

Tomorrow marks 45 years since the Supreme Court Decisions Roe v. Wade and Doe v. Bolton which in a single day swept away all state laws protecting unborn children. An entire population had its right to life stripped away by that court decision. The numbers are staggering. At a minimum, only counting surgical abortions, around 60 million American children have lost their life in this US holocaust. 60 million!

It is fitting that on the eve of this 45th anniversary, all of our readings call us to urgent repentance.

We hear Jonah cry out “Forty days more and Nineveh shall be destroyed!”

We hear St. Paul tell us “the time is running out” and in the Gospel

Jesus comes into Galilee proclaiming: “Now is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the Gospel!”

Urgency and repentance is the message this weekend.

What will judgement day be like? I want to describe three of the most significant players involved in the establishment of abortion-on-demand in our country, each of whom has just died in the past few years, one less than a year ago. We will then briefly imagine what it might have been like for them to stand before the throne of God.

- 1) Norma McCorvey – Norma was the Jane Roe of Roe v. Wade. It was her case in Texas brought all the way to the Supreme Court that was the deciding case in striking down all state abortion restrictions. We could say she was the impetus that opened all American children in the womb to having their right to life stripped from them.

- 2) Sandra Cano – Sandra was the Doe in Doe vs. Bolton – the companion case to Roe v. Wade whose decision was announced in tandem with Roe and ensured that there would be no exceptions through procedural requirements states might have. We could say her case finished closing off the avenues states might have had to protect children in the womb.

- 3) Dr. Bernard Nathanson – Dr. Nathanson was a New York doctor, who after he got his girlfriend pregnant brought her to an illegal abortionist to abort his baby. After that he co-founded an organization which became known as the National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL)– it began by lobbying to repeal all abortion laws and then after Roe v. Wade served to advance abortion in America. It was one of the most influential organizations in

advancing abortion. By his own count Dr. Nathanson once said he had presided over or been involved with 60,000 abortions! Including performing one on his own child.

What was it like when they stood before God at their death?

Well let's look at a little more information about each before we make our educated guess:

- 1) Norma McCorvey – the Jane Roe of Roe v. Wade – in 1995 she was working as an abortion clinic escort when after meeting some Christians she had a conversion and was baptized. She left her work and became a member of Operation Rescue and spent her time and resources trying to save unborn children. On August, 17, 1998 she was received into the Catholic Church at St. Thomas Aquinas Church in Dallas. She remained a committed and faithful Catholic and active in pro-life work until her death last February at the age of 69.

- 2) Sandra Cano, the Doe of Roe v. Wade's companion case – Doe v. Bolton – has a heartbreaking backstory about how she became Doe.

She was a young, poor, wife and mother trying to get a divorce from a convicted child molester and keep custody of her own children. Her ACLU lawyer told her she was helping her to do that but was really using her to present a case for abortion. The lawyer enlisted Sandra's mother to try to convince her to attempt to abort her unborn child but she fled the state. In the meantime the lawyer used her in the cases all the way to the Supreme Court.

Sandra spent her life trying to undo what was done under her name. She died in 2014 having lived up to a pledge she made in 1997 when she stated: "**I pledge that as long as I have breath, I will strive to see abortion ended in America.**"

- 3) Dr. Bernard Nathanson – the founder of NARAL – and overseer of 60,000 abortions- later into the 1970s with the development of ultrasound had the opportunity to see the children in the womb that he had once convinced himself were just blobs of tissue. He said after that he could not continue. He began writing books against abortion and producing videos like the Silent Scream- which contained an ultra sound video of a mid-term abortion

– exposing it for what it is– He spent himself trying to bring people back to sanity regarding the life of children in the womb. In December of 1996 John Cardinal O’Connor, Archbishop of New York, baptized, confirmed, and gave Dr. Nathanson his First Holy Communion in St. Patrick’s Cathedral. Dr. Nathanson died a faithful Catholic in February, 2011. Some time before his death he was asked about why he had converted to Catholicism, he said this: “no religion matches the special role for forgiveness / that is afforded by the [Catholic Church](#)”. <rpt> beautiful! - MERCY

Which brings us back to our first intention – to imagine for a moment what it would be like for each of these on their day of judgement. Seeing as all had already clearly repented and spent their lives trying to end the greatest human rights abuse of our time, we can very easily imagine that on their death they heard those words we all desire to hear, those words of the 25th Chapter of St. Matthew’s Gospel: “well done good and faithful servant, now enter into the joy of your Master.”

