

Racism is a Life Issue

Last week hundreds of thousands of Catholics and other pro-life supporters gathered in Washington, D.C. and other venues to again focus attention on the victims of abortions. Much will be said and written about the intrinsic evil that is abortion, and no national holiday or statue in our nation's capital honors the deaths of these innocents. Pro-life marchers took time off of work, spent their own money to travel, and made arrangements that included hours in cars, buses and planes to reinforce their message. In the 45 years since *Roe v. Wade*, the enthusiastic commitment to be heard has not faded.

But abortion is not the only life issue. Among others are euthanasia, assisted suicide, and capital punishment. And too many good, pro-life Catholics remain blissfully unaware of the connection between racism and the repudiation of God-given life.

Of all the moral issues that beget political campaign slogans, racism seems to make people squirm the most. Abortion has its “reproductive rights” supporters, capital punishment its “law and order” proponents, and suicide has “death with dignity” apologists. But too few in the pro-life movement seem ready to take their arguments into the racism conversation. And too many in the “pro-choice” movement do not shudder when their actions and beliefs are traced to the stridently racist eugenics pedigree of Planned Parenthood and its founder,

Charitably Speaking



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‘As bishops, we unequivocally state that racism is a life issue. Accordingly, we will not cease to speak forcefully against and work toward ending racism.’

—Open Wide our Hearts, The
Enduring Call to Love, A Pastoral
Letter against Racism 2018, United
States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Margaret Sanger.

All of the Church’s pro-life teachings are rooted in justice. But, as St. Augustine observed, we live in a world that is not always governed by justice, but by a “lust to

dominate.” Whether it’s taking fatal sides against a developing baby, determining that a person or class of people, e.g., the elderly or disabled, is unworthy of life, or by deciding that a race or ethnic group is somehow inferior because of skin color or country of origin, the lust to dominate is a force that must be met head on. We are called by Church and country to treat people as equals in the arenas of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Really, what else is there?

Catholic Charities’ mission statement calls for us to work with other people of good will to advocate for justice. Just as two years ago we started emphasizing human trafficking as a target for education and exposure, so too must we now speak and act to expose and oppose the continuing existence of racism that comes from that lust to dominate.

The injustice of racism and abortion are attacks on human life. They disproportionately affect people of color and other minorities who have the

greatest numbers in jail and in poverty, and with the least access to health care, healthy environments and healthy diets. Let’s use January’s focus in Washington and our diocese to respect life and value the importance of being truly and completely “pro-life.”