

+++ *From the Pastor* +++
Sunday, January 17, 2016

Defending the Rights of the Unborn

Friday, January 22, 2016, marks the 43rd anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* the notoriously unconstitutional decision handed down by the United States Supreme Court which decriminalized abortion. This infamous decision made abortion on demand, at *any time* during a woman's pregnancy, the law of the land. Since January 22, 1973 over *50 million* of our brothers and sisters, our fellow citizens, have been destroyed in their mother's wombs or have been killed just minutes before they were fully delivered into this world.

The bishops of the United States have declared January 22, 2016 to be a national day of penance for violations to the dignity of the human person committed through acts of abortion, and of prayer for the full restoration of the legal guarantee of the right to life.

Women and men who have experienced the pain and suffering of abortion need our love, support, compassion and prayers. Those who have endured the trauma of abortion need to know the forgiveness, pardon and mercy of God. This forgiveness, pardon and mercy is found most profoundly and wondrously in the Sacrament of Penance. It is also found through the love and care and concern of the Christian family which, while always and everywhere rejecting the absolute evil of abortion, embraces with great affection those who continue to suffer the loss of their children to abortion.

Here in Baker City and in many places throughout the United States, women and men in a crisis can find help at Pregnancy Resource Centers. At these centers, kind and compassionate people are ready to help with all types of support. There is a box in the parish hall of the cathedral in which we can place items to assist mothers and babies at our local Rachel Pregnancy Resource Center.

In this, and in so many other ways, the Holy Spirit is calling us to become the people of the Gospel of Life that we are created to be. Christ Jesus has come to bring us life and to bring us life to the full, as we read in the Gospel of Saint John. Jesus is calling us out of the darkness of what Saint John Paul II termed the culture of death towards the bright light of the Culture of Life.

Life is a holy, sacred gift from God, in Whose image and likeness we have been created. Each human person conceived in his mother's womb is holy and sacred in His sight. Therefore, we must do all within our power to promote, protect and defend our God-given Right to Life. The Declaration of Independence, our nation's founding document, declares that *... all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness...* Without Life no other right, given to us by God, matters. Together, may we thank God for the gift of Life!

