

Videos should wake us all up
Cutting up aborted fetus and selling its parts a human tragedy
By Bishop David O'Connell

I am sure that most people who have watched recent video revelations and news reports showing the harvesting and selling of organs and body parts from aborted human fetuses by Planned Parenthood are horrified.

Although the Catholic Church in the United States has always been highly suspicious and hugely critical of Planned Parenthood because of its support for abortion as an aspect of “reproductive rights,” the dissection of aborted human fetuses goes far beyond what any decent and rational human being could perceive or present as a right. It’s bad enough that anyone attempts to justify abortion at all, for any reason. But this wholesale slaughter and dismemberment of human fetuses for profit has “pulled the curtain back” from Planned Parenthood’s sponsorship of an industry that has consistently attacked the dignity and value of human life for many years. Isn’t it tragically ironic that those who claim the fetus is not human life as a defense for abortion at the same time sell dismembered fetus parts as a means to repair or prolong human life?

I was sickened by what I saw on the videos but even more disgusted by the motivation behind the activities they portrayed. To see medical professionals drinking wine over lunch or others chuckle as they are describing the procedures involved and a price list, with an aborted fetus in front of them, is simply unconscionable. More than ever before, it just seemed to me like the people involved just don’t care, I have always opposed abortion, not because I am a Catholic bishop and priest, and not simply because I am Catholic. I have always opposed abortion because I am human and it is wrong to kill another human being. I have the same opposition to physician-assisted suicide and so-called “mercy killing” for the same reason. I have the same opposition to capital punishment for the same reason. I have the same opposition to letting the poor starve to death and the elderly languish and die alone for the same reason.

I know well the contrary arguments and rationalizations. I have heard and read them countless times and I disagree with them absolutely. Opinions — including my own — polls, majority votes and even laws and judicial decisions do not make something right or wrong.

There has to be some point when all of us as humans acknowledge the most basic thing we humans all share — human life — has its own right, one that trumps every other right we claim because, after all is said and done and argued, human life is the reason we have any rights in the first place. Without human life, there are no rights. no matter what rights people think they have.

This current portrayal of the outrageous actions of Planned Parenthood is not something that can be easily dismissed simply as a “Catholic issue” with the Church, once again, allegedly imposing its views and moral code upon society. Neither is it merely a partisan political issue, Democrat vs. Republican, or a right vs. left ideological subject for debate. This is a profoundly human issue requiring a profoundly human response from decent, rational, moral, feeling human beings. We belong to one another on this planet.

We are part of a common humanity that cannot be denied. We have a responsibility for one another.

We are so willing to fight for the protection of animals; to fight for air or water or land or oil; to fight for equality and an end to discrimination. What are we really fighting for, if we have no respect for life, all human life, at every stage? Who decides who lives and who dies and what the decision is worth in the marketplace?

What do we label or deny as the true subject of human rights? Can we ever put a price on human life, no matter how small, no matter how vulnerable, and allow its destruction and sale in such wholesale fashion? Are “reproductive rights” exercised through abortions worth this price? Does the “tolerance” that has become a social obsession include sitting by when such horrors become just another story on the evening news?

Dear God, please bring us to our knees. And if you don’t believe in God, then just hope that witnessing this horror in itself will bring us to our senses. Our common humanity depends upon our response. Enough. Stop. No more.