

## Homily 3<sup>rd</sup> Sun. Advent Yr C (Evil of Abortion; Jesus Living in Mary)

Fr. Dwight P. Campbell, S.T.D., J.D.

Did you know that at the moment of conception a human being's unique DNA is created, DNA which never existed before – and will never be repeated again?

At the moment of conception a human being's unique traits are already present –e.g. the sex, hair & eye color have already been determined.

An unborn baby's heart begins to beat only 22 days after conception, 3 weeks and a day – before most women even know they are pregnant.

By week 3 you can see the baby's ears and eyes; by 6 weeks the baby has fingers and toes.

Between 6 and 11 weeks the child in the womb grows five times in size.

By the 11<sup>th</sup> week the baby can smile and frown, wiggle its fingers and toes, and even suck its thumb.

At 13 weeks the baby's ears start picking up vibrations and it is comforted by the heartbeat of its mother, and later by the sound of its mother's voice.

At 6 months the baby is fully developed and everything is functioning as it will at birth – and for the rest of its life.

At 38 to 42 weeks the baby is born.

Everything I just stated can be said about every unborn child, about every one of us before we were born, AND about Jesus Christ, who spent the first nine months of His human life in the womb of His mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary - a beautiful thought to consider as we journey through this holy season of Advent, preparing to celebrate the joyful Birth of our Savior.

God has revealed to us through the prophet Jeremiah: *“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart”* (Jer. 1:5).

In light of these truths, I am asking your prayers today – in the days to come - for our country, because at this time in our nation’s history we stand at an historic crossroads:

whether to continue to allow the legalized murder of preborn babies in the womb by abortion – an ongoing holocaust that has taken the lives of over 60 million human beings over the past 50 years; or whether to prohibit this evil which is like a deep, festering cancer on our country.

You’ve probably heard that this past week the U.S. Supreme Court made a decision on a Texas law that outlawed abortion after the “heartbeat” of the child could be detected. The Court’s decision allowed the law to stand, but permitted challenges to it – it’s a bit complex, I won’t elaborate on it here.

But the week before last the Supreme Court heard arguments concerning a Mississippi law that basically prohibits abortion after 16 weeks.

The decision in this case will likely determine the fate of the lives of tens of millions of human beings in the future: whether or not children in the womb will be given the right to life under our Constitution, or be denied that right.

First, a little history.

In the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision, the Supreme Court said that a fetus is not a person but “potential life,” and therefore does not have any constitutional rights – especially, and most importantly, the right to life:

*Roe v. Wade* gave a woman the right to abort the child in her womb during the full nine months of pregnancy.

The Court’s rationale really made no sense; it was mind boggling:

What exactly is “*potential life*”? It’s a contradiction in terms. Either something is alive or it is not. A child in the womb is most certainly alive.

The S. Ct. created this “right” to abortion – supposedly based on a right to privacy; but it is found nowhere in the Constitution and for this reason Justice Byron White, who wrote a dissenting opinion in *Roe v. Wade*, called the

Court's decision creating a "right" to kill unborn babies by abortion an exercise of "RAW JUDICIAL POWER."

As Abraham Lincoln said in debating Stephen Douglas when the latter claimed spoke of a "right" to own slaves: *"He cannot logically say that any body has a right to do wrong."*

Almost 20 years after *Roe*, in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, the S. Ct. had the opportunity to overturn the *Roe v. Wade* decision; but refused to do so even though by this time all the medical evidence clearly showed that human life begins at conception.

The rationale for allowing the murder of children in the womb to continue in our country was basically summarized in one sentence: I quote: *"people had organized their intimate relationships and made choices ... in reliance on the availability of abortion in the event contraception should fail."*

So, the killing of children within the womb must remain "legal" because women need a back-up when contraception fails.

Fast forward 30 years to 2021. Two weeks ago, in oral arguments before the Supreme Court over the State of Mississippi law that bans abortion after 15 weeks of pregnancy, pro-abortion Justice Sonia Sotomayor made statements that reveal how those who favor abortion will use any argument, no matter how ludicrous, to keep abortion legal.

