

Jeev♥tsau! TO CELEBRATE LIFE!

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EDITORIAL

The right to life for all

- Dr. Pascoal Carvalho

June 24, 2022 – the world was once again challenged to accept the rights of the unborn. In a landmark decision, the United States Supreme Court overturned its nearly 50-year-old decision in *Roe v Wade* that legalized abortion in the country. The 1973 *Roe v. Wade* had recognized that the right to personal privacy under the Constitution, protects a woman's ability to terminate her pregnancy, and legalized abortion nationwide.

The June 24 ruling has stirred up strong sentiments across the country and the world. After almost fifty years, the US Supreme Court has effectively come to the defence of the unborn, allowing states to enforce a ban on abortions. Merely minutes after the ruling, states across America began imposing a ban on abortions.

Pro-life activists rejoiced on hearing this judgement whilst pro-choice activists expressed disappointment. Many rights groups are calling the *Roe v Wade* decision as horrific and medieval and a vote against women reproductive justice and bodily anatomy. The verdict has been criticised by many world leaders and influencers. Some prominent personalities and politicians in our own country have been quick to denounce the ruling. On the other hand The Vatican's Pontifical Academy for Life praised the Supreme Court's decision on abortion saying it challenged the world to reflect on life issues whilst calling for social changes to help women keep their children. The verdict has reignited the commitment of all who had been raising their voice against abortions.

We all agree that deliberate killing of a human being is an act of murder. Yet we have a vast section of society which has no hesitation in asking for the right to kill an unborn child in the womb under the guise of women's empowerment and her right to choose. The baby in the womb does not seem to warrant any consideration. The current ruling has forced society to rethink on the meaning of life and humanity.

As voiced by Archbishop Paglia, President of the Pontifical Academy for Life, "In the face of Western society that is losing its passion for life, this decision is a powerful invitation to reflect on the serious and urgent issues by choosing life. It is a time for healing wounds and repairing social divisions; it is a time for reasoned reflection and civil dialogue, and for coming together to build a society and economy that supports marriages and families, and where every woman has the support and resources she needs to bring her child into this world in love."

India, though a religious nation, is not far behind western thinking when it comes to abortion issues. To aggravate the situation, we have a culture of preference for a male child often with deliberate attempts to abort a girl child.

As per a study published by The Lancet Global Health, the number of abortions in India is over 21 times higher than government reports. The government had been consistently reporting about 700,000, but that doesn't count private abortion clinics or self-administered "at home" chemical abortions. The study emphasized that 81 percent of abortion seekers take life-threatening drugs, killing their babies at home, without a doctor's supervision and many without even counselling.

The Church teaching holds that abortion is intrinsically evil, and as such is never justified. The same can be said for many other things such as rape, torture, euthanasia, and kidnapping (Gaudium et Spes para 27). Though an individual may have the best intentions, it does not justify an act that moral law and revelation have deemed evil.

It is now a time for serious introspection. Merely talking anti-abortion is definitely not enough. As a community, do we celebrate life by providing resources to young couples who look forward to starting their own families in these financially challenging times? We have to collectively challenge those who propagate female infanticide. Voices which have been silent for too long should be emboldened to speak up in defence of the unborn.

Our institutions need to be made easily accessible to women seeking help without feeling judged. We need to do more, to ensure that women in India are provided all the care and support to help with the delivery and subsequent care so that abortion ceases to be an option. In the measure we can, we are called upon to use our talents, time and resources to provide assistance to mothers, couples and the unborn child.

Pope Benedict XVI in his address to the Pontifical Academy for Life in Feb. 2011, very aptly stated, "Society as a whole must defend the conceived child's right to life and the true good of the woman who can never, in any circumstances, find fulfilment in the decision to abort."

Dr. Pascoal Carvalho is a member of the Pontifical Committee for Life at the Vatican. He is also a member of the Archdiocesan Human Life Committee of the Archdiocese of Bombay.

Life in the Womb

Dr. Angelica D'Souza

The word LIFE has the resonance of promise and power. Because life exists, there is hope! In fact, the birth of every newborn is a sign that God has not given up on us yet. It is a sign that there is still hope for the human race. Right from the time a newborn takes it's first breath and fills up it's lungs with the breath of life to the time that he/she breathes his/her last- it is LIFE- that essentially is the core of one's existence. Where there is life, there is hope and joy. Why would anyone want to murder this hope at the very bud of it's existence (in the womb), is a thought one could never fathom. Why would we ever want to lose this chance of joy is beyond reason or understanding. In fact, every aborted foetus is one chance less, to make the world a more thriving and hopeful place to live in.

If every once in a while, we take time out to appreciate the beauty of our existence- our body and mind in particular, maybe we'll be able to see life in the womb with more awe and amazement!

