



## Archbishop of Portland Alexander K. Sample's statement in response to Oregon Governor Tina Kotek's proclamation of Abortion Provider Appreciation Day

### The Celebration of Death

There are moments when words fail. When the mind stares into the abyss and finds no bottom. When all that's left is a kind of stunned silence—the kind you feel when you realize just how far a culture can drift from reality.

“Abortion Provider Appreciation Day” is one of those moments.

Not just the act of abortion itself, but the *celebration* of it. The idea that those who make a living ending innocent, unborn life should be publicly honored. Thanked. Applauded.

This isn't just moral confusion. It's something deeper. A kind of spiritual blindness so thick that what should be self-evident—the sheer wonder and worth of a human life—is obscured entirely.

### The Great Deception

The modern world is a master of euphemism. We don't say, “killing.” We say, “choice.” We don't say, “ending a life.” We say, “reproductive freedom.” The words are carefully chosen, not to reveal, but to obscure. Not to tell the truth, but to make the truth more palatable.

Because deep down, we know. We know what abortion is. We know what it does. And we know that no amount of slogans or legal jargon can make a wrong thing right.

And yet, modern culture insists on turning tragedy into triumph. It demands not just tolerance for abortion, not just legal protection, but celebration. It must be honored, enshrined.

Why? Because modernity has exchanged the wonder of life for the pursuit of power. If a baby is inconvenient, it must go. If it interferes with autonomy, it must be sacrificed. A life is no longer a gift. It is an obstacle, a burden, a problem to be solved.

### A World Without Wonder

This is what happens when a culture loses its sense of the sacred. When it stops seeing existence as a miracle, as something given, something to be received with gratitude. Instead, life is reduced to a transaction. A commodity to be managed. And, when necessary, discarded.

The language of “rights” and “freedom” in these conversations sounds noble. But strip away the rhetoric, and what's left? A world where the strong decide the fate of the weak. Where those with power have permission to eliminate those without it. Where human worth is conditional—based on ability, autonomy, wantedness.

That's not progress. That's collapse. A return to humanity's oldest, darkest impulse: might makes right. But followers of Jesus have always stood in the way of that tide and simply said, "no." Blessed are the poor. Blessed are the meek. Blessed are the ones with no power at all.

### **A Theology of Death**

Make no mistake, this is a spiritual issue. It always has been. Because at its core, abortion is not just about politics or law or even ethics. It's about how we see reality itself.

Is life a gift? Or an accident? Is a baby something to be received with awe? Or something to be discarded at will? Is love the foundation of the universe? Or is it simply power?

Modernity has chosen the latter. It has built an entire system—legal, medical, ideological—on the premise that some lives matter more than others. That some are expendable. That the strong can dictate the terms of existence.

And yet, the truth lingers. It cannot be fully erased. The unborn child is not just tissue. Not just an inconvenience. But a presence. A reality. A life.

And that's why, no matter how loudly abortion is celebrated, something feels... off. The need to frame it as a social good, as a moral necessity, reveals the guilt just beneath the surface. If abortion were truly nothing, no one would need to justify it. No one would need to celebrate it. The fact that it must be ritualized as progress is itself an admission of its darkness.

### **A Different Way**

But here's the thing about darkness, it doesn't get the final word.

Because the gospel is not about condemnation. It's about invitation. Even for those who have celebrated abortion. Even for those who have profited from it. Even for those who have convinced themselves that this is somehow a moral good.

Grace is still available. Forgiveness is still possible.

The call of Jesus is always the same: Repent. Open your eyes. Step out of the lie and into the light. And most of all—choose life. Not just biologically, but spiritually. Choose to see reality as it truly is. To embrace the mystery, the beauty, the wonder of existence itself.

Because life—every life—is a gift. And a world that forgets that is a world that has lost its soul.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



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Archbishop of Portland in Oregon