

Remember Me

by Fr. Shenan J. Boquet, **SEPTEMBER 10, 2016**

“Even if a mother could forget her child, I will not forget you. I have carved you in the palm of my hand.” – Isaiah 49:15-16

Today is the National Day of Remembrance for Aborted Children, and across our country pro-lifers are honoring the memory of little boys and girls whose lives were violently ended at the hands of the very people who should have welcomed and loved them – their mothers and fathers. These precious little ones are victims of a culture and society growing increasingly more violent.

It is fitting that this day falls adjacent to September 11, the anniversary of the terrorist attacks in New York and Arlington, Virginia. Though the number of lives taken by abortion is much larger than that taken on that terrible day fifteen years ago, both acts of mass murder rely on the same evil, the denial of the humanity of others.

In the Culture of Death, the fundamental and immutable value of each human life is rejected to sustain a self-consumed culture that destroys more than one million unborn children every year in the United States and nearly 55 million globally. This irrational and immoral behavior contributes to the pervasive culture of violence escalating in our nation and in our world. Even using the word abortion shields us from its reality, keeping the humanity of the child distant and shadowed.

For these innocent children, there is no story to tell about their lives. There are no names to recollect or pictures to share. No birthdays or special occasions to celebrate. There are no “firsts” to remember – a first smile, first tooth, first walk or first day of school. There is no burial place among his family. For the majority, they are labeled “medical waste” and disposed of.

There is something tragically wrong when society ignores the humanity of the unborn child or worse yet, is indifferent toward the violence done to him/her. In 1994, Saint Teresa of Kolkata during the [National Prayer Breakfast](#) said:

Any country that accepts abortion is not teaching its people to love, but to use any violence to get what they want. This is why the greatest destroyer of love and peace is abortion.... I feel that the greatest destroyer of peace today is abortion, because it is a war against the child, a direct killing of the innocent child, murder by the mother herself. And if we accept that a mother can kill even her own child, how can we tell other people not to kill one another?

The argument in favor of legal abortion rests upon a deception—keeping the science obscure and language about the beginning of life ambiguous.

It's not a baby... It's just a blob of tissue. Or... It's not a human person... It's a potential human being.

Any distinction about the worth of the unborn child based on his stage of development is entirely arbitrary, and when abortion is the result of such distinctions, it is the cruelest form of discrimination.

The unborn child in the womb is not a potential life, but a life with potential – a teenager, brother, sister, mother, father, doctor, lawyer, teacher.

It is interesting that an unborn child wanted by his/her parents is called a baby and given a name, but the same set of parents could decide that the same baby is a “fetus” unworthy of life because he is unwanted.



Life begins at the moment of conception/fertilization. **There is no debate about the science**, only denial from those for whom it is inconvenient. Human development begins when a male gamete unites with a female gamete to produce a single cell, a zygote. This highly specialized, totipotent cell marks the beginning of each of us as a unique individual with our own genetic code. The 23 chromosomes in the sperm join the 23 chromosomes in the ovum to make a genetically unique human being with 46 chromosomes. Since the baby is genetically unique at fertilization, it is inaccurate to say he/she is merely another part of his/her mother's body. At fertilization our genetic make-up is complete including gender and eye and hair color. The heart begins to beat at 18 to 21 days after fertilization. There are brain waves at 6 weeks, and at 8 weeks all body systems are present, including the baby's fingers and toes.

Most abortions take place after the 8th week of the pregnancy, about 5 weeks after the baby's heart has started to beat. Abortion silences the beating heart and active brain waves of the individual maturing in the womb of his mother.

The Day of Remembrance is a chance to remember the humanity of the more than 55 million boys and girls whose lives were violently—and legally—ended.

To transform our culture and society from its perilous path, we must affirm and protect all life, especially the most vulnerable among us. Pope Saint John Paul II understood what was necessary to build a Culture of Life where the most vulnerable are defended, welcomed, and cared for:

The first and fundamental step towards this cultural transformation consists in forming consciences with regard to the incomparable and inviolable worth of every human life. It is of the greatest importance to re-establish the essential connection between life and freedom. These are inseparable goods: where one is violated, the other also ends up being violated. There is no true freedom where life is not welcomed and loved; and there is no fullness of life except in freedom. (Evangelium Vitae n. 96)

Today we remember those who have been killed and the survivors, those who have been harmed by abortion. Let us also renew our commitment to abolish abortion in law, eradicate the idea that it is acceptable in culture, and love those in our lives who mistakenly see it as a solution to a difficult situation. Let's love them by telling them the truth and praying for and with them. Let's continue to live and promote chastity as the life- and freedom-affirming virtue that it is.