

its mouth" to swallow Abel's blood. At the scene of the final victory of life, it is death itself that "will be swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?...Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:54-57).

Abortion is death. Christ came to conquer death, and therefore abortion. "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10).

The final outcome of the battle for life has already been decided by the Resurrection of Christ. We are not just working *for* victory; we are working *from* victory. We joyfully take a victory that has already been won, and proclaim, celebrate, and serve it until He comes again to bring it to its fullness. "There shall be no more death" (Revelation 21:4). "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!" (Revelation 22:20).

We have included a number of Scripture references to assist the priest or deacon to show the congregation how God's Word challenges us to promote the sanctity of life and to end abortion. The teaching of Scripture clearly shows that the destruction of innocent life in the womb is contrary to God's law, to God's very nature, and to the Christian life. This can be highlighted by focusing on various themes, which the suggested readings touch upon. God's dominion over human life. This theme is reflected by the Creation accounts, as well as by any passage declaring God to be Lord of the universe. Because God has made us, our lives and bodies are not absolutely our own, nor is our freedom of choice absolute. A parent, moreover, does not "own" his/her children. The creation of man and woman in God's own image, furthermore, makes the human person quite distinct from other life forms.

God's explicit prohibition of killing the innocent. This law is expressed not only in the Ten Commandments, but also by the many condemnations of child sacrifice in the Old Testament. This practice was not only a violation of the Fifth Commandment, but also of the First. It was the ultimate cause of the exile.

God's relationship with the child in the womb. Various passages show that God forms the child in the womb and even establishes a relationship with that child, preparing him/her for a mission in the world.

God's justice. "Justice" in the Scriptures indicates an act of intervention for the weak and helpless. God demands that we "do justice." Otherwise, our worship is pointless. Christ is Life. In the Old and New Testaments, God intervenes to give His people life. The victory of life over sin and death is a constant theme in Scripture. God did not make death; in the end, He will swallow it up forever.

We are called to love. Love in Scripture is no mere sentiment. We learn it from Christ's salvific intervention for us. We practice it in turn by intervening to assist our brothers and sisters in need. Love, therefore, fuels the pro-life movement. Love demands that we act to save the babies and assist women to make life-giving choices. It also demands that we assist women who have had abortions to find forgiveness, healing, and peace. If the pro-life movement is not a movement of love, it is nothing at all. But if it is a movement of love, then nothing will stop it, for "love is more powerful than death" (Song of Songs 8:6).

### Scripture Passages on Pro-Life

Gen. 1:1-2, 26-28, Creation of man. Gen. 2:7-8, 18, 21-24, Creation of man and woman. Gen. 4:8-16, The first killing of the innocent. Ex. 20:1-17, The Decalogue. Lev. 19:15-18, Love of your neighbor's life. Deut. 30:15-20, Choose Life! Jeremiah 7:27-31, The rebuke of child sacrifice Ezekiel 23:36-39, Child sacrifice Wisdom 1:12-15, God did not make death. Wisdom 7:1-6, I was formed in the womb. 2 Kings 24:1-4, The exile occurred because innocent blood was shed. Proverbs 6:16-19, The Lord hates six things. Jeremiah 1:4-8, I called you from the womb. Isaiah 49:1-6, The Lord called me from the womb. Isaiah 49:14-17, Can a mother forget her infant? Isaiah 1:10-17, Do justice! Amos 5:21-24, Let justice roll down like a river! Psalm 72, He will save the weak from violence! Psalm 82 Rescue the weak! Psalm 139, You knit me together in the womb! Proverbs 24:8-12, Rescue those taken to death! Matt. 18:1-6, 10-14, Do not despise the little ones. Matt. 25:31-46, Whatever you do to the least... Mark 10:13-16, He blessed children. Luke 1:39-45, The babe leapt in the womb. Luke 6:20-26 Beatitudes and woes Luke 10:29-37, The Good Samaritan is neighbor to anyone in need. Luke 16:19-31, The Lazarus of the 20th Century: The Unborn Child. John 1:1-5, All things, all life, comes through Christ. John 10:7-15, The Good Shepherd came to give us life. John 11:17-27, Christ is the Life. John 14:1-6 Christ is the Life. 1 Cor. 15:51-58, The victory belongs to life; you do not labor in vain. Eph. 6:10-20, Be strong in this battle! James 1:22-27 Religion requires us to help the helpless. 1 John 3:11-18, Love rather than kill. Rev. 4:8-11, You have created all things. Rev. 21:1-5, Death shall be no more!

