



A SERMON IN MEMORY OF THE VICTIMS OF ABORTION

Phil. 4:4-7, Ex. 1:15-2

In the Name of the Father and of the +Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Whenever God gathers His Church together for worship, it is that they might receive and celebrate His love. It is never that they might scold and condemn those who are not present. Nor is it ever that they might wring their hands in despair or heap guilt upon those who have sinned, even those who have sinned in the most grievous of fashion. The Lord gathers His church to receive sinners, to bestow His gifts, to be reconciled to those who hunger for righteousness.

St. Paul makes no exceptions. Under compulsion of the Holy Spirit, he commands: “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice” (Phil. 4:4).

Brothers and sisters in Christ: this is a time to rejoice. I don’t care how many times the old ladies say that they wouldn’t want to raise children in this world. This is a good time, a blessed time to be alive, to be a child, to have children and to raise children. This is a good time and a good place to be a Christian husband or wife, father or mother, a good time to confess and praise God as we rejoice in His gifts. Jesus lives. Our sins are forgiven. He is coming back to bring us home.

The world is very evil and has been so since Adam and Eve first sinned. It should not be difficult in the least to figure out that killing babies is wrong, that Pharaoh is evil and the midwives are good, and it should not be that hard to figure out that buying and selling people is wrong, that breaking treaties with the Native Americans is wrong, that lynching is wrong. Sin blinds us. Satan deceives us. No-fault divorce and legalized abortion and sex change operations didn’t come about as a sophisticated response to a difficult situation. They came about because sinful men wanted an excuse to do what their fallen flesh craved. In our fallen flesh, we are always looking for an easy escape from responsibility and duty.

To be sure, there are godless people in this world under Satanic influence who are possessed by demons, who murder and mutilate babies and pretend they are providing a medical service. But mostly, the people involved are deluded and confused. They have been horribly deceived and misled. They have been fooled by the false veneer of the Hippocratic oath and high-sounding words. They are like sheep without a shepherd. They do not know what they are doing. They think children are a burden, a disease, or even a form of slavery for their mothers. Where are the midwives of Israel?

We must seek to help these people. Not only are the lives of babies at risk, but so also the mothers and the nurses and even the doctors. You cannot engage in evil like this and not be affected by it. Abortion not only kills a baby and does terrible, dangerous violence to women’s bodies, but it also harms the souls and the minds of everyone involved. You can’t get raped and then just walk away as though nothing happened. When you are violated, mentally, physically, or spiritually, when you participate in evil, in murder and mutilation, even if you don’t know what you are doing or even if it was forced upon you against your will, it changes you, it scars and wounds you.

This is hard to face. We all want to look away, but we must not. God has exposed this evil for us in mercy. He would not have us be deluded into thinking that these are victimless crimes or that there is no cost to those involved or that it is simply a matter of political opinion. He would not have us become complacent or

lackadaisical while babies are murdered and women are violated and souls are deeply harmed. He is calling us to action, to mercy, to compassion for the lost sheep whom He deeply loves and whom we have been called to love as well.

Not only does evil change a person, so does grace. We have been saved by the grace of Christ, baptized into His Name, and His redeeming Blood is poured upon us in the Sacrament of the Altar. We have the forgiveness of sins and the promise of heaven. We cannot despair. We cannot give ourselves over to hatred and rage. We, who have gained so much by grace, who have been changed into God's own beloved, cannot hold those who are suffering from abortion or other sins in derision or contempt. If we love God, we must love our neighbors, because He loves them. We must recognize in them the very souls for whom God gave the life of His Son and be unashamed to receive and eat with them, even as He has been unashamed to receive and eat with us. We must hold out to them the hope and acceptance, the forgiveness and peace, the healing that Christ has won also for them.

We must obey God rather than men. We must speak for those who cannot speak. We must pray for those who don't know they need prayers. We must tell the truth, no matter how uncomfortable or the cost, to those who are caught in a deadly lie, and we must be ready at all times to give an answer for the hope that is in us even when the world is crashing down around us. Because we are called to rejoice and Jesus lives and He is coming back to bring us home.

So we confess our sins. We confess that we have sometimes kept silent out of fear of retribution or the opinions of others. We confess that we have held a desire for the pleasures of sex without consequences; we sought the benefits and advantages of holy marriage without the work or cost of children. We confess, and we repent. We ask God to give us the strength and courage to do better, that He change us by His grace and allow us to serve our neighbors as His voice among men. For we not only confess our sins, we also confess Christ our Light and our Hope and the Life of the whole world.

That is why and how we rejoice. We rejoice that God is good, that He knows what He is doing, and that He works through us despite us and often even unknown by us. He didn't abandon His people in Egypt or in Bethlehem. He answered their prayers in the concentration camps, the slave houses, and the bloody arenas of the past. He brought them to the reward He had won for them by the cross and empty tomb. Neither has He, nor will He ever, abandon us. He hears our prayers. He is working all things together for good. We rejoice because we know the end, that He has died for us and risen for us, and He is coming back to bring us home. He won't require us to stay in this evil place forever.

We also rejoice for the babies who live. They are gifts to us, a blessing. We rejoice in their lives, their laughter and their future. We rejoice in their Baptisms, in their prayers, in their hope. We rejoice in the midwives and doctors and mothers who love and serve life and for the courage that God gives them. We rejoice in His generosity and beauty which He shows to us even in this evil place and time. The world is evil, but God is good. Our sins are black as tar, but in Christ they are as white as snow. We are loved. We are saved. Pharaoh cannot have us or our children.

So it is that God has gathered us here today to feed us, to forgive and sanctify us in this joy. He is not yet done with us. Our hardships have not yet ended. While we have not always been faithful to Him and our neighbors, He remains ever faithful and merciful to us. We have prayers to say, protests to attend, letters to write, and we have people to love, babies to care for, and hope for the future. Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice.

IN +JESUS' NAME. AMEN.