

CONNECT! SUNDAY REFLECTION

27th Sunday in Ordinary Time | For Sunday, October 4, 2020

The Precious Gift Of Life

Written by Douglas Sousa

Isaiah 5:1-7

Philippians 4:6-9

Matthew 21:33-43



One question that Christians have been asking themselves over the past four years is: What does it mean to be pro-life?

Our life is the first gift that God gives us. Everything else God wants to give us depends on it. What good would all the treasures of earth be if we didn't have our life to enjoy it? What good would even faith, hope, or love be if we weren't alive to receive them? Before God can give us anything else, he must first give us the gift of life.

That is why, as believers in Christ, we must always work to guarantee a right to life for all people from the time they are conceived until the time of their natural death. We never look at any human being — no matter how sick, no matter how deformed, no matter how needy — as a burden. Rather, we look at each person as a gift, a gift from God. And, if we take care of the most vulnerable among us — if we cherish their lives as a precious gift — it will surely change us for the better. We discover that caring for the lives of the needy will force us to clear away the things which don't really matter, like anxieties about our appearance or our status. It will help us to place the gift of life and the right to life at the center of our families and our society where it belongs.

In this Sunday's Gospel, the people who are put in charge of the vineyard forget that it doesn't belong to them. They want to keep the vineyard and its produce for themselves. They want to do with it whatever they want without respecting the demands of its true owner. They eventually go so far as to kill the owner's son. They took the gift they were given — the vineyard — and forgot to whom it belonged. Instead of honoring and protecting the gift, they squandered it, and it resulted in their ruin.

Can we see a parallel with today's society? How have we treated the gift of life entrusted to us? How have we taken care of the weak and needy in our society? Every year on this day — Respect Life Sunday — we ask these hard questions of ourselves and of our country. In an election year, these questions become even more pressing. Once we recognize life as a gift of God and every human life as made in God's own image and likeness, we can no longer fool ourselves that whether the unborn live or die is a personal choice. We can no longer kid ourselves that the lives of the innocent are ours to do with as we please. Nor can we look the other way when Black men are disproportionately incarcerated and murdered. Otherwise, as a society, we risk the calamity that befell the men in today's Gospel.

What does it mean to be pro-life then? It means to honor and defend every single human person without distinction. It means that human beings never lose their God-given dignity no matter what stage of development they are at, no matter how much or how little political power they have, no matter what they have done.

It means that we consider all human persons as good in and of themselves, apart from what they can or cannot produce. On this Sunday — Respect Life Sunday — let us renew our commitment to life, especially the lives of the most vulnerable members of our society.

Douglas Sousa

PRAYER

Heavenly Father,
Our life is your precious gift.
None of us is random
None of us is an accident
None of us is unwanted
For we were all formed by your creating hand.
Gift us the grace to use our gift of life
For your glory and the good of our neighbor
May we never look down on anyone
As unworthy of life, love, or respect
Not the unborn, not the immigrant
Not the poor, not the sick, not the disabled
Not people of other races
And not the prisoner.
Help us always to see your image
In those in whom it is the hardest to see
So that we can fashion a society
That is welcoming to every human life
And in which every human life
Has a chance to flourish.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.