

Jan. 9/10, 2016

Thoughts from the pastor,

SEAS Parish was blessed for years to have Fr. Joe Hanefeldt, now Bishop Hanefeldt, as pastor. One of the reasons that he was so great was that he was also the Pro-Life Coordinator for the Archdiocese and was on top of all the things that were going on around the area, the country and even the world. I still get some of publications that helped him get informed for that task. Some of you won't remember him because he left for another assignment eight and a half years ago.

A lot has happened on the Pro-Life scene in those years since he has been gone. Keeping up with it is not easy. But the basic thing that we need to realize that that the war is not over, not even close. It is worth taking a quick look at some of the battle fronts. About sixty years ago the birth control pill was first being proscribed for women. A little more than ten years after that (1968) Pope Paul VI wrote *Humane Vitae* to warn people of the dangers artificial means of birth control would mean for the family. Five years after that (1973) the Supreme Court ruled to legalize abortion, which shouldn't have been needed if the pope had been wrong and the people marketing the pill were right, because they said abortion would be unnecessary if the pill was available.

Five years after that (1978) I was ordained and one of the biggest things I remember worrying about was that some of the couples preparing for marriage were starting to live together before marriage. One of the reasons that they were doing this is because they were uncertain about marriage but were not willing to wait to start their sexual relationship and the pill made that workable. The reason they were uncertain about marriage was that divorce was becoming more and more common, another thing Paul VI had warned us about. By thirty years ago, most women, including Catholics, were using artificial birth control because they didn't believe the pope even though the things he had predicted, like an increase in infidelity, divorce, abortion, were already happening. All of these things are attacks on what we called the family. Few people wanted to listen to the warnings from the church.

Now it is no longer women using the pill but it is being pushed on young girls also. In past letters I have mentioned some of the other sexual issues that have been turned upside down in the last twenty years. Now the battle is being fought on many more fronts. There are new attacks on the family from so many areas. We used to boycott TV shows because of their inappropriate content. Now it is tough to find appropriate TV shows that would have not been seen as inappropriate fifty years ago. Marriage is now portrayed in ways that no one in the history of the human race would ever have deemed appropriate. At this point it is actually ridiculous to even try to define marriage in any way that would fit our current circumstances. The result of this confusion is that there is almost no model for marriage for our young people to work towards.

So what is the answer? As usual it is in Jesus Christ and His Church. His Holy Spirit continues to work in the Church to retain the model of the sacredness of marriage. This is why it is so important for couples to look to the Church to find that model and live by it. This means receiving that Sacrament of Marriage and not just living together. It means Sacramentalizing a marriage that didn't happen in the Church.

The answer also involves getting involved in the battle if you are not already a warrior. If you are thinking it is time to start you can find opportunities to learn about the war and ways of fighting on the other side of this letter. One of the things you will find is that one of the biggest battles we face is with Planned Parenthood. This multi-billion dollar industry is heavily invested in destroying the family because healthy families don't tend to have abortions. This is a part of the battle that we can all be a part of, but it might mean joining us in prayer or avoiding groups that support them.

God bless you,
Fr. Frank