

Sunday Sanctity of Life 2007

A sermon by the Rev. Fr. David G. Subu
delivered on January 21, 2007

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Christ is among us!

Read: Message of His Beatitude Metropolitan Herman on the Sanctity of Life 2007

Brothers and sisters in Christ, in the words of St. Paul which we also heard today: “⁹This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance. ¹⁰For to this end we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe. ¹¹These things command and teach.” The Problems which face our society have not changed particularly much over the last 35 years since Roe v. Wade. New ethical challenges have risen with the advent of new reproductive and genetic technologies. The rise of global terrorism and nuclear proliferation has also tested the limits on the issue of war and national self-defense. To support the sanctity of life has evolved into something far beyond a “one-issue” cause, and many possible expressions of that support now exist, in varying degrees of moral cohesiveness. There remains a great deal of confusion and misinformation. The young people of today will be sorely challenged to find a clear picture of the issues that they will be asked to confront tomorrow.

What guidance can be given then today for any of us as we attempt to be true to the commandments of the Lord’s Gospel in a complex world? How does one be pro-life in a consistent and meaningful way? There are some who will put the majority of their effort into overturning laws, policies, and rulings that jeopardize life and that will mean lobbying for change from grassroots to the national level. There are others who will put their efforts into protecting the sanctity of life in their more immediate environment, by putting their effort into the care of children, the elderly, the infirm, or the disabled. Others will serve in the armed forces,

so that others will not have to face the horrors of violence of war and terrorism, especially here but also throughout the world. All of these are virtuous expressions of protecting the sanctity of life. Not every one of us will be engaged in every one of these pursuits. But each of us is called by God to do something. Each of us has been given gifts by God to serve our fellow human beings, from the womb to the tomb, and even beyond.

Therefore, if we wish to teach the young people of today what they must do, let us heed the words that St. Paul gave to the young bishop Timothy:

¹²Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. ¹³Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. ¹⁴Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. ¹⁵Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all.

Some of us have the gift of a gentle way. Let us use it to minister to those who are struggling with the choices of life and death, whether informally in our own community and families, or through a more formal ministry of aid. Some of us have the gift of communication. Let us use it to speak with our brothers and sisters, in exhortation, in teaching. Some of us have the gift of organization. Let us use it to coordinate efforts which will help support others where we cannot through fund-raising, supply drives for orphanages, pregnancy centers, homeless shelters, nursing homes. Some of us have the gift of agitation! Let us use it and our constitutionally guaranteed freedoms to let our government know that we hold them accountable for what they do, and talking about values is not the same as protecting them. Every single one of us has some gift that we could put to use in the defense of the sanctity of life. Let us not allow the machinations of politicians blind or paralyze us from this fact. We will be held accountable for what we did, not for what they did or didn't do.

The greatest defense of vulnerable life is simply to care. How many lives could have been saved and nurtured throughout the decades if someone had just cared enough to step up and say, "I'll help." The greatest deterrent to abortion is a network of support for the couples and individuals who find themselves in a difficult situation in which their "choice" seems empty and pre-determined for them. The greatest deterrent to euthanasia and suicide is the recognition of the power of depression and the intervention of the greater power of love and ministry. The greatest defense against terrorism is not accommodation but the courage to stand up and refuse to be intimidated, to be willing to fight back to protect the innocent from further death and destruction, to say, "This will not stand!" The greatest expression of the sanctity of life is to be unafraid to live, to embrace the sorrows along with the joys, to give thanks to God for all things, and to redeem the time given to us. Let us give ourselves entirely unto living the fullest, most Godly life, that like St. Timothy, our progress may be evident to all. Only then will our culture change, because we have changed, and the world around us will have become better for it.

I encourage and exhort as many of you as possible to join Metropolitan Herman tonight in prayer at St. Nicholas Cathedral at 6:00 PM. A Car-pool will be gathering here at 5:00 PM. Also, tomorrow, if you can, join thousands of concerned citizens at the March for Life in Washington D.C. at 11:30 AM. Most of the marchers will have come from long distances for this event. Let us who live close by not be faulted for our neglect. This is an important time to bear witness to our belief that life is worthy of protection. May Christ our true God, who sanctifies and enlightens all who are brought into this world, bless and sanctify all of us, together with His Father co-eternal and His Most Holy Good and Life Creating Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.