

Capitol Comments:

Mother's Day: Remembering and renewing the commitment to life

By Maria Frederick, Public Relations and Outreach Coordinator for the Texas Catholic Conference

What do you do for your mom on mother's day? Take her out shopping, buy her jewelry or flowers? Perhaps give her some much needed relaxation from her day-to-day tasks? These are all great ways to thank our mothers for, well, being our moms. But do we stop to think that our thanks is not only for our moms *being* our moms, but for their "yes" to our lives, their "yes" to God's blessing of a child?

The Bible has numerous references to God's blessing of children to women. Sarah, the wife of Abraham, is blessed with a child in her old age. Elizabeth, mother of John the Baptist, also becomes a mother later in her life.

And of course we have the story of the young, unwed woman who learns of her pregnancy. She is all alone, and when her betrothed finds out about the pregnancy, he plans to dismiss her quietly. And yet, Mary's "yes" to God's blessing, literally an affirmative response to God that His will be done, is ultimately a yes that allows for the salvation of all of humanity.

Unfortunately, Mary's committed, unhesitating, "yes" is not the response of all mothers. Some mothers today are faced with daunting questions—How do I continue my education? How do I financially support this child and the rest of my family? Can I raise a child alone?—and have concerns, fear, and doubt about their new status as a mother.

Our Catholic teaching tells us that life begins at conception and we believe that a child is a blessing of God. The joy of motherhood begins months before the baby is born. And yet, in light of the tragedy of abortion in our country, we have to realize that today's mothers are faced with the false choice of rejecting the child that God has entrusted to them. Countless mothers in America, however, make the tragic decision to reject God's gift of life and instead fall for the false solution of abortion. On Mother's day, these mothers will not be able to celebrate with their lost children.

In Faithful Citizenship, the Bishops tell us "there are some things we must never do, as individuals or as a society, because they are always incompatible with love of God and neighbor. These intrinsically evil acts must always be rejected and never supported...Opposition to intrinsically evil acts also prompts us to recognize our positive duty to contribute to the common good and act in solidarity with those in need. Both opposing evil *and* doing good are essential obligations. The right to life implies and is linked to other human rights—to the basic goods that every human person needs to live and thrive (*Faithful Citizenship*, 22, 24, 25)."

In our legislative advocacy, the Texas Catholic Conference strives to both oppose evil and do good. We oppose funding for abortion providers and we oppose any legislation that would allow or fund embryonic stem cell research which destroys unborn children. We support distribution of the state-produced "A Woman's Right to Know" brochure which educates women on pregnancy and resources available to them. We support funding for the Texas Pregnancy Care Network, which provides funding for crisis pregnancy care networks around the state. We also support increased funding for Children's Health

Insurance and Medicaid, which help families with access to health care, and we support increasing awareness for umbilical cord blood donation, which allows women to donate adult stem cells that can help treat other families. To learn more about the Texas Catholic Conference Legislative priorities, and to receive legislative updates, visit TXcatholic.org.

This Mother's day, let's commit to do more than buy flowers, jewelry, or just give some time off to our mothers. Let's honor our mothers by helping other mothers around the state that are hesitant to welcome the gift of a child that God has given them. Through education, prayer, donating time and items to pregnancy help centers, teaching young people about chastity, and raising awareness for post-abortion counseling, we can foster a culture of life that helps women feel confident about themselves and about in their choice to choose life for their child, and we can aid mothers who have chosen abortion in their healing. Contact your Diocesan Respect Life director or Catholic Charities office for more information on how you can help.

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