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27th Sunday in Ordinary Time (A) 2020 (RESPECT LIFE!)

“Finally brothers and sisters whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.” On this Respect Life Sunday, this line from our second reading from St. Paul’s letter to the Philippians made me think of this past January and the March for Life. The enormous crowd on the mall in D.C. heard the following words spoken by President Trump:

“When we see the image of a baby in the womb, we glimpse the majesty of God’s creation. When we hold a newborn in our arms, we know the endless love that each child brings to a family. When we watch a child grow, we see the splendor that radiates from each human soul. One life changes the world... We cannot know what our citizens yet unborn will achieve. The dreams they will imagine. The masterpieces they will create. The discoveries they will make. But we know this: Every life brings love into this world. Every child brings joy to a family. Every person is worth protecting. And above all, we know that every human life, born and unborn, is made in the holy image of Almighty God.”

Even the CCC does not give such an eloquent testimony to the value and dignity of human life. Today, we find enemies of human life in so many news stories that it makes us wonder where we went wrong as a society. The one thing we can do to try to do the right thing for society is to vote for leaders who adhere to our Catholic principles and teachings. So many issues are subject to the prudential judgment of Catholic voters. What that means is that Catholics can legitimately disagree, for

example, on the best way to address issues such as racial injustice, education, the economy, immigration and healthcare and still remain in good standing in the Church. There are other issues, however, which touch on matters of INTRINSIC evil which are actions that can never, at any time, under any circumstances be committed, promoted or even enabled by a faithful Catholic. Obviously, one such intrinsic evil is abortion. Sadly, words like “choice” or “reproductive rights” or “women’s health” or other sanitized statements are used to cover up what abortion is and what abortion does, but these words do not change the fact that abortion is intrinsically evil and falls under the 5th commandment, “Thou shalt not kill.” Even the very word, “abortion” has been drained of its meaning. We treat it like nothing more than a term that starts a heated debate rather than a procedure that stops a heartbeat. Many want to treat abortion as merely one issue among many – but that requires that a person pretend not to know what abortion is and what abortion does. So, when we vote, we have an obligation to discern which candidate, which policies, and which party are most in line with Catholic teaching, and which ones are not. Some questions that we should ask ourselves would be, “Do I know which candidate and party promotes the intrinsic evil of abortion and even promises to expand its availability here at home and abroad? Do I know if a candidate and party intend to make me pay for other people’s abortions with my tax dollars – something that has always been illegal? Am I aware of a candidate and party that

says abortion must be available any time, any place, even up to the last moment that the fully formed, full-term baby remains in the womb? Ignorance in this area is not acceptable, because ignorance in this area costs millions of babies their lives and jeopardizes the souls of many Catholic voters. We must not use our vote to help candidates with their war on the unborn. We must never forget that in an abortion an innocent person is always put to death, and never by mistake. It's always chosen, always intended. The intention of abortion is to knowingly and deliberately kill an innocent boy or girl each and every time. Some people may be thinking, "A priest has no business discussing politics in church!" However, I'm speaking about a moral issue, the 5th Commandment, Thou shalt not kill. It is my role as a spiritual father to address issues that may jeopardize the souls of those whom I have been entrusted to care for. I think of it this way – There are plenty of Catholics who, quite rightly, have criticized bishops and priests in recent years for not having spoken out more forcefully against the sexual abuse of children by priests and bishops. Why, then, do many of these same Catholics want to silence bishops and priests who speak out forcefully against the killing of innocent children? Why is opposing sexual abuse of children a matter of justice, but opposing the murder of children a matter of "preaching politics?" If a priest doesn't speak up for those most vulnerable in our society, and if the Catholic faithful don't actively protect the most vulnerable in our society by refusing to

enable their deliberate destruction with their vote, then such Catholics are condoning the killing by their cowardice. I will close with a quote from Congressman Henry Hyde of Illinois who died in 2007. He said this:

“When the time comes, as it surely will, when we face that awesome moment, the Final Judgment, I’ve often thought, as Bishop Fulton Sheen wrote, that it is a terrible moment of loneliness. You have no advocates. You are there standing alone before God, and the terror will grip your soul like nothing you can imagine. But I really think that those in the pro-life movement will not be alone. I think there will be a chorus of voices that have never been heard in this world, but are heard beautifully and clearly in the next world. They will plead for everyone who has ever been in this movement. They will say to God, ‘Spare him because he loved us.’ And God will look at you and not say, ‘Did you succeed?’ Rather, He will say, ‘Did you try?’”

My brothers and sisters, I stand before you and say, I’m trying!