

How Insensitive

October is the month each year when the Catholic Church throughout the United States observes Respect Life Month. It is a 40-year-old tradition and a time when we raise awareness of the Church's belief in the inherent equality and transcendent value of every human being, a belief that serves as the foundation of the Church's teaching on issues ranging from capital punishment and end-of-life care to Catholic social teaching, immigration and racism.

While it is important to remember that the Church's pro-life positions encompass a broad range of issues, there is good reason why many often immediately shift their attention to the national scourge of abortion whenever we speak about respect for life. Unfortunately, it would appear from the horrific data that follows that an overall insensitivity exists in our society toward the value of human life.

Consider that in the United States alone, there have been nearly 50 million legal abortions from 1973 to 2008, according to the most recent data provided by the Guttmacher Institute. Of course, these numbers are incomplete because they only include "legal" abortions and four states, including Maryland, do not compile and/or provide such data.

While the number of abortions declined from 1.31 million in 2000 to 1.21 in 2008, the most recent year for which we have national data, the picture remains grim.

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