In my medical school, my favourite subject was human anatomy. I loved every theory class, but the cherry on the cake would be every dissection class. As I made my way through the dissection of the human body, I was left flabbergasted every single time I discovered an organ or the mechanism of the various systems in our body. I would stand in awe of the Creator, the designer, our God. And to think that all these parts actually came into existence in the womb- during the nine month formation of the foetus, was mind blowing. The greatest of all designers, our creator, chose to stretch his hand out to husband-wife, asking them to partner with Him, making them co- creators of this amazing, small and beautiful being - New Life! What an honour and privilege! On the other hand, what a shame! If one let's go of this chance by stifling life in the womb. A lot of us think life in the womb begins after the foetal heart starts to beat. But the fact is that there ought to have been life for the heart to even come into existence. Life begins in the moment of conception and conception happens within a few minutes of sex. We must not get carried away by the after-pill that reassures you of avoiding abortion because at whatever point you take the pill, it is still abortion!

All human life- from the moment of conception and through all subsequent stages- is sacred, because human life is created in the image and likeness of God. Nothing surpasses the greatness or dignity of a human person...If a person's right to life is violated at the moment in which he is first conceived in his mother's womb, an indirect blow is struck also at the whole moral order - Pope John Paul II, October 7, 1979 in Washington D.C

Each one of us is called to respect, love, uphold, nourish and cherish all human life, especially the unborn life in the womb. The very being of the unborn is precious and wonderful- a true sign of love. We cannot ignore the discrimination that is taking place against the defenceless unborn babies. We cannot be talking of justice and equality in the human kind without taking into account the injustice being done to life in the womb. Whatever circumstances or mistakes or miscalculations or crime has led to the bringing into being or bringing into existence of a foetus, it doesn't make the existence (baby) a mistake. There is the immense power and will of God at work, in every little embryo. And He doesn't make mistakes! In my clinical practice, I witness scores of couples seeking help with infertility and sadly, on the other hand I have to try hard to convince so many 'more fortunate' couples to let their baby live!

Let us make an appeal to the world, to let live! Irrespective of gender, racial background or disability, let us not overlook the dignity and right to life that every human deserves. Let us keep the hope alive! Let us keep life alive!

Dr Angelica D'souza is a Consultant Homeopath and can be contacted on drangelica.d@gmail.com

Do your bit

Arelene Theknath

A unique initiative coupled with an objective of protecting life on earth, The Saved Pearl Foundation (TSPF) is a progressively active NGO. It renders dynamic support to women in crisis pregnancies. Alongside, TSPF helps protect pre-born children (usually babies that are labelled as 'unwanted', especially, if it is a girl child).

In today's time, we have frequently heard of practising empathy towards the flora and fauna. However, we have seldom come across banners that cry out to save an unborn child. Is this because the unborn child is invisible to naked eyes for 9 months? That period of 'invisibility' must not turn into an opportunity to lash it out forever! Life begins at conception! Thus, anything destroyed post conception is unethical and unlawful, isn't it? When the national estimate of abortion in India was released, the study found that approximately 15.6 million abortions occur annually. Unlike any previous research on the topic of abortion, this study is the first explicitly calculated to measure the national incidence of abortion in India, which has been legal in the country under a broad range of criteria since 1971. We witness ruins in a soundlessly hushed manner called 'foeticide'. It is

incredible to learn that countless pregnant women are either forced into foeticide or are abandoned from families for their (women) decision to save the baby. As a result, the foetus either continues to perish or is sacrificed at the altar of desperation and hopelessness. Few other reasons have always been cruelty, convenience, lack of integrity or extreme poverty.

Moreover, if one kills a pre-born sea turtle or a pre-born bald eagle, the person is heavily fined with an accompaniment of minimum 1 year imprisonment. However, there is no penalty levied on killing a pre-born human baby! Our ethics surely stand silent in the witness box of life! We are well acquainted to the 'Roe v Wade' shout for abortion being made legal. Thankfully, this long running tryst has now been addressed; and the Supreme Court has voted to overturn abortion rights. This has definitely provided some solace with reference to saving lives! It is heart wrenching to see that despite being a progressive society, we learn of pregnant women wronged, abandoned and left harassed with helplessness enumerating many direct or indirect reasons. We believe that life is sacred and thus nobody has the right to ooze out the sanctity of it. Thus, TSPF does its bit of supporting life. Firmly believing that life is precious and has a purpose attached to it, we undertake our work of protecting life. With pioneering efforts to address healthcare needs of pregnant women in poor and marginalized communities, our foundation has crossed many milestones to preserve life and humanity.

