

Life and Social Justice—If Life Isn't Sacred, Nothing Is

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To build a good house you need a strong foundation. Likewise, to pursue social justice, you need a strong ethical foundation. Find out what that is.

This month marks a tragic date: the 37th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, when our “robed masters”—the Supreme Court—discovered a constitutional right to kill innocent babies waiting to be born.

The good news is that polls reveal that Americans are more pro-life than ever. The bad news is the culture of death is making ominous inroads on many other fronts.

A few months ago, as most of you know, theologian Timothy George, Princeton scholar Robby George, and I co-authored a document called the Manhattan Declaration. Two hundred Christian leaders and hundreds of thousands of lay people have signed it online. Some younger evangelicals, however, demurred. Why limit the agenda to life, family, and religious liberty, they asked. What about social justice and the environment?

What these well-meaning folks fail to realize is that a strong pro-life commitment is absolutely essential for social justice. For 34 years I've gone into America's prisons to witness to the most marginalized among us, precisely because I believe every human being is made in God's image. When I walk through the vile-smelling cell blocks, I don't see tattooed inmates; I see children of God.

There is no social justice, you see, without respect for the innate dignity of each human being created in God's image.

Many of us will learn this truth afresh should any of these health care bills pass. They all contain provisions which will result in medical services being rationed. Decisions historically made between doctor and patient, and maybe clergy, will now be made by government bureaucrats.

Under the bill's provisions, prescribed treatments of Medicare patients must be approved by a government commission. Medicare is publicly funded. So the government decides which services it will pay for and which it won't. Older Americans will be hardest hit.

Imagine you're 85 with a chronic heart condition and you experience renal failure. Should you receive dialysis? Who decides?

If we don't have a consistent ethic about the sanctity of human life, decisions will not be made on the basis of what care we need, but on what the government can afford. Patients will be judged, not by their innate worth, but by their perceived value to society. Do the elderly and infirm have a right to life—or a duty to die?

This is why evangelicals, Catholics, and Orthodox leaders are so concerned about abortion. The infamous *Roe* decision was merely the camel's nose under the tent. Up for grabs today is the question of what it means to be human.

No matter how exhausting the battles, the church must adhere to and contend for the biblical teaching that all human beings are made in God's image, and that all life, at every stage, is precious in His sight. This truth must inform all of our ethical decisions.

As the [Manhattan Declaration](#) makes clear, the threshold issues are life, liberty, and family. If we don't fight the assaults on these fronts, there will ultimately be no “social justice,” or dignity of life, for anyone.

In this week's installment of my Two-Minute Warning, I talk more about why the sanctity of life—along with the importance of marriage and religious freedom—is so crucial to the church today. Watch my Two-Minute Warning at ColsonCenter.org.

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