

"It is true that the decision to have an abortion is often tragic and painful for the mother, insofar as the decision to rid herself of the fruit of conception is not made for purely selfish reasons or out of convenience, but out of a desire to protect certain important values such as her own health or a decent standard of living for the other members of the family. Sometimes it is feared that the child to be born would live in such conditions that it would be better if the birth did not take place. Nevertheless, these reasons and others like them, however serious and tragic, can never justify the deliberate killing of an innocent human being."

(emphasis in text) (The Gospel of Life,58)



Over the past six months two pastors called the Pro-Life Office for consultation regarding couples who chose abortion because of fetal defect and brought the deceased baby's remains to the Church for burial. The Church responds with the same love and care due to any family faced with the grievous death of a child. It is essential to provide the appropriate funeral rites and prayers for the deceased child. It is also important, in order to prevent scandal or misunderstanding, that we not communicate approval or support for the act of abortion which led to the death of the child. This requires great pastoral skill and care. It is likely, due to the fact that some hospitals now treat such abortions as a

form of necessary infant death, that we will see more situations like this in the parish.

The Pregnancy Help staff is an excellent resource for consultation, referrals and direct counsel and support of pregnant women and family members. We have received feedback from clergy and other pastoral care providers that it is especially helpful for pastoral care givers to consult with Pregnancy Help before meeting with a pregnant woman or couple to be better prepared for their questions.

Upholding the Church's foundational teaching on respect for human life and dignity is often not easy, especially for those entrusted as pastoral care ministers. Yet, it is ultimately living this teaching with love and confidence that will open the way for the Holy Spirit to inspire the civilization of love:

"The commandment "You shall not kill," even in its more positive aspects of respecting, loving and promoting human life, is binding on every individual human being. It resounds in the moral conscience of everyone as an irrepressible echo of the original covenant of God the Creator with mankind. It can be recognized by everyone through the light of reason and it can be observed thanks to the mysterious working of the Spirit who, blowing where he wills (cf. Jn3.8), comes to and involves every person living in the world..."

The Gospel of Life, (77)

Resources for Consultation and Referral

Pregnancy Help • 617-782-5151

Pro-Life Office • 617-783-5410

Health Care Ministry • 617-789-2457

Pope John Center • 617-787-1900