

Dear Friends,

As I write this column 138 of us from the parish are planning to join tens of thousands of people in Washington D.C. for the annual March for Life on January 27th. This year's march will mark the 44th anniversary of the Supreme Court's Roe v Wade decision of January 22, 1973 legalizing abortion throughout our nation.

The theme of this year's march is "**The Power of One,**" inspired by the words of the English author J.R.R. Tolkien: "Even the smallest person can change the course of history." As Catholics we know the power of one. One man's death on a cross 2000 years ago brought salvation to all. One person can make a difference in the world; make a difference in the life of one person or many people. Unfortunately a million babies in the United States are never given the opportunity to live and change the world each year. Building a culture of life and ending abortion takes each and every one of us.

"The Church firmly believes that human life, even if weak and suffering, is always a splendid gift of God's goodness . . . the Church stands for life: in each human life she sees the splendor of that 'Yes,' that 'Amen' who is Christ Himself" (St. John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio* (The Christian Family in the Modern World). Sadly, human life encounters numerous obstacles in our society. We live in a society obsessed with efficiency. When one is weak, when one is at the mercy of others for existence, like an unborn child, there is not always room for them. Abortion is a terrible tragedy inflicted on our country and the world. In his encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*, (Charity in Truth), Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI wrote: "When a society moves toward the denial or suppression of life, it ends up no longer finding the necessary motivation and energy to strive for man's true good. If personal and social sensitivity toward the acceptance of a new life is lost, then other forms of acceptance that are valuable for society also wither away." Abortion's tragedy leads to further tragedy for the human family.

All is not lost, however. There is One who has overcome darkness and death; there is One who became weak that we might be strong, Jesus Christ, and we have been baptized into His life. Being pro-life is in our DNA, a sign of our baptism into Christ's life. Being pro-life we are to engage the world in which we live, loving it as Christ loves, even those who do not embrace us and our pro-life message. Love has the power to bring about real change.

By the time you read this, this year's March for Life will be over. The real test to being pro-life, though, isn't just participating in a march once every January. To be pro-life is to always oppose any and all types of murder, genocide, abortion, euthanasia or violations of human dignity. To be pro-life is to stand against all that violates the dignity of the human person. To be pro-life is to always advocate for and with the weakest, the vulnerable, the despised, for in them our God has chosen to make His home. In all things, we are pro-life.

Peace and blessings,

Father John