

## THE RIGHT TO LIFE ATTACKED ONCE AGAIN

As everyone knows by now, Governor Rauner made the terrible decision just over a week ago to force Illinois taxpayers to pay for abortions in our state. I'm sure you might also have read or heard Cardinal Cupich's statement regarding the betrayal of a promise the governor had made to him personally. It is truly devastating to think of my tax dollars helping to pay for such a profound evil. But it's also mind-boggling to imagine how it's possible for anyone who considers himself or herself a Christian—much less a Catholic Christian—to support abortion on demand, with the local poster boy for that being our fake “Catholic” senator, Dick Durbin.

Supporters of abortion on demand constantly use the argument that it is a woman's right to have control of her own body, and that is indeed a right every person has. However, that control begins, not after pregnancy, but before a person decides to engage in a sexual relationship, especially one outside of marriage. What is legal or what some might consider a human right is not necessarily a moral right. And when immorality becomes implicitly enshrined in law or written off with a shrug by all too many modern parents because “that's just the way it is”, the fabric of a civilized society begins to unravel, perhaps irreparably.

Once a child is conceived, a woman now has not one, but two bodies for which she is equally responsible. And with the sole exception of the horror of rape, the conception of a new life is the possible consequence of a **choice** that a man and woman have made to engage in sex. I will always remember a wonderful Jr. High teacher at one of my parishes who constantly drummed into his students' heads the fact that all their actions, positive or negative, have **consequences**. I'm not sure just how that awareness or sense of responsibility has faded over the years; but I suspect it has something to do with what I wrote about earlier this year regarding the message we're given over and over, in advertising and through government bureaucracy, implying that that there's remedy for every ill that might befall us or a nanny state that will always be there to protect us from our poor choices—the Cook Co. soda tax being the latest example of the latter.

In Catholic moral theology, abortion is an objective evil, not a choice, with one notable and challenging exception called “proportionate value” which permits and requires a profoundly difficult subjective judgment. If the life of the mother is unquestionably endangered by her continued pregnancy **and** there is virtually no chance to save the lives of both mother and child, the fully formed life of the mother may be saved at the expense of the partially formed life of the child. In this tragic circumstance, the termination of a pregnancy can be seen as an **indirect** negative result of the positive effort to save the life of the mother. Even though that has not been enshrined in official teaching, the vast majority of Catholic moral theologians support that position, recognizing the role that a **fully formed** conscience must play in any moral decision-making.

Tangentially, this same “proportionate value” dictum of Catholic moral theology also applies in the case of a **just** war – with the emphasis being on the word “just” where the war is waged in defense against an unjust aggressor or offensively for the protection of human life. Even though the fifth commandment says clearly “thou shall not kill”, a war can be entered into or waged for “the greater good” or as the “lesser of two evils.” World War II is probably the best example of a “just” war, fought to save the world from the horrors of Nazism, even at the cost of many lost lives.

But the bottom line right now, here in our sad state of Illinois, is this: no Catholic – really no citizen of any faith – should be forced to pay through taxation for abortion on demand, the willful murder of an innocent life that began with the selfish or thoughtless decision of two people who failed to consider the consequences of their actions. The governor may very well pay for this decision with his political life; but it’s the innocent unborn who will continue to pay, quite literally and tragically, with their very lives.

Fr. Bob