

Homily Reflections - Pro-Life Homily

On behalf of all the pilgrims I wish to thank Cardinal McCarrick for his gracious and encouraging words of welcome and for his continued and vigorous support for the Culture of Life. It is a true blessing for pilgrims from across our land to be able to gather once again with their bishops in this great Basilica. The blessing is enhanced because so many can join us by television through the Eternal Word Television Network.

In the first reading we were reminded by the prophet Isaiah, "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in deep darkness, on them has light shined." We acknowledge before the Lord that there is deep darkness in our world, precisely because of a variety of threats to God's gift of life, and we pray here that the merciful Lord will dispel the darkness with the "great light" only God can give.

There is a special life-sustaining gift of God which we call peace.

Let us pray for peace in all the human family, a peace that defies differences, whether of race or religion, whether of nationality or culture. This invitation includes a special remembrance for the peace of those who risk their lives for others, and all those many millions around the globe whose lives are jeopardized by the absence of peace. Let us pray for those millions more, here and almost everywhere in our world, who literally face death threats because of hunger and illness and poverty, as well as for the victims of the recent natural disasters in Southeast Asia. Let us not forget in our prayer the frail elderly in this country and elsewhere who with minimal resources suffer from the isolation of neglect and the absence of compassion. Let us pray for the victims of violence and, yes, even for those who have done great violence and await the ultimate punishment society can inflict.

This evening uppermost in our minds is the call to pray for the most vulnerable of God's children, those waiting to be born.

We are joined yet again in our pilgrimage for life, pausing in this holy place to pray for an end to the terrible evil spawned that 22nd day of January, 1973. It was then that a few men sworn to uphold our nation's Constitution shamefully abused that guarantee of human and civil rights by denying to the most vulnerable of all humanity the most fundamental right of all. It was an incredible distortion of justice. It meant the denial of the first of all human rights, and to vulnerable innocents! A tragedy and a grave sin! Thirty-two years later, the evil of Roe v. Wade persists, the blood of innocents continues to stain our Constitution, and the loss of more than 40 million unborn children should haunt our national consciousness.

Thirty-two years! And each year, another 1.3 million children are lost to the great evil of our time. 20,000 of them are put to death after the 21st week in their mothers' wombs, as many as 4,000 of that number by means of the horrendous partial-birth abortion method. And this, for 32 years!

The evil must end! It must end soon! And we are here to affirm that, with God's grace, we must be instruments of its ending!

We come together here confident in this purpose and confident in the knowledge that our purpose has God's blessing, for God is the Lord of life. As we gather to protest yet again the tragic miscarriage of justice that was the Supreme Court's decision in Roe v. Wade, we re-commit ourselves to the dismantling of Roe and its poisonous progeny, confident in the promise of the psalmist that we "shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living!"

Confident in our purpose, we also come together here unified in that purpose, mindful of the Apostle Paul's charge to the Corinthians, a charge directed to us in the second reading, that they be "united in mind and judgment." We are as one in our prayers for the souls of the little ones whose lives have been taken by abortion, and for the mothers and families and