We shelter our beneficiaries with an aim to their holistic development throughout their pregnancy. In certain cases, we have walked an extra mile by approaching licensed adoption centers to ensure that the new born baby is in safe hands. Quality healthcare and counselling for the well-being of the mother remains our prime focus throughout. Simultaneously, the realm of our work embraces sustaining and improving the heartbeat of a new born life, especially the girl child. With stringent integrity, the collection of TSPF's success stories is a product of our compassionate donors and my enthusiastic team. With their support TSPF has metamorphosed into a triumphant reality. They relentlessly inspire and empower TSPF to scale newer heights. Alongside this assistance to pregnant women, we conduct workshops in schools, colleges and various remote vicinities to spread awareness on health and hygiene, with a primary aim to help them choose wisely (specifically relationships, physical and emotional).

We have been successful in touching many lives with our services. We feel blessed to support the underprivileged and assist them to bloom with grace. This is but a result of the steadfast support and contribution of our generous donors.

Mrs. Arlene Theknath is the Founder and Trustee of The Saved Pearl Foundation

"Be not afraid."

A testimony of a post-abortive mother

"Do not fear, for I am with you"

To my dearest sister,

El-Roi. Our God sees you. He knows what you're going through and He wants to help you.

Be not afraid. Kings, prophets, Mama Mary and St. Joseph, the apostles were reassured time and again that God is in control of every situation

But first, He lovingly calls you to trust in Him. Trust that His plans for you are beyond your comprehension. Cast your burdens on Him because he cares for you in a way no one else can.

I know this seems impossible right now. You feel alone, abandoned, weak, unworthy, foolish for not thinking before you acted. I know. You are scared that you will not be able to care for the child growing inside you. I know. Because I've been there. And leaning on my own understanding, I took matters into my own hands.

Not long after that, my marriage fell apart. *For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.* (Romans 6:23). The wages for taking the life of another will always be death. Death of a person, death of a marriage, death of a family. Where a spirit of fear brings death, the fear of the Lord offers life.

And so, I beg you, put your trust in Him. He offers you the gift of forgiveness. Accept it. He will make all things new.

He loves you so much more than you can comprehend. I continue to see His love for me every time I say not mine, but let Your Will be done, Lord.

Surrender to Him completely. Find your refuge in Him alone. He is knocking on the door of your heart and waiting with open arms to welcome you home.

Today, my dear sister, Abba Father wants to remind you:

Do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your God;

I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand (Isaiah 41:10)

WHAT WE DO NOW MATTERS FOR ALL ETERNITY!

Anonymous mother and blogger
messymiraculousmommy.blogspot.com

Rise up, Church and take your place in history TODAY!

What we do now matters for all eternity!

For the last 24 hours, the world has watched, vented and wept as the United States of America split apart with many in rage, grief, shock and dismay and many others in stupendous joy! Lifelong friends can't face each other, families are ripped apart, communities in fear of the majority group in their state. The ripple effects are felt all over the world because so many of us have friends and family in the United States.

We who are called to be God's people, a royal priesthood, one Holy Nation, we rise up and take our place in history today!

1. Remember that our battle is NOT against flesh and blood. DO NOT fall into the trap of getting angry, hostile, dismayed and grieved over the countless souls who do not know Jesus and therefore cannot choose life while they are still entrapped in the kingdom of darkness. It's not their fault. Please don't be angry with them.
2. Remember that our battle is against the spiritual forces of evil. So prepare to fight the correct enemy with the armour God has given us.
3. Choose to forgive even when you absolutely do not want to. Destroy the devil's goal of making you worship your own desires over God.
4. Pray without ceasing. Give thanks for those who are putting their lives and families in danger to save countless unborn lives. Pray for those who persecute them because they really do not know what they are doing. Pray for the Church to stand firm in the Lord and do what it's supposed to do!
5. Fix your gaze on the author of life and worship Him only.
6. Start helping in practical ways: listen to your ranting, venting friend with the ears of Jesus, watch out for the vulnerable who do not know what to do or where to turn, start mobilizing resources to meet the very practical needs of babies who are going to be born to mothers who are completely unprepared for them.

7. Stop judging, gossiping and slandering those who are in crisis pregnancies irrespective of how bad you think they have been. Prepare the church to receive with genuine compassion and love the many birth mothers who have nowhere to go.

This is the time to have baby showers for them, to organise shelter and food for them, to give them your shoulder to cry on, to take them to their maternity check ups, to sit with them in the waiting rooms, to gather the financial support they need, to hold their hands through childbirth, to prepare them for motherhood or a safe relinquishment of their baby, to pay all your staff well so no one has to be afraid of the gift of a child.

The world needs us today, church.

Pregnant girls and women need us.

Innocent babies need us.

And yes, confused and absent fathers need us too.

Those who will lose their jobs in abortion clinics need us.

Those who will attempt to kill themselves need us.

And the only thing of real value we have to give is JESUS.

More of Jesus, less of us.

How we respond today will matter for all eternity!

Written on 25th June 2022, 24 hours after the SCOTUS judgement overturning Roe vs Wade

END