** year.

On the morning of the march last monday
We attended a mass celebrated for the marchers from
Illinois and missouri by cardinal francis george, archbishop
Of chicago. He quoted the grizzly total as now having reached
40 million since 1973 of unborn children whose lives we have terminated in this
country. (**insertion:the number quoted in october 2008 is over 45 million**)
Back in the seventies when the vietnam war was still raging i wrote the following
poem:

War

War forgets that men have mothers,
keeping faces without names.
To kill with calm we must remain



distant— being brothers.

Numbers may be bombed at will,
erased from charts and left in tombs,
but sons are made of love in wombs
and persons are too close to kill.

This described, around the time of roe v wade, the immense tragedy of the war that was raging. It tells the tragedy of any war.

But mother teresa called abortion the biggest threat to peace for she said in abortion it is the mother who has her own child executed and there is no tie between humans as close as that between mother and child.

This is why it is such an unbelievable maelstrom of darkness and blindness and tragedy in our age.
And the victims are both the children **and** their mothers.

Nonbelievers may have only a hazy idea of the value of the child in the womb, protestants, who have only a hazy belief in authoritative teaching also may be uncertain when an unborn child has inviolable rights.

But catholics, if well-informed, have no room for such haziness. A catholic, who is educated in his faith and knows the teaching of vatican ii and of the catechism, can take no refuge in claims of ignorance. He or she has the privilege and the responsibilities of light, the privilege and responsibility of knowing the truth .

For a catholic believes that the church, according to the authoritative teaching of vatican ii, has been given a shepherd who, guided by the spirit, is protected from error when he teaches authoritatively on faith and morals

**St john told us:
If i had not come,
If i had not spoken to them,
They would have been blameless.
But as it is they have no excuse for their sin. John 15.22**

In 1995, on the feast of the conception of jesus, the annuntiation, March 25, the church's teaching that had been boldly and clearly taught in many documents, including those of vatican ii, Was courageously, unambiguously and with great clarity reiterated by john paul ii in his encyclical *evangelium vitae - the gospel of life*.



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Catholics who are well informed believe
That from conception each human being is a person —
As Jesus was from his conception.
So each human being conceived
Deserves and should be given
The same protection
That Mary gave Christ.

It will be our task in this new century
To spread this good news.—this gospel of God's love for man, this gospel of the
dignity of the person, this gospel of life —

Those who know this truth cannot advocate
A policy of choice
Any more than they could have
Said in the nineteenth century:
"I personally believe that negroes have rights
And are not chattel but I would not dream
Of forcing my belief on you if you do not believe this.
I believe in your right to choose to own a slave."

This is why a well-informed Catholic will go on patiently
Non-violently, persuasively, and prayerfully
Fighting for the restoration of legal protection
For every human being from the moment of their conception
Till the moment of their death.

They have that dignity. They have a right to live.
They are the most vulnerable and the most innocent
Of all God's creatures.
They are, par excellence, the 'little ones'
Referred to by Jesus in the gospel
Whatever you did to the least of these little ones you did to me (Matthew 25:40)
Until he has shared this truth with all,
A Catholic cannot rest.
We need all our powers of intellect and prayer to achieve this —or to have God
achieve it through us.

That each human being,
Each Christ, should be respected
From the moment of his or her conception



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To the moment of his or her natural death.

This is our gospel, **this** is our message—

The joyful good news that christ has revealed to us

And that our church proclaims

Loud and clear

Without ambiguity

Our church teaches that at our conception

God works with our mother and father

By creating, directly, our soul

And this is why

From conception

Every human being is a person

—sacred, unique and irreplaceable.

Let us conclude with a direct quote from the gospel of life #25

‘precisely by contemplating the precious blood of christ, the sign of his self-giving love, the believer learns to recognize and appreciate the almost divine dignity of every human being and can exclaim with ever renewed and grateful wonder:

“How precious must man be in the eyes of the Creator if he gained so great a Redeemer and if God gave his only Son in order that man should not perish but have eternal life.” Gospel of Life #25

Let us pray for all of us that we may do all in our power to promote a culture of life; that we may be able to help and support anyone who is faced with a crisis pregnancy and is in need, and help them bear their child.

May God continue to bless

all those who are already doing this

in so many ways.

May God deepen **your** vision of the wonder of every human life

and so deepen your joy. A M E N d.r.w.1.27.00

May we all see this as the basic issue in the elections on november 4th 2008 and may those who are old enough to vote vote accordingly.

Ralph Wright O.S.B. October 16th 2008



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