

From Your Pastor

Respect for the Dignity of Human Life Is at the Heart of Catholic Life and Action

Last weekend I provided you with a bulletin insert from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops that updated you on the current state of health care reform in the Congress of the United States. As you saw, it is very possible that the bill to be sent to President Obama may be terribly flawed, because 1) it does away with a 33-year restriction on the funding of abortions by the federal government and 2) it provides no conscience protection for those who refuse to participate in an abortion for reasons of conscience. Though the Catholic Church has been an ardent and long-time advocate of health care reform, we will have to oppose such a bill. This is very sad.

Several months ago I had occasion to be at supper with a number of fellow Catholics. Not surprisingly, the subject of health care reform came up for discussion. During that conversation, one of my tablemates suggested that we might have to live with federally funded abortion in order to get a health care reform bill passed. The rest of the group concurred. I thought about that for a moment and asked, "Would we be willing to live with racial segregation in order to get a health care bill passed?" The group went mute. Three times I asked my question. It was never answered. Neither did my tablemates abandon their suggestion that we might need to tolerate federally funded abortion to achieve a health care reform bill.

From a Catholic perspective, racial segregation and abortion are moral evils. For that matter, so are blasphemy, stealing, calumny, adultery and a host of other actions that violate one's self and one's neighbor. According to Vatican Council II, activities like these are "infamies" that "poison human society" and "do more harm to those who practice them than those who suffer from the injury. Moreover, they are a supreme dishonor to the Creator" (*Gaudium et Spes* 27).

Is it ever acceptable to promote or tolerate an action that is morally evil, even as a means to a good end? No. Why? Because actions that are evil by their very nature, such as murder or the willful destruction of a person's good reputation, can never be justified for

any reason. They are inherently wrong or, as the moral law says, "intrinsically evil." You can never call a bad action "good." Abortion is always wrong.

Something interesting has happened in the past year. Last May a Gallup Poll reported that for the first time in recent years a majority of Americans (51%) are now calling themselves "pro-life" on the issue of abortion. This is stunning. When Gallup first asked the question in 1995, only 33% of Americans identified themselves as pro-life. Something is changing.

The right to abortion cannot and will not remain the law of the land, because it is inherently wrong. Just as our natural goodness as Americans moved us to overturn the Dred Scott Decision of the Supreme Court, which denied African Americans their human rights by keeping them enslaved, so also will the wrong (not "right") of legalized abortion be overturned. It is only a matter of time. But time is of the essence. Tragically, 1.3 million abortions continue to be performed in the United States each year.

What can we do? Let me suggest three things. First, now that we pro-lifers are a majority in society, let us be more forceful with those who represent us in government. It is time we insist that we be truly represented at the federal, state and local levels. Speak up. Let those in elected office know you want them to make decisions that are decidedly pro-life. Second, if you have not yet communicated with your Senators and Representative in Congress on the current health care discussion, do that today. You can find the information you need in the flyer that is available at the doors of the church. Third, join us this Thursday evening, January 21, at 7:00 pm for a Holy Hour for Life. Friday marks the 37th anniversary of the dreadful Roe v. Wade decision of the Supreme Court that legalized abortion. Let us pray for an end to this specter over us and our society.

One day the Lord will ask each of us to tell him what we did for the least among us. By God's grace and mutual encouragement may we be able to do just that.



God bless each of you.

Mrs. Fay