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Companions on the Journey

January 19, 2020

Dear Friends,

Uncomfortable. As human beings we don't particularly like being uncomfortable. That can be physical discomfort or emotional discomfort or even intellectual discomfort. We do not like the way we feel when in discomfort and so we tend to take measures to avoid feeling that way or avoiding the things that make us feel uncomfortable. What makes us feel uncomfortable varies from person to person. For some, talking about politics does; for others it's talking about religion. For others it is being involved in something that is controversial.

This brings me to some worrisome and truly uncomfortable statistics as we come to the anniversary of the Supreme Court decision known as Roe vs. Wade on January 22, 1973. In the 47 years since, there have been more than 60,000,000 abortions in this country alone. Each year between 1.2 million and 1.3 million abortions are chosen by or for pregnant women in this country. Sometimes it is their choice; sometimes it is forced upon them by their spouse, lover or family; sometimes they choose to abort out of a variety of kinds of very personal fears. Some abort with great sadness and regret; some with boldness and conviction.

What about worldwide? Between 14 million and 15 million abortions are reported worldwide each year. Each year. Fifteen million. That means that each day on this planet 40,000 children in the womb have their lives abruptly ended because they are inconvenient or because their parents are afraid they cannot care for them or because the timing wasn't right or because people would talk or because a secret sexual liaison would be uncovered or because it is easier than having the child.

Let me try to put that into a perspective for you. Think of all the people you know who have died of cancer of whatever type—breast, prostate, colon, lung, pancreatic, etc. Of the people who die on this planet each year (between 56 million and 57 million), 12% die from some form of cancer. Between 6.5 million and 7 million people die worldwide of cancer each year. Abortions kill more than twice that many every year. My friends, it is just not right. As citizens yes but even more so as followers of Jesus Christ we know it but we are afraid to take away something that is now a part of our law that our country thinks needs to be available for any woman who has been sinned against and therefore needs this procedure as an out of a very bad situation.

BUT. The child in the womb has done nothing wrong while we human beings make all manner of mistakes and that is especially true in the area of our sexual activity. We surely make mistakes but God does not. That newly extant child in the womb is part of God's design for that man and woman and for the whole world. Abortion may seem to fix a bad situation but it does not. It makes things worse. And in almost every instance it makes things worse specifically for the woman. Can that really be the right thing? The good thing? Do any of us really think that abortion is ever what God desires for us? Is it right that any woman should have to bear this load all her life? I believe abortion is being subtly foisted upon women, even sometimes by women, portrayed as a "right" to which they are entitled under the law. And yet, there are millions of men who profit by these millions of women who have these abortions. These men profit either financially or by ducking and shirking their responsibilities as the father of these children. Why should the man escape responsibility simply because the child is growing in the uterus of the woman? Abortion makes neither the woman nor the man a better person. Abortion does NOT make their lives better. Look around. Take a real good look. Even if you think your abortion was necessary for you to win a Golden Globe award. Really? To win an award, my child's life is forfeit.

Thank God for the mercy of Jesus Christ. Thank God for the sacrament of Reconciliation—for both men and women. If you are carrying this sin go to confession and place it in the Lord's lap. He is merciful and full of kindness. You need not walk in this discomfort any longer. This is no unforgivable sin. Let the Spirit lead you to the cleansing waters of the Lord's love.

Peace,

Msgr. McHenry