Value Them Both

15 Sunday Year C – Value Them Both Homily

Sunday, July 10, 2022

Mother Teresa was tending to a dying man in the streets of Calcutta. Someone approached her and said, “Mother, look around you.” “We are surrounded by dying people. This one man is but a drop in the ocean.” Mother responded, “But the ocean would be different without this drop.”

No one is inconsequential. Mother Teresa’s love for that dying man is a beautiful image of God’s personal love for each one of us. Each human life matters. You matter. Our value as human beings isn’t based on our accomplishments, our productivity, our intellect, our looks, or any other way we might judge one another. Each human being has an intrinsic worth - meaning we have value based on our very being. St. Paul reminds us in the second reading that we are all made in Him – in Christ – in His image - and we are made for him. We are made for God. We belong to God. And God not only willed us into being out of love, but when we turned away from Him, he sent his only begotten Son to redeem and save us.

We are all meant to identify with the robber in the gospel. There was a man going down from Jerusalem to Jericho. Jerusalem is the Holy City. Jericho in the bible is the city of sin. This is the story of the fall of humanity. All of us due to sin are now wounded, half dead on the side of the road. And Jesus is the Good Samaritan. Jesus came to heal and save us. He pours wine and oil into our wounds – representing the sacramental life of the church. It’s through the sacraments we are saved. Jesus then brings us to the inn – the church and pays the price. He pays the price of our redemption. And then he will come again in glory to claim us for all eternity. This is the Good News of God’s mercy and now what is our response? “Go and do likewise.” In love and mercy, we are called to respond to the needs of others.

This weekend, Archbishop Naumann has asked all the pastors of the Archdiocese to speak about how we as the People of God are called to “go & do likewise,” – to respond in mercy to the cries of the unborn and women in crisis by voting Yes on the Value Them Both Amendment August 2nd. This is the Superbowl of pro-life events. This is perhaps the most important vote we as Kansans will ever cast. Lives are literally at stake.

Just a few weeks ago, the US Supreme Court overturned Roe, but this does not ban abortion in the United States, but sends the regulation of abortion back to the states. This is why passing the Value Them Both Amendment is so urgent.

What is the Value Them Both amendment? First, let’s review what’s happened in our state. In April 2019, our Kansas Supreme Court claimed to have discovered a right to abortion in our 1859 Kansas Constitution. This ruling now positions Kansas alongside New York as one of the most radical pro-abortion states in America. We’ve already started to see people traveling to Kansas for abortion. Half of abortions in Kansas today are now performed on women from surrounding states. Prior to 2019, abortions in Kansas were steadily declining. But now, after this 2019 ruling abortions have increased in Kansas by 13% and live-dismemberment abortions have increased in our state by 17%. If the Value Them Both Amendment does not pass, Kansas will continue to be an abortion mecca for the Midwest. Contrary to misleading Ads, Value Them Both does not ban abortion in Kansas, but it does return the regulation of abortion back to the people of Kansas and their elected representatives. Voting Yes on Value You Them Both will allow the people of Kansas, not a few unelected judges, to decide:

* Whether taxpayers should be coerced to fund abortion,
* Whether parents have a right to know about their minor daughter’s pregnancy,
* Whether women have a right to know the possible physical and psychological consequences abortion,
* Whether mother’s have a right to see ultrasound images of their child,
* Whether abortion facilities are required to observe health and safety standards.

At Mother Teresa’s canonization, Pope Francis said the modern-day sin is indifference in the face of the exploitation and suffering of others. We cannot sit this one out. We cannot be like the priest or the levitate in the gospel who pass on the other side ignoring the dying person. We have a moral duty to vote is August 2 or vote early beginning July 16th. Remember everyone 18 and over can vote in this primary election even if you not affiliated with a political party.

Sometimes people say, the church is wading into politics. Let me share with you a quote from Pope Francis. He said, “Sometimes we hear: a good Catholic is not interested in politics. This is not true: good Catholics immerse themselves in politics . . . ” Let me make this clear – the church is not in the business of endorsing candidates or playing partisan politics. Speaking about Value Them Both is issue advocacy. This is not about endorsing a candidate or party. I would certainly hope that all people of good will - no matter if they are Democrat or Republican or Independent would be voting yes on the Value Them Both Amendment.

This is also not just a Catholic issue. Archbishop Naumann recently said, “abortion is not primarily a religious issue but a fundamental human rights issue. Our faith helps us understand the dignity of every human life created in the divine image . . ., but reason alone is sufficient to know that it is wrong to destroy an innocent human life.

Isn’t that what Moses is reminding us in the first reading? The law of God isn’t something mysterious or remote, but it’s written on our hearts. We do not need to be Catholic or even remotely religious to recognize the scientifically-verifiable truth that human life begins at conception. Nor do we need to be religious in order to acknowledge the fundamental, common-sense truth written on the human heart; that motherhood and fatherhood are at the service of human life—NOT the taking of it. Far too many men and women must live with the pain that comes from ignoring this fundamental truth.

God loves you. God loves me. In mercy he has come to our aide. Now we are called to “go and do likewise”: to treat others with mercy. Plain and simple; mercy DOES NOT kill. It is never merciful to look at someone and say: “you have no dignity and it would be better that you not exist”; love DOES NOT do that. In times of difficulty, mercy cares for, binds the wounds, consoles, and advocates for those in difficulty, but it DOES NOT kill. The greatest image of mercy the world has ever seen is Jesus laying down His life on the cross for us…mercy does not take life; mercy lays down it’s life for others so that they might know life and love. We are called to do this for all our brothers and sisters; the unborn, the unemployed, those experiencing difficult pregnancies, those who are overlooked and ignored…

I love the name of this amendment. Value them Both. Yes, we care about the unborn, but we also care about women in crisis. I’m so proud of our parish for focusing on women in crisis: St. Michael parishioners raised over $135,000 to open the Olathe Crisis pregnancy center and provide on-going support through such things as the recent baby bottle campaign. We have parishioners walking with unwed mothers at Advice & Aide. We started the Walking with Mom’s program to accompany mom’s in need. We have foster care parents. And we pray and work for healing for all those hurt by abortion through programs like Project Rachel. Jesus assures us that this is how we will be judged at the end of our lives; whether or not we treated others with mercy.

Pray, pray, pray for the passing of this Amendment. Let us implore Our Lady of Guadalupe to intercede on behalf of her children. I’ll close with the words of Archbishop Naumann, “The Lord wants to empower each of us to help build a Culture of Life and a Civilization of Love, where abortion will become unthinkable. A critical first step to do this in Kansas is to vote YES for the Value Them Both Amendment. Together, we can protect Kansas from being a destination for death and make it a destination for life, where every mother is loved and every child is cherished. Thank you and God bless!”