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Pamphlet 191

# The Bible's Teaching Against Abortion

Fr. Frank A. Pavone

The Bible clearly teaches that abortion is wrong. This teaching comes across in many ways and for many reasons. Some people point out that the word "abortion" is not in the Bible, and that is true. Nevertheless, the teaching about abortion is there. This is the case with many teachings. The word "Trinity" is not in the Bible, but the teaching about the Trinity is there. In any case, a person who wants to deny the teaching about abortion would deny it even if the word were there.

Let's look at some of the Biblical reasons why abortion, the deliberate destruction of a child in the womb, is very wrong.

## 1. The Bible teaches that human life is different from other types of life, because human beings are made in the very image of God.

The accounts of the creation of man and woman in Genesis (Genesis 1:26-31; 2:4-25) tell us this: "God created man in his image; in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:27).

The word "create" is used three times here, emphasizing a special crowning moment in the whole process of God making the world and everything in it. The man and woman are given "dominion" over everything else in the visible world.

Not even the original sin takes away the image of God in human beings. St. James refers to this image and says that because of it we should not even speak ill of one another. "With [the tongue] we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings who are made in the image of God . . . This ought not be so, brothers" (James 3:9-10).

The image of God! This is what it means to be human! We are not just a bunch of cells randomly thrown together by some impersonal forces. Rather, we really reflect an eternal God who knew us from before we were made, and purposely called us into being.

At the heart of the abortion tragedy is the question raised in the Psalms: "Lord, what is man that you care for him, mortal man that you keep him in mind? . . . With glory and honor you crowned him, giving him power over the works of your hands" (Psalm 8:5-7).

There is the key. Not only did God make us, but He values us. The Bible tells us of a God who is madly in love with us, so much so that He became one of us and

even died for us while we were still offending Him (see Romans 5:6-8). In the face of all this, can we say that human beings are disposable, like a car that becomes more trouble than it is worth? "God doesn't make junk." If you believe the Bible, you have to believe that human life is sacred, more sacred than we have ever imagined!

## **2. The Bible teaches that children are a blessing.**

God commanded our first parents to "Be fertile and multiply" (Genesis 1:28). Why? God Himself is fertile. Love always overflows into life. When the first mother brought forth the first child, she exclaimed, "I have brought forth a man with the help of the Lord" (Genesis 4:1). The *help of the Lord* is essential, for He has dominion over human life and is its origin. Parents cooperate with God in bringing forth life. Because this whole process is under God's dominion, it is sinful to interrupt it. The prophet Amos condemns the Ammonites "because they ripped open expectant mothers in Gilead" (Amos 1:13).

"Truly children are a gift from the Lord; the fruit of the womb is a reward" (Psalm 127:3).

## **3. The Bible teaches that the child in the womb is truly a human child, who even has a relationship with the Lord.**

The phrase "conceived and bore" is used repeatedly (see Genesis 4:1, 17) and the individual has the same identity before as after birth. "In sin my mother conceived me," the repentant psalmist says in Psalm 51:7. The same word is used for the child before and after birth (*Brephos*, that is, "infant," is used in Luke 1:41 and Luke 18:15.)

God knows the preborn child. "You knit me in my mother's womb . . . nor was my frame unknown to you when I was made in secret" (Psalm 139:13, 15). God also helps and calls the preborn child. "You have been my guide since I was first formed . . . from my mother's womb you are my God" (Psalm 22:10-11). "God... from my mother's womb had set me apart and called me through his grace" (St. Paul to the Galatians 1:15).

## **4. Scripture repeatedly condemns the killing of the innocent.**

This flows from everything that has been seen so far. God's own finger writes in stone the commandment "Thou shalt not kill" (Exodus 20:13, Deuteronomy 5:17) and Christ reaffirms it (Matthew 19:18 - notice that He mentions this commandment first). The Book of Revelation affirms that (unrepentant) murderers cannot enter the kingdom of heaven (Revelation 22:15).

