



Allocutio



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Allocutio: Promote and protect life

The ruling of 16 December 2011 in the European Court of Human Rights which ruled that the non availability of abortion in Ireland interfered with a person's right to privacy about her life opens the way to possible legislation for abortion in this country. And a lot may now depend on the outcome of the general election.

What we must do now is ask Our Lady to help us obtain the help of the Holy Spirit on how to deal with this. And deal with this we must. For this is about the right to life of human beings and protecting them from the worst abuse they could suffer. It is also about upholding the beautiful life-giving disposition of the Heavenly Father and not rejecting his bounty.

We need to pray because what lies ahead will require great light from heaven so that the very best dispositions will be in our hearts and the best persuasion on our lips. Our Lord warned us to be as gentle as doves and as cute as serpents. Just one wrong word, one wrong action and the pro-abortion media would have a field day and turn a good intention into a disaster. On the other hand we must beware of the mistake the man with the one talent made who buried it out of fear. So we must ask for courage too.

We must arm ourselves with indisputable evidence that a human being comes into existence at the moment of conception. This is clear from Scripture certainly. For example the whole of Christianity holds that Jesus was already present in Mary's womb when she visited Elizabeth. Mary had gone immediately to visit Elizabeth and so was barely pregnant. Those who argue that in the early weeks there is no human being must face a fact that Christ, true God but also true man, was truly present when Mary visited Elizabeth. And in the same way we are all there from the moment of fertilisation, in the fallopian tube and in the lining of the womb.

But science too is building its body of evidence which can only challenge the view that it is just a tissue or part of a woman's body but is a distinct living being who has an independent existence although dependent. We will not go into that today.

It is very important that we understand that this is not an intellectual debate. We must also become aware of the emotional issues that surround a pregnancy. Often it is fear or some other emotional influence that drives a woman to have an abortion, a decision that often haunts the woman for the rest of her life. It will be kind understanding and encouragement that will cause her to change her mind. So if we put arguments it cannot be a case of arguments just at an intellectual level but a genuine compassion for her that it is in her best interests and that of her child to allow it to come to birth. We must pray to truly love them.

I also think we need to confront the culture which seems today to say it is okay to have sex outside of marriage. Sadly the contraceptive culture has opened up the door to a greater promiscuity that has led to so many unwanted pregnancies not to mention sexually transmitted diseases and also casualness about relationships.

It is sometimes argued that the woman should not have to carry a child of a rape. While I can feel compassion for a woman who is left with a child after such an event let me ask this: who should be executed: the mother, the child or the rapist? Surely if anyone should be put to death it is the rapist. Am I advocating that this happen? No. What I am pointing out is the perversity of the thinking involved. We kill the innocent child and let the perpetrator of a crime off scott free. That is a betrayal of all the best standards of a truly good civilisation. Besides I know a number of people who are the children of rape and they have been a boon to humanity. And we thank their mothers for having had them.

I have mentioned fear already. My experience with girls who have had abortions is this: that they often came from too strict families or families where there was an over-bearing parent who was too harsh. On the other hand I have come across girls who kept their babies and spoke of a warm and loving parent who gave them the opening to tell them what had happened and who cherished them despite it. Again it was love that gave the victory whereas harshness only contributed to the bad decision.

Here is something else. It is often felt that the whole burden of stopping abortions lies with the women. Pregnancy and abortion is seen as a woman's issue. But the truth is that the actual pregnancy is contributed to at least 50% by the man. And in fact the whole culture of contraception as well as the availability of abortion facilitates mostly the selfishness of the male. Part of our response must therefore also be aimed, again in love, towards the male side of society calling on men to control selfish impulses and not put at risk the future life of the woman who will be knocked out whatever way she handles the pregnancy. By the way I do know that in some instances the man would stand fully by the mother and child and it is she who goes against his wishes and aborts the baby. But what I am saying is that the battle against abortion must involve an appeal to the nobility of the male.

I don't know if I am making sense. Some of you have dealt with this directly and have more experience than me. But a society in which abortion may now be permitted to take place will be a new challenge. This is not so much a political battle as a battle for the hearts of people. We may need to speak to the pro-life movement in the U.S. and Britain and learn from them how and how not to act.

And it must be done now so that we are well trained in time on how to deal with it. And again we must pray and ask the kind Lady of Heaven to help us in this battle for morality and the life of the unborn.

Amen.

Fr Paul Churchill