

22 January 2009
On Roe v. Wade

1. In 1963, Martin Luther King, Jr. was put in jail for nonviolent protests against racial discrimination. While in solitary confinement in that Birmingham City Jail, he wrote a letter to his fellow clergymen explaining his actions. In that letter, he quoted St. Augustine who said, “An unjust law is no law at all.” He also referenced St. Thomas Aquinas when he said in his letter, “an unjust law is a human law that is not rooted in eternal law and natural law. Any law that uplifts human personality is just. Any law that degrades human personality is unjust. All segregation statutes are unjust because segregation distorts the soul and damages the personality. It gives the segregator a false sense of superiority and the segregated a false sense of inferiority. Segregation, to use the terminology of the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber, substitutes an ‘I-it’ relationship for an ‘I-thou’ relationship and ends up relegating persons to the status of things.” If we were to substitute “abortion” for “segregation” in his speech, it would describe exactly where we are today.
2. On this day in 1973, seven Supreme Court justices voted to segregate pre-born human beings from born human beings in the watershed case *Roe vs. Wade*. They voted to substitute an “I-it” relationship for an “I-thou” relationship between a mother and her unborn child; and by doing so, they relegated the unborn person to the status of a thing. This has been the law of the land for so long that we often forget what is being destroyed in an abortion is not a thing, but a person. Otherwise, how could we hear politicians say that they are personally opposed to abortion, but they would not impose their own personal morality upon the public; or voters saying that abortion is only one issue amongst many? Would anyone vote for a politician who was personally opposed to rape, but did not want to impose that personal morality upon the public? Or personally opposed to chattel slavery, but did not want to impose that personal morality upon the public? Or personally opposed to murder, but did not want to impose that personal morality upon the public? Such statements are the direct result of a lax conscience—one that can convince itself that evils are good, or, at least, not that bad.
3. Using her well-formed conscience, Blessed Teresa of Calcutta once said, “If abortion isn’t wrong, then nothing is wrong.” Very strong words from a very small, yet very strong woman. Considering the number of people around the world, in this country, and perhaps even in this room who think that there is nothing wrong with abortion—or, at the very least, who think that it should be kept legal—it seems that Mother Teresa’s words are quite absurd.
4. I think what Mother Teresa was referring to is the fact that if a person does not have the right to life, then it makes no sense that he would have any other rights whatsoever. For if one does not have the right to be alive, then how can one have the right to property, or to be free, or to be protected from rape? If I can murder you at any stage in your life, no matter how vulnerable and innocent you are, then I should be able to steal from you, enslave you, and rape you. For all those, and anything else that I could possibly do to you, are less harmful than murdering you. This is why if abortion is not wrong, then nothing is wrong.

5. There is no question that abortion is a deliberate act, that it is the killing or destruction of something, and that the thing killed is innocent. But the question is whether the fetus is a human life. Ultimately, this is always the most fundamental and important question in the abortion debate. Is the fetus a human life? If it is, then we cannot murder it. No matter how much spin people want to put in the discussion, it is not a matter of subjective choice, but of objective being. What *is* the fetus? Not, do I have the choice to do what I want with my body? Because if the fetus is a human being, then we are not talking about the woman's body anymore. We are talking about someone else's body, the body of the fetal person inside the woman. We do not give people the choice to rape or enslave another person no matter how weak or vulnerable that person is, so it makes perfect sense that we do not give people the choice to murder another person. Certainly, there is no one weaker or more vulnerable than a child in her mother's womb.

6. If we wish to defend women's rights, then the woman in the womb should have the same rights as the woman outside the womb. What is inside that womb *is* a woman, *is* a person, *is* a human being. Embryo, fetus, infant, teenager, and adult are not nouns. They are adjectives describing a human being at different stages of development in his life. What we mean is embryonic human being, fetal human being, infant human being, teenage human being, adult human being. The human being part is implied, but essential to the discussion; for, if it is a human being, then we cannot murder it.

7. The reason why pro-abortionists want to use the subjective language of choice rather than the objective language of being is because the scientific facts overwhelmingly say that the zygote, the embryo, the fetus is a distinct human being from the mother. The zygote, the embryo, the fetus in her womb is not just another cell in her body that can be treated, for example, like a cancer cell, but is in fact another human being with his own genetic code. Human beings have always known this and modern science proves it.

8. To show that human beings have always known this, consider the following. In 1940, the U.S. passed a law making it illegal to kill a bald eagle because it was endangered back then. That same law also stated that if one were out in the wilderness and came across a bald eagle's nest, it was illegal to destroy the egg that was inside. It makes perfect sense that if an eagle is valuable, then it should be protected from the earliest moments of its existence. Well, inside that egg is an embryonic eagle, the very same creature that flies in the clouds above. Those lawmakers understood this truth. Hence, even an atheist with basic knowledge of biology can see that at the earliest stages of development, what we have is a distinct human being, someone who should be accorded the same rights as any other human being.

9. Laws exist primarily for the purpose of protecting rights, the first of which is the right to life. "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" (Declaration of Independence). Without the right to life, there is no right to liberty or the pursuit of happiness.

10. Now, can we force someone not to have an abortion? Well, can we force someone not to steal? Can we force someone not to perjure himself? Can we force someone not to murder? No, we really cannot. But we have laws against all those things, which means that it is not

unreasonable to have laws that protect human rights, the first of which is the right to life. If abortion is not wrong, then nothing is wrong.

11. Note, also, that the Declaration of Independence acknowledges that our rights come from our Creator, not nine unelected lawyers—in the case of *Roe v. Wade*, seven unelected lawyers.

12. This is why people of good-will all over the country are gathering, to pray for an end to this unjust law, and end to the culture of death, as John Paul II called it. We pray that those who have performed abortions, those contemplating an abortion, and those who have procured abortions come to the healing power of Christ to receive the mercy and forgiveness that He offers to anyone with a contrite heart and to find peace and comfort in His loving providence, not in the killing of innocent babies. Killing the innocent does not solve our problems. Love does! Love is not a what; Love is a who! And His name is Jesus Christ, who loves us from the moment of our conception to the moment of our natural death, and even unto eternity.

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1/22/09