

Human Dignity vs. The Abortion Worldview

Human Dignity: “God made a spiritual image to Himself in man.” (*Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 93, art. 1)

The Abortion Worldview: “A direct abortion is one that is intended either as an end in itself or as a means to an end. As a willful attack on unborn human life, no matter what the motive, direct abortion is always a grave objective evil.” (Fr. John Hardon’s *Modern Catholic Dictionary*)

“By associating with the lowest ranks of society (cf. Mt 25:31-46), ‘Jesus brought the great novelty of recognizing the dignity of every person, especially those who were considered ‘unworthy’. This new principle in human history – which emphasizes that individuals are even more ‘worthy’ of our respect and love when they are weak, scorned, or suffering, even to the point of losing the human ‘figure’ – has changed the face of the world.” – Dilxit nos, ¶170

It is said that the three most fundamental divisions are:

1. The natural and the supernatural
2. The material and the spiritual
3. The lifeless and the living

This may be why the topic of abortion always carries with it so much emotion; because it is a fundamental matter of life and death. When we think of life, we may think of things like health, joy, family, holidays, or even something like music, art or sports. When we think of death, we may think of things like old age or illness. Our health eventually deteriorates, family gatherings eventually get less joyful, and we will eventually not be able to play music or sports the same way we once did. Why? All of this points to the reality of death. Life, then, is one big preparation for death.

“To philosophize is to learn to die” (Montaigne, *Essays*)

When we think of death, though, the first thing that comes to mind is not typically murder. Why? Because there is natural death (e.g., old age or illness), and there is unnatural death, or death that happens as a result of something outside of the ordinary. Our minds usually first turn towards the ordinary. Something like suicide or abortion, for example, relates to deaths outside of the ordinary or natural. These acts are wholly unnatural and evil. This is why even for the Enlightenment thinkers Emmanuel Kant and John Locke, suicide represents a violation

of the universal moral law. Speaking directly about taking one's own life (and indirectly about taking another's), Locke believed that human beings are God's handiwork and, therefore ...

"They are His property ... made to last during His, not one another's, pleasure" (*Great Ideas I*, 1019).

Continuing on, he writes that everybody "is bound to preserve himself and not quit his station willfully" (*ibid.*). By this logic, something like abortion seems more heinous, for it takes another's life and does not even give the child an opportunity to preserve their own.

Every human being has dignity; that is, worth and value. Even when we suffer, we have dignity. Pope Francis says that it is those that suffer whom Jesus came to remind us to give great dignity to. Those who are considered unworthy, Francis writes, Jesus came to remind us that they have dignity and infinite value! What else does the abortion worldview say other than "unwanted babies have no value. They are better off dead." This is the reality, but this reality is cloaked in "nicer" language.

- "I can't bring my child into this corrupt world"
- "I won't be able to afford to put myself through college"
- "The child won't have her father in her life"

In Catholic moral theology, the end never justifies the means. In other words, it is never okay to do something evil in order to achieve some "good" end.

- The world is corrupt, but raising a child to be a saint and a light in the darkness is God's will for any pregnant mother (not abortion)
- To have a degree might be helpful or even necessary depending on the circumstance, but God will always provide in abundance for those who protect and cherish his little ones
- For a mother to raise a child alone is overwhelming and not ideal, but choosing life brings infinite joy, purpose and even comfort to that mother

Abortion is always evil, in every circumstance. It is never justified. Choosing to have one's own child killed is usually a consequence of other immoral decisions. This is why more than half of abortions are the result of failed contraception (Guttmacher, 2018), which is another intrinsic evil. God brings good out of evil, and this is what happens when mothers who do not feel ready to have a child choose life. Saint Thomas quotes St. Augustine in his *Summa* (I, q. 22, a. 2) and sums this great teaching up for us:

Thus Augustine says: "Almighty God would in no wise permit evil to exist in His works, unless He were so almighty and so good as to produce good even from evil."