

Homily110616

## TOLERANCE FOR SOME BUT NOT FOR ALL

(Tolerance is sympathy for or indulgence of beliefs/practices differing from one's own. Intolerance is an unwillingness to accept views, beliefs or practices different from one's own.)

Yesterday morning we had the memorial Mass for one of our longtime parishioners Marcella Deysher, who died at 88 years of age. A few years back she and her husband Jim entered a retirement community but asked that they be allowed to be buried form Saint Anthony's when the time came. And for Marcella, the time had come. Marcella had been the president of our Pro-Life Committee here for many years and this is what I said of her at her Mass.

*To me, the essence of Marcella was in her devotion to and protection of the unborn. She was our Pro-Life Representative for many years. She was fierce in her love for and defense of those who have no voice. She gave them a voice—hers. And she was an elegant spokesman for the unborn and she sought to create a world where no woman would ever have to be confronted with such a choice. And she cared not what others thought of her or criticisms that came her way because of this singular conviction about the defense of the unborn. She truly set her face like flint in their defense. So here is what I think. At the gates of heaven when she died there was a cohort of little ones who never made it into life in this world but whom God took to himself dispatched from their mother's wombs. They made it into eternal life. They were sent by the Lord to the gates of the kingdom to bid their defender welcome to the kingdom and to present the crown of victory for a job well done.*

When the Memorial Mass was finished I grabbed a quick bite to eat and headed upstairs to work on today's homily. Not much was flowing. I have been preaching a lot lately and I felt that the font was pretty dry. I have learned in such moments that the Lord will provide. I was just at that point when the front door bell rang and I went to answer it and there was a woman at the door who was running for political office and going door to door and was asking to see Rev. Thomas Vattothuparambil. Now, she was looking for little Father Thomas who left here in 2009 (7 years ago) and who died 2 years ago in India. I explained all of that. And she then asked me if I was planning on voting and if I were could she count on my vote and could Hillary Clinton? I said that I was struggling with both of the candidates at the top of their Party's ticket. She countered with all the good work that Secretary Clinton had done for women and children.

I responded with, "She has not been supportive for children yet to be born." "Yes, she has but she supports a woman's right to choose." "But what has she done to protect the child in the womb at its most defenseless?" "Well, a lot of people claim to be for the children but

they really aren't." "Well, I think we as Catholics have a pretty good track record of caring for children after they are born and before." Then she said that she personally had been Catholic herself once upon a time and that she was committed to helping women and children. I said the number of abortions since Roe v. Wade is 60 million according to the Guttmacher Institute. She granted that they are the ones who keep the records. I then said that I had to try to get my homily together and she moved on. Our meeting was not at all hostile but it was frank.

Sixty million abortions hardly sounds as if our country is really trying to protect the child in the womb. The truth is we value life in the womb but we value it less than we value the choice of the fully grown person. That is our culture's assessment. And there are some who would try to foist that view upon everyone in our society like the Greeks in the first reading tried to force that family to eat the pork that was forbidden to them by their faith convictions. That too was pitting culture against faith. That was 2200 years ago. But the realities are the same, whether it's ISIS forcing individuals to convert or killing those who will not or our own culture trying to shout down any voice of faith that does not toe the established mantra in the areas of marriage, sexuality or life, it is clear that people of faith (and we Catholics are definitely that) are not experiencing tolerance from others and this after we have been at times exceedingly tolerant of others.

And so this is where we live and this is one issue of many that we face. Racial disharmony, unemployment, a violent culture of drugs of all kinds, spending out of control, who should be allowed into our country and under what circumstances? There's a long list. Interestingly we had exposition of the Blessed Sacrament Friday night into Saturday. At midnight there were 25 people in the Mary Chapel praying. At 2:30 AM there were fifteen. And the morning had a chapel full. A number of people were there the whole night. Praying for our country. Some of them are not able to vote. They are able to pray. And pray they did.

I am voting on Tuesday. I know that I can cast my ballot for a candidate or against a candidate or I can abstain from voting for an established candidate and either leave the choice blank or write in a name. Each is a possibility for me. Where do I think my one ballot will do the most good? I have spent a lot of time in prayer, a lot of time listening, a lot of time reading, a lot of time discussing. Now we each have to make a decision knowing full well that we have no idea which is actually the better person to elect. We must seek the Lord's enlightenment and then cast our ballots by our lights.

I also know this. Whoever is elected Tuesday night, the Lord will still be the Lord, his grace will still surround us, his love will maintain and we will weather this outcome as we have weathered presidential outcomes for the past 240 years. Let us pray for the grace of courage and wisdom—for all—on Tuesday.