

The Fallacy of "Choice"

By Rev. Robert T. Cooper

My Brothers and Sisters in the Lord:

Friday, January 22nd was the anniversary of Roe v. Wade. The Roe decision, in many ways, has been a turning point in our life as a nation. In the space of a few decades, an act of violence that was condemned as a "crime against humanity" at the Nuremberg Trials, has become a woman's "right to choose" - and even an act of convenience. While Roe v. Wade instituted abortion on demand, Doe v. Bolton defined health exceptions so broadly that any restrictions could be avoided at any time during pregnancy. Disappointingly, Planned Parenthood v. Casey (1992) reaffirmed Roe, though it did permit greater regulation of abortion. Likewise, Gonzales v. Carhart (2007) offered some hope by upholding the partial birth abortion ban, but abortion on demand is still the law of the land. Pope Benedict XVI has said, "The fundamental human right, the presupposition of every other right, is the right to life itself." However, our nation unjustly allows laws that dictate who is worthy of life, defying God's natural law of how life is created. It is important to make a few moments to reflect on the philosophical fallacy that undermines the culture of life.

We have all heard the saying about "the elephant in the room." So often, we have an awkward situation, and rather than confront it, we work around it, we try to ignore it. After awhile, we get used to it; somebody comes in, and shakes his head: "what's wrong with you? There's an elephant in the room, and you act as though you don't see it!"

Maybe you think I am talking about abortion; I am; but it is much bigger than that. I am talking about that popular idea, "Choice." I love choices! Don't we all? What's wrong with "choice"? Nothing, particularly. The problem is when we elevate "choice" above everything else. Because what we are really doing is elevating ourselves-the one who makes the choice. The result is corruption: Corruption of the truth, Corruption of our ability to reason as moral people; Corruption of people themselves.

Let me show you what I mean. If a couple says, "We just found out we are going to have a baby!" A single word seemingly changes everything: "baby." Is that baby human? Is he or she precious? Should we, as a society, protect babies? Of course! It's a foolish question. But take the same situation, same facts-but change one key word: "we found out we have a choice." Somehow, choice changes everything, even reality itself! The baby stops being a baby; the value of a human being is turned off and on like a light switch. Here is what we are all told: "Who are you to say that is a baby? That should be" (wait for it) . "an individual choice." If only it were so easy! The obvious, terrible consequence is the loss of unborn children's lives: more than a million every year. But the corruption goes farther. Notice what is happening in the medical profession. Doctors are supposed to be healers; instead, they merely help us "choose"-regardless of the consequence. So-in Oregon State, doctors prescribe drugs to kill people!

Another horror of this idolatry of "choice" is what happens to people with disabilities. Did you know you do not meet as many people with Downs Syndrome? It's true: 90% of children, diagnosed before birth with Downs Syndrome, are aborted. Nine out of ten! It goes even further. Sometimes we say, "How people live their lives is their choice"- meaning, "I do not have to warn you-I do not have to try to save your soul!" Look at the debate about marriage: Whatever you chose is fine: two men, two women; leave one marriage, and start another. What matters above all is choice: Not our identity as men and women; Not the commitments we have already made; Not what God asks of us.

Notice how the false god of choice corrupts everything it touches. And choice is a false god-it betrays and abandons all who trust in it. And no one knows that better than millions of men and women who bear the unseen, unacknowledged wounds left by abortion. Many will say, "you made your choice"-and walk away. Sometimes what they hear from prolife supporters, from the Church, does not sound welcoming. When Jonah brought a tough message to Nineveh, it was not to condemn, but to save! When St. Paul says, "time is running out," He says that, not to condemn, but to save! Christ himself said: "I came, not to condemn, but to save!" Every time we celebrate the Mass, we experience once again the mystery of our faith: That Christ died to save us! That is why it is so important we celebrate Mass again, and again, and again! Christ died once for all; but we need lots of reminders! We need to know His mercy endures forever! Roe v. Wade has left a trail of broken hearts. Those who resort to abortion out of a sense of desperation often find the cruel reality of abortion too difficult to bear. But it is too difficult only in a world without God and therefore without hope. We must reach these hearts and give them hope. These are the converted hearts that will at last bring an end to abortion.

If you need that healing-there are people who can help you. Project Rachel is an organization that exists to help heal anyone, men or women, injured by abortion. If I can help, I certainly will. Call me, and we will talk confidentially. I publically reaffirm my offer of assistance to anyone considering abortion: If you are overwhelmed by the decisions you face, if you cannot afford medical care, if you are homeless or feel helpless, whatever your needs, the Church will help you. The Church and Her ministries, inspired by the word and example of Jesus Christ, will help you with compassion and without condemnation.

There is a reason that this is an uncomfortable topic: because we may wonder, "does this mean I have to do something? Do I have to change?" I suppose Andrew and Peter, James and John, might have asked the same question, looking at their nets, just before they dropped them and followed Jesus. And-if you are even asking the question, you already know the answer!

Roe v. Wade cannot stand as the law of this great nation, a nation founded on the self-evident truth that all people are created with an inalienable right to life. We must be committed, no matter how long it may take, no matter the sacrifices required, to

bringing about a reversal of this tragic Supreme Court decision. We must speak out on behalf of the sanctity of each and every human life wherever it is threatened, from conception to natural death, and we must urge all people of good will to do likewise. For, as our Holy Father of happy memory, Pope John Paul II reminds us, "it is impossible to further the common good without acknowledging and defending the right to life, upon which all the other inalienable rights of individuals are founded and from which they develop" (The Gospel of Life, no. 101). Roe v. Wade must be reversed. This is not a debate about "choice;" it is about our willingness to stand up for the Truth of the Gospel. There can be no freedom, justice or peace while we continue to deny the rights of members of the human race. Let us continue to build a culture of life starting with protection for the most vulnerable human beings, the unborn.