

**Talk given at Thanksgiving Eucharistic Adoration on Saturday January 20, 2007  
Following the *Walk for Life West Coast 2007***

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You are light for the world: People should observe your goodness, your integrity, your kindness, your humility, your gratitude, your praise to God, your being “fully alive” as St. Jerome says: the glory of God is the human being fully alive; each individual person an alleluia to God.

Disciples of Jesus are called first to LIVE the Good News, and at the same time by example of life to proclaim it. This is what the “to do” is at the end of the Gospel of Matthew. After proclaiming his own authority over the universe, Jesus tells them: Go, therefore, proclaim the Good News to all peoples, teach them to carry out all I have asked of you and baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

As disciples, we will answer “we can” to Jesus’ questions to John and James and to us about being baptized as he is to be baptized, that is in suffering – by which his obedience becomes perfect. [Letter to Hebrews]

We will be remembering his Resurrection each Sunday as we celebrate Eucharist together at which Jesus tells us “Do this in memory of Me” – not only gather in Eucharistic assembly but Do what He did: broken body and poured out blood for us, for all.

We will be those drawn to Jesus when he is lifted up.

We will seek first the kingdom of God and his holiness and be among those who receive blessings – besides persecutions.

And again and again, we will be beginning to let go, empty ourselves, and take our cross every day and walk in the steps of Jesus following his invitation: “Come and see.”

We will be aware in our lives that we should use the talents and interests and abilities, gifts of God to us, so that fruits of the Good News may abound.

And then, in Gospel paradox, we’ll know in our hearts that we are just useless servants since we only did what we were supposed to do.

We will examine our life every day according to Jesus’ statement: “Whoever is not with me is against me; whoever does not gather with me scatters.” If every action of our lives whether eating or drinking or anything, in the words of Paul, we are to do to the praise and glory of God, the easiest gauge is “with Jesus” or not – each action, each thought, each reparation for evil, each act of gratitude. And we are thus “gathering” into the Body of Christ, not “scattering” sapping energy from the Body.

You can see how the expectations of Jesus for a disciple presumes, then goes way and beyond, the Ten Commandments or the specific expectations [precepts] of the Church. There are many more examples from the Gospels and you will discover them by your reading and living the Word.

It is from this view of discipleship that we come together to proclaim the sacredness of life from beginning to end. When the disciple lives the commands of Jesus himself or herself then the proclamation will be “gentle and humble” inviting all to receive God’s loving care into their hearts.

It is only openness of hearts that will in the final analysis bring people into the culture of life thus bringing a monumental change away from the practices of abortion and contraception.

Having in mind God’s infinite love for each one He has called to life, as other persons see this in our attitude rejoicing to be with Jesus on the cross out of love for all, then we may give a simple explanation of the reality of abortion and contraception.

The first thing is Faith in God, Creator of heaven and earth. For agnostics and atheists another track must be taken along simply human values alone for which the Holy Spirit will guide you.

When we admit and believe in God the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, several things arise from it.

We thus believe very definitely that God calls each human being to life, and among them many to be disciples of Jesus.

This belief in the individual creative act and call of God to each human being is the basis for our respecting and loving life from its very beginning to its very end.

Where then is the sticking point of where evil enters?

It is this: in destroying life that has already begun one is cutting off outright the choice God has already made to bring that human being to life and stopping the potential for the growth of love in the world. This is abortion.

The second thing is contraception where we directly choose to frustrate the possibility of God choosing to bring a human being to life. Now a number of so-called contraceptive methods do not prevent conception at all; they simply make the womb inhospitable to receive an embryo and thus it is ejected, an abortion in reality destroying a life that has already begun. This is very different from a natural miscarriage.

Preventing ovulation is the only contraceptive that “only” frustrates God’s potential calls. Also permanently frustrating the possibility of God’s call to individuals are vasectomy, tubal ligation and removal of the womb that is not diseased.

A neurosurgeon told me many years ago that introducing such powerful chemicals into the human body is sure to mess things up. My amateur mind tells me that this is perhaps why so many couples find it difficult to get pregnant. The body has been filled with chemicals for so long, it does not know how to act naturally.

Now if we have such a strong stance upon God’s individual call to life by trying to give example to women not to abort, we should also be thinking of our own individual call in the mind and plan of God.

All throughout the Old and New Testament Scriptures, God makes special choices by announcing their conception beforehand doing what St. Paul says: God chose us from before the world began to be holy and blameless in his sight [Ephesians]. Each one of us has been called by God, not only babies in the womb that may not have a chance to live or even be conceived.

St. Paul exalts that in the one Holy Spirit there are so many and varied gifts. He gives a list as examples of what these gifts may be. This list is by no means exhaustive. Who can limit the Holy Spirit? But I’d like to point out to you some at the beginning of St. Paul’s list in the letter to the Galatians: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers in roles of service to the whole Body of Christ.

How many of you here present may be called in these ways of service? To be missionaries, to be priests, to be Brothers or Sisters for the glory of God in service to his people?

In the Church there are many types of religious communities with different charisms that the Holy Spirit gives for the Church. They cannot fully live their charism without members.

There are also varieties of Secular Institutes of single men and women living in the work-a-day world as Gospel examples.

And there are a number of general spiritual movements in the Church which encourage us to live the Gospel truly as Good News in our lives. Examples are currents in the Charismatic Renewal, Cursillos, Couples for Christ, Focolare, Neo-Catechumenal Way, and many others. All of us need sustenance in our Christian life from the community of Church beyond our Eucharist.

After an experience of members of the larger Church community coming together to witness for God’s gift of life, it is incumbent on us to seek out and grow in a model of Christian life suited to carry out living “holy and blameless” lives chosen “before the world began.”

Probably in your smaller groups when you get back to your campus, you might help each other in choosing how to respond to God's call.

I once participated in a retreat weekend of young people where the one who just gave a talk told us to break into groups and answer a question: "From those who are here who do you think would be a good priest?" After minutes of discussion I was very appreciative that they thought I would be a good priest. They also mentioned Dennis, one of the youth leaders; he is now a Franciscan priest.

Look for qualities among yourselves and tell one another "You would be a good Sister or Brother to everyone; you could be a good priest; you could be an announcer of Good News, a missionary." And so on.

My wish for you who have witnessed for life today is that you be attentive to the signs of God's blessings in your ordinary life to become people of Light for the world, Salt for the earth, and Leaven in our society today.