That is them but what about us? Often we hear these words calling to repentance and we hear it in the context of a homily on abortion and you think the priest is going to talk about the need for those who have had abortions or participated in

them and so on to repent, but it's been my experience at least for those who are Christian – that they have repented. They have recognized their role and have turned to Christ in repentance and received His Mercy. I don't worry so much about them – I worry that they sometimes have trouble forgiving themselves, but I have no worry about God forgiving them in their repentance.

You know who I am most worried and troubled about from these readings and this reflection - <> all of you.....and me.

When we learn about the facts of abortion and Roe v. Wade we often think automatically that our first spiritual duty in the face of abortion is to pray. It is not -
– Our first duty is to REPENT.

Maybe there is a misunderstanding of God's Word here – God doesn't simply prohibit us from committing abortion, he prohibits us from *tolerating* it. He calls us to be active in fighting it. Sometimes I want to stand here and <knock on the microphone> this isn't one issue among others – what do you not understand about 15,000 children, just like you and I once were, 15,000 children with their own separate genetic code, with their own eye and hair color set, worthy of all love, 15,000 in these UNITED STATES OF AMERICA being killed every single week.

Let's quit worrying about the people who have already repented – they are safe.

Let's worry about ourselves who think we have no need to repent if we just stand clear of killing children all the while doing nothing about it going on less than sixty miles from us at Planned Parenthood in Columbus. Let us pray for Mercy for us – b/c on the day of judgement it's going to be us not Norma McCorvey or Dr. Nathanson or those men and women who have been affected by abortion and already repented of it that are going to need the Mercy.

How do we help – how do we do something about it?

First we don't accept the status quo. We don't act like Roe v. Wade has to be settled law that somehow it would be a terrible thing if the next Supreme Court Justice to be replaced switched out a Roe supporter with a Roe opponent. It would simply be a step towards restored sanity. Don't accept the media bias on this. Let those who want your vote know that you are pro-life and that you are sane - that you realize that the killing of children in the womb is absolutely intolerable no matter what other benefits a politician might promise. Can you imagine our ancestors visiting from another era learning that we would vote for someone who

says that children for the first nine months of their life should be open game.

Sanity must be restored in what we demand of those who want our votes.

Second, support organizations that help women bring their children to term.

Elizabeth Hope is a great example of this. They provide all kinds of care and support for women and their children. And in the end it is here where hearts will be won and the culture changed – even more important than vote counting – is creating a web of charitable institutions that support the unborn and cherish life.

Today you will have the opportunity to take home a baby bottle and fill it up to help support the work of Elizabeth Hope – please be generous. Elizabeth Hope is in the process of obtaining a mobile sonogram unit that can now travel around and bring the opportunity for pregnant women to see and fall in love with their child and thus bring that child safety and protection.

Third, join in public demonstrations about the sanctity of life. Attend a March for Life – either in D.C. or in Columbus, or beginning this year, you have the opportunity to attend one here in town. Tomorrow at 11:30 we'll gather in Yoctangee Park at Paint St. and then march together to the Court House where there will be speakers about the dignity of life and prayer and music. Just a simple way to witness in a joyful way to the dignity of life.

Fourth, above all pray and do penance. Tomorrow, January 22 is an annual day of prayer and penance in the Catholic Church in America. Catholics are supposed to increase their prayer and abstain from meat, or fast, or such – praying for the full restoration of the rights of the unborn and doing penance for violations against this.

My friends time is running out, so says St. Paul in that 2nd reading today. We must be witnesses for life – who knows, maybe like Jonah, we are about to be surprised by a massive conversion in this area, but regardless of whether we are about to return to sanity or whether we're destined to fight this for decades, the point is we must fight. We must repent for our apathy and we must fight. And let us ask today for the intercession and the prayers of those who have gone before us in this battle – the prayers of those like Norma McCorvey, Sandra Cano, and Dr. Nathanson – they remind us that with repentance all things can and are / being made new in Jesus Christ.