The killing of children is especially condemned by God through the prophets. In the land God gave his people to

occupy, foreign nations had the custom of sacrificing some of their children in fire. God told His people that they were not to share in this sin. They did, however, as Psalm 106 relates: "They mingled with the nations and learned their works...They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to demons, and they shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and their daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan, desecrating the land with bloodshed" (Psalm 106:35, 37-38).

This sin of child-sacrifice, in fact, is mentioned as one of the major reasons that the Kingdom of Israel was destroyed by the Assyrians and the people taken into exile. "They mutilated their sons and daughters by fire...till the Lord, in his great anger against Israel, put them away out of his sight" (2 Kings 17:17-18).

Notice that this practice was a religious ritual. Not even for "religious freedom" can the killing of children be tolerated.

## **5. The Bible teaches that God is a God of justice.**

An act of *justice* is an act of intervention for the helpless, an act of defense for those who are too weak to defend themselves. In foretelling the Messiah, Psalm 72 says, "Justice shall flower in his days...for he shall rescue the poor man when he cries out and the afflicted when he has no one to help him" (Psalms 72:7, 12). Jesus Christ is our justice (1 Corinthians 1:30) because He rescued us from sin and death when we had none to help us (see Romans 5:6, Ephesians 2:4-5).

If God does justice for His people, He expects His people to do justice for one another. "Be merciful as your heavenly Father is merciful" (Luke 6:36). "Go and do likewise" (Luke 10:37). "Do unto others as you would have them do to you" (Matthew 7:12). "Love one another" (John 15:17).

Abortion is the opposite of these teachings. It is a reversal of justice. It is a destruction of the helpless rather than a rescue of them. If God's people do not intervene to save those whose lives are attacked, then the people are not pleasing or worshiping Him.

God says through Isaiah, "Trample my courts no more! Bring no more worthless offerings...Your festivals I detest...When you spread out your hands, I close my eyes to you; though you pray the more, I will not listen. Your hands are full of blood! Wash yourselves clean...learn to do good. Make justice your aim: redress the wronged, hear the orphan's plea, defend the widow" (Isaiah 1:13-17).

Indeed, those who worship God but support abortion are falling into the same contradiction as God's people of old, and need to hear the same message.

## **6. Jesus Christ paid special attention to the poor, the despised, and those whom the rest of society considered insignificant.**

He broke down the false barriers that people set up among themselves, and instead acknowledged the equal human dignity of every individual, despite what common opinion might say. Hence we see Him reach out to children despite the efforts of the apostles to keep them away (Matthew 19:13-15); to tax collectors and sinners despite the objections of the Scribes (Mark 2:16); to the blind despite the warnings of the crowd (Matthew 20:29-34); to a foreign woman despite the utter surprise of the disciples and of the woman herself (John 4:9, 27); to Gentiles despite the anger of the Jews (Matthew 21:41-46); and to the lepers, despite their isolation from the rest of society (Luke 17:11-19).

When it comes to human dignity, Christ erases distinctions. St. Paul declares, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave or free person, there is not male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28).

We can likewise say, "There is neither born nor unborn." Using this distinction as a basis for the value of life or the protection one deserves is meaningless and offensive to all that Scripture teaches. The unborn are the segment of our society which is most neglected and discriminated against. Christ Himself surely has a special love for them.

## **7. Scripture teaches us to love.**

St. John says, "This is the message you have heard from the beginning: we should love one another, unlike Cain who belonged to the evil one and slaughtered his brother" (1 John 3:11-12). Love is directly contrasted with slaughter. To take the life of another is to break the command of love. To fail to help those in need and danger is also to fail to love.

Christ teaches this clearly in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), in the story of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31), and in many other places.

No group of people is in more serious danger than the boys and girls in the womb. "If someone...sees a brother in need and refuses him compassion, how can the love of God remain in Him?" (1 John 3:17).

## **8. Life is victorious over death.**

This is one of Scripture's most basic themes. The victory of life is foretold in the promise that the head of the serpent, through whom death entered the world, would be crushed (see Genesis 3:15).

Isaiah promised, "He will destroy death forever" (Isaiah 25:8). At the scene of the first murder, the soil "opened