In response to the argument that during the abortion procedure the preborn children feel pain while their tiny bodies are being torn apart, Justice Sotomayor said: *"There's about 40% of dead people who, if you touch their feet, the foot will recoil. There are spontaneous acts by dead brain people. So I don't think that a response by a fetus necessarily proves that there's a sensation of pain or that there's consciousness."*

Really? Here Sotomayor compares the unborn child, who is alive during the abortion, with someone who is already dead. And the preborn baby is definitely not brain dead: science shows brain waves detectable at 5 weeks.

Moreover, for over a decade now doctors have been performing surgery on infants before birth, while still *in utero*, and when they do so they administer pain medicine to the unborn child. Why? Because they know that the preborn child can feel pain when operated on.

One doctor responded to Justice Sotomayor's statement: "*To compare an unborn child to a brain-dead person or a corpse flouts science which tells us that at 15 weeks gestation, a baby's organs are fully formed, her heart pumps 26 quarts of blood a day, and her lungs are already practicing drawing breath.*" (Dr. Grazie Pozo Christie)

On this point, it's important to remember: Presidents appoint Supreme Court Justices, who vote either to keep abortion legal, or to recognize that preborn babies have a right to life.

Right now it looks like there might be a majority on the Court that will overturn *Roe v. Wade*. Let us pray that they do.

In the Gospel today we see that John the Baptist preparing for the coming of Jesus Christ by preaching repentance from sins: He tells tax collectors not to collect more than is due, and soldiers not to practice extortion.

Let us pray that we will be humble enough as a nation to acknowledge our sins against the dignity and sanctity of human life in the womb that have been ongoing for the past 50 years.

This is a fitting topic to consider as we approach celebration of the Birth of Jesus Christ, our Savior.

At this time a little more than 2000 years ago, the BV Mary was carrying Jesus in her womb, making her way with St. Joseph from Nazareth to Bethlehem, about 90 miles away.

Just think: the All-Powerful Son of God, who had shared in the glory of the God the Father and the Holy Spirit from all eternity, became man at the Incarnation, and allowed Himself to be enclosed in the immaculate womb of His Mother, Mary for nine months before she gave birth to Him.

Why was it part of God's plan that Jesus should come to us through Mary in this way? What purpose did God have?

No doubt, God wanted to teach us to imitate Jesus: As any other child living in its mother's womb, Jesus was totally dependent on His Mother, for His human life and nourishment. What a wonder: that the Creator should be totally dependent upon a creature of His own making!

By living in Mary as a Babe in her womb, Jesus teaches us to have that same dependence on Mary for everything and to entrust ourselves - our wants, our needs, our lives - totally to her: she is truly our spiritual Mother in the order of grace, who not only foresees our needs, but protects us from harm as well.

The oldest known prayer to Mary in the Church, the *Sub tuum praesidium*, dating from the late 200's if not earlier, reflects this notion: "*We fly to thy patronage or holy Mother of God, despise not our prayers in our necessities, but ever deliver us from all dangers, O glorious & Blessed Virgin!*"

Contemplating this great mystery of "Jesus living in Mary" also allows us to imitate the Virgin Mother. What immense joy must have overflowed in Mary's Heart, knowing that the Eternal Word took flesh in her womb and was living within her. Her Heart was literally bursting with joy as she awaited her Son's birth – a beautiful thought during this holy season of Advent.

During this holy season of Advent we can imitate Mary, and share in her joy by meditating on the Joyful mysteries of the Rosary, especially the first three Joyful mysteries: the Annunciation, Visitation and Birth of Our Lord.

We can also imitate the Virgin Mary when we receive Jesus in Holy Communion: for those few minutes after we receive Him, Jesus lives in us as He lived in Mary for nine months; we become, like Mary, living tabernacles of the Most High. Let us, during this holy season of Advent, strive to imitate Jesus in His total dependence on Mary in all that we do; let us also strive to exude that same joy which Mary held in her Heart as she was making her way to the little town of Bethlehem, to give birth to the Savior of the world.