

HOMILY - AFFIRMING LIFE PRAYER SERVICE

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May 5, 2008

The Easter season is drawing to a close...For the last 6 weeks we have been celebrating the central event of all human history...the foundation of our Christian faith – the fact that Jesus Christ, God made man, conquered His own death by rising from the tomb on Easter morning...He not only conquered His own death when He came out of that grave,...He conquered yours and mine...He overturned the entire Kingdom of death to establish a new Kingdom, a Kingdom of Life...When we celebrate Jesus' victory over death, we celebrate that we share His victory...that He gives that triumph of life over death to each and every one of us...in our soul, body, community, nation, world. ...That Easter miracle...the gift of eternal life it promises to all who follow Jesus – who live by His Gospel – has made us a People of Life...People of Christ are a People of Life...If we stand with Christ, we stand with life...and against whatever destroys human life...Sadly, there is much that destroys human life in our day...And there is nothing that destroys more human life – destroys it on such a large scale – as abortion... A Zogby poll in 2006 showed that a majority of Americans – by more than 2 to 1 - believe that abortion is the taking of a human life...Even Dr. Morris Wortman, Rochester's leading abortionist, acknowledged that in an interview with the Democrat and Chronicle several years ago, in which he also claimed that the taking of that human life was justified... Since the Roe vs Wade decision in 1973, our nation has justified the taking of over 50 million human lives through abortion.

Embracing the Risen Christ fully, eagerly, in the way He wants us to embrace Him, demands that we reject the false solution of abortion...Abortion doesn't solve anybody's problems...it doesn't solve any of society's problems...We, as the People of Life, proclaim that life is the ONLY choice for the people of God...because we have accepted Jesus Christ...have acknowledged that His resurrection from the dead is the central event of human history...that He has done away with the power of death and restored life by His Gospel...He has done away with death...So why do we seek death as a solution?

If He has rolled the stone away from the entrance to the tomb,...why do we try to roll it back? ...It is not a solution...It is not the way...He has rolled the stone away from the tomb...That means it's time to build policies that affirm life, not that try to use death as solution to our problems...And it's not only abortion that tries to use death to solve a problem of society... Death is not a solution to the problem of the suffering and debilitation of a terminal illness...Some doctors and ethicists claim that patients with dementia or who are in a so-called "persistent vegetative state" are no longer really persons,...and that families should deny them even the most basic forms of nourishment and care...As People of Life, we know God is not calling us to do that...I believe – and I have seen it so many times – that, however weak and vulnerable such patients may be, they have the awesome power to inspire heroic, sacrificial love from their family members and caregivers...They can be the instrument God uses to bring forth goodness and holiness from those who care for them...God never stops giving us opportunities to grow more holy – to grow more like Jesus Christ.

God loves, and wants us to love, the grandfather lying unconscious in a hospital bed, the child with severe physical and mental impairments, the frightened teenaged mother, and the unplanned embryo nesting in her womb. Each of these vulnerable lives is given to us so we may learn to love generously, sacrificially, unconditionally.

And death is not a solution to the problem of crime when we put criminals to death...God is not calling us to do that ...He is calling us to affirm life and to affirm the fact that even though one may be entrapped in all kinds of sin, and deceit and evil,...that person can still be redeemed.

My friends, we must not take refuge in the false solution of death...because it's power has been robbed...by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ...He reigns as King over death...Death is powerless in the presence of our King,...and we should never give that power back to death by using it as a means to resolve any of society's problems...Abortion, euthanasia, assisted suicide, capital punishment, war, environmental policies that endanger human life...all of these are like trying to roll that stone back in front of the tomb.

All of these attacks on human life must be spoken out against and worked against, vigorously, by the People of Life...But the one that cries out loudest to our Christian conscience, ...that demands our response and commitment, is the deliberate, massive attack on the most vulnerable, defenseless, and voiceless members of society: the unborn.

For the People of Life who believe that all human life is sacred, it's been Good Friday for over 35 yrs....since the Supreme Court legalized abortion in this country...Some small battles have been won, but still the lives of well over 1 million unborn children are snuffed out every year. ...And right now, there is an abortion bill being sent to the State Legislature that – in the words of our Bishop – is absolutely intolerable...In the face of these assaults on life, it is easy to become discouraged, to lose hope that anything will ever change, that the unborn will ever be granted the sacred status they deserve as miracles of our Creator's hands...Yet as believers in the Resurrection, as the People of Life, we know that YES it may still *be Friday...But Sunday's coming...It's Friday, but Sunday's coming.*

It's Friday. Abortionists are doing their work over 4,000 times a day, snatching helpless, innocent lives from their mothers' wombs. *It's Friday.... But Sunday's comin'!*

It's Friday. Pro-abortion organizations like Planned Parenthood are putting out their hands for government money to fund the deliberate taking of human lives...That's because *it's Friday....but Sunday's comin'!*

It's Friday. Abortion clinics hide the truth; they hide the pain of abortion, and ignore the evidence of how it harms women, and call abortion a blessing. That's because *it's Friday....but Sunday's comin'!*

It's Friday. People with hardened hearts guard their abortion clinics and usher desperate women in to have abortions, while keeping them from pro-life people who want to give them hope. That's because *it's Friday....but Sunday's comin'!*

It's Friday. Preachers are preaching love and compassion for sinners, but not a word of love and compassion for these defenseless little ones...That's because *it's Friday...but Sunday's comin'!*

Yes, the People of Life live in Hope that Sunday's coming...But, Hope does not mean that we ignore or minimize the evils around us....It means, rather, that we see the whole picture, which is that evil will be conquered because of what happened that one Sunday morning 2000 years ago....The power of sin and death has been broken by the Resurrection of Christ... We are called to proclaim, celebrate, and serve that victory, waiting in joyful hope for Christ's return and the full flowering of the Culture of Life!...

Indeed, Sunday's comin'!...But we can't just sit and wait for that Sunday...because precious lives are being snuffed out....We need to keep praying...We need to keep raising awareness, ...we need to keep working to change hearts (every heart that's changed will save a life) ...preachers need to keep preaching LIFE. ...We need to write letters to the editor...we need to

call and write our law-makers...we need to support and vote for pro-life candidates...we need to support organizations like **Birth Right, Compass Care** and **Women's Care Center**, that counsel and care for pregnant women and their babies – not only with our dollars, but with our time and talent...We must keep working for LIFE as we wait for Sunday....We must keep working to save the little one's whom Jesus loves so much. ...So, as we go forth today out into a world filled with Good Fridays, let's do so with a renewed commitment to unite our FAITH with WORKS, unite our HOPE with ACTIONS...so that Sunday will come soon for at least some of those innocent little lives that are in danger...May the Lord Jesus Christ, give us strength and courage to carry out His will.In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. AMEN.