

Homily
Mass of Thanksgiving for Life – Ss. Anne & Joachim
Sept. 23, 2022

“There is an appointed time for everything, and a time for everything under the heavens. A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to weep and a time to laugh; a time to tear down, a time to build.” These words of Ecclesiastes tell us something about this moment in our history. God has intervened in our time, and has called us to a new time, a new era. This is a time for thanksgiving, and a time for life.

For good reasons, I’m sure many of us wondered if we would ever see the day when the Roe v. Wade decision would be reversed. I seriously doubted that it would change in my lifetime. But what I never doubted was that God could bring life out of death, and light out of darkness. And he has done just that in our nation. We give thanks today for the decision of our highest court to cast aside the flawed and tragic decision that seemed to enshrine the act of abortion. We give thanks for the grace that allowed those judges to recognize the sanctity of life. It’s not a perfect decision, but it’s a great decision, because it gives all of us a chance to create a culture of life, a sanctuary for life, where life can once again be protected.

In this amazing moment, it’s important that we renew our amazement at the gift of life. Every life that God creates is necessary and deserves our protection. Every child has an eternal destiny and should have an opportunity to live the life that God plans for them. Every child is a gift to all of us, and will touch all of us, because every child bears the image and likeness of God. We can’t help but give thanks for this reprieve from the culture of death that held sway in our nation for almost fifty years. Only God could have pulled us out of that pit, and we give thanks that he reached down and lifted us up.

But it’s also important to realize that our work is not done. Life is still at risk and needs our protection. The culture of death is still all around us. The people who support abortion will become even more vehement and even militant. Women are still being told that they need to have abortions, and children in the womb are still threatened. So, our work continues, and it might even become more demanding.

To go back to that image from Ecclesiastes, there is a time for everything under the heavens. Now is a time for renewed prayer and fasting. We still need God’s grace to bring about a final victory for life. We can’t accomplish that on our own, we need his intervention again and again. So this is a time for even more fervent prayer, prayer that he will continue what he has begun. And prayer for the conversion of hearts away from that culture of death and towards a culture of life.

This is a time for courage and faithfulness. It would be easy to say that we’ve done enough and walk away from the battle. But we need to stand fast and keep doing everything we can to continue the movement for life. And the attacks on us might get even harsher; that’s what happens when the devil faces resistance. We will need courage to stand fast for the truth about life, and to resist the temptation to let down our guard. Many will fight even harder now to get abortion into our laws, to intimidate those who believe in the sanctity of life. And our faith will be challenged too. So now is the time for faith and courage.

This is also a time for compassion. We won’t win any hearts through anger and hatred, but we can win hearts through compassion and love. Now more than ever we need to reach out to women and men who face challenging pregnancies and help them to choose life. There’s a message out there that says we only care for the child in the womb, but not for the child after birth, or the mother herself. Of course that’s not true, but we need to prove it through our works of charity, our compassion for those in need, and even for

those on the other side. As we turn the page of this new era, let this be a time of compassion, a time for life. May the Lord make it so.