

ENCOURAGEMENT

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‘The Most Vulnerable...’

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“Can you not buy two sparrows for a penny but not one falls to the ground without your Father knowing.” (Matthew 10:26.33.) The Gospel then tells us not to be afraid. If something that is seemingly of little value and not important is SO significant to the Lord then how much more is that the case of those whose lives are vulnerable and small. Children fall into this category. We hear much said about the need to support children and provide for their needs. We have today children who are victims of war or privation, of abuse of all kinds. We hear of children who go missing and are killed or used for trafficking. The numbers are staggering as there are about a million children worldwide that simply vanish.

There is no greater gift than a baby that is born to a family. The long expected arrival is usually greeted with much joy and delight. It is also a miracle of great proportions as the studies today discover the absolutely wonderful way in which the child develops in the womb of its mother and develops organs limbs and hearing and sight. The brain with all its complexities enables the baby to develop its own identity and eventually faculties which will enable it to become a part of the society into which it is born.

This process is so magnificent that it is truly a wonder of the creator’s hands. To Jeremiah(1:5) the Lord says “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations. We are very privileged today to know much more about the life of the baby in the womb. With the advent of scanners and various other measurements and scientific means we can even see the baby before it is born. Previous generations did not have that ability or joy. We can actually photograph the new little one (or two or three) and keep it, so establishing a bond very early on in its life.

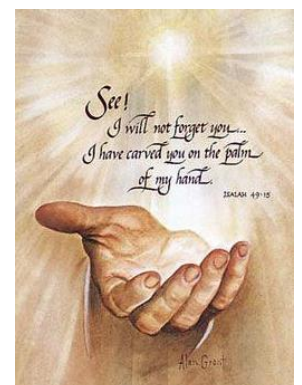
In our often broken world, and a sad one, we also know that many people cannot share this happiness. Many mothers-to-be, or parents, have to deal with

other issues, not least of which is the inability to conceive a child, the frequent loss of children through miscarriage. These are all difficult situations are requiring great sensitivity and courage as well and the support of others. Some children too are born with health problems that will affect them for the rest of their sometimes-short lives. It is also true that for many people the arrival of a new child can be a difficult time especially where there are many mouths to feed and there is poverty and scarcity. There are also those for whom pregnancy of itself is unwanted and unprovided for - indeed a terrifying prospect. There may have been violence in conception, rape or abuse. Sometime the mother herself may be in poor health. These are all challenging and heart rendering situation.

All these things have far reaching consequences and in today’s world the solutions offered are to simply remove the cause of the problem i.e... the child yet to be born. It is beyond the scope of this Encouragement because there would not be enough space to deal with all the issues many of which have individual aspects.

However, it is within the scope of this issue to say that **Abortion is not** the solution to all the problems and indeed has ramifications for the society which go beyond the merely personal, as China has discovered in trying to regulate the population structure.

Abortion ‘as a right’ varies from country to county. In many countries it is still illegal while in others there are safeguards and restrictions. This is a subject that raises many emotions and feelings but sadly sometimes without the ethical considerations that should and must govern such action. As we have gained so much more



“Disorder in society is the result of disorder in the family.” – St Angela Merici

knowledge about the development of children in the womb and children born before full term survive even at twenty-four weeks of the pregnancy there have been placed laws which make abortion illegal after this time. In some countries the limit is 12 weeks only or less.

In many of the quite heated discussions the argument centres around the right of the mother... (and what of the father?) as opposed to the rights of the child or the morality of such actions. Whatever the views are we must never lose sight of the fact that we are talking about a Human person who is being denied life at whatever stage of development they might be. It is not reasonable to speak of the right of one without the right of the other as if these were irrelevant. There is a prevailing view that unless the 'baby draws breath' it is not alive. The lunacy of that argument now encourages the clamour of abortion on demand and at **any stage**. Do we take it then that a still born baby who does not take a breath is indeed not a person? I dare anyone to tell a mother who has lost a child that fact..?

It is unthinkable that we should consider the baby in the womb as an unintended consequence and irrelevance in any action that might injure the wellbeing of the child or its life. When this is not even an issue of the mother's wellbeing but only a matter of 'choice' the situation is even more grave. What is more is that we have degraded life and in so doing minimised the rights of the most vulnerable people, all children born or not. As Christians we must always bear witness to charity, understanding and compassion but never forget that this must extend to all people.

Finally an example of a heroic Saint (and yes it sometimes requires heroism) St Gianna Molla. Born in Italy, a qualified doctor, she and her husband and two children went to work for the good of those in Argentina. Soon after realising that she was expecting her fourth child she was diagnosed with Cancer. An abortion was advised which she refused even though this put at risk of losing her life as well. She refused treatment too, as it would affect her baby. Amazingly she survived the pregnancy as did her baby girl. Sadly, she died soon after birth of an infection, but the baby was brought up by her loving

husband and children and continued to proclaim the goodness of her mother... A life to be reflected upon? How much do our children matter to us?

Halina Holman



St. Gianna Beretta Molla (1922-1962)

Pope Francis

“Unfortunately, what is thrown away is not only food and dispensable objects, but often human beings themselves, who are discarded as ‘unnecessary.’ For example, it is frightful even to think there are children, victims of abortion, who will never see the light of day; children being used as soldiers, abused and killed in armed conflicts; and children being bought and sold in that terrible form of modern slavery which is human trafficking, which is a crime against humanity.”

— Speech to Diplomats Jan. 13, 2014

Prayer for Courage

In all circumstances of our lives may we value and respect all that the Lord has given us, planned for us, and blessed us with, so that we never lightly treat His Providence for us.

Feast Days in July

1st St. Oliver Plunkett

2nd Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

3rd St. Thomas, Apostle

4th St. Elizabeth of Portugal 6th St. Maria Goretti

9th Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

11th St. Benedict, Patron of Europe

15th St. Bonaventure

16th Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

21st St. Lawrence of Brindisi

22nd St. Mary Magdalene

23rd Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

24th St. Charbel Makhlouf & New. & Hexh. Martyrs

25th St. James, Apostle

26th Ss. Anna & Joachim, Parents of Our Lady

29th Ss. Martha, Mary & Lazarus

30th Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

31st St. Ignatius of Loyola

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