

Pastoral Thoughts from Rev. Kevin Donoho:

I want to take a moment and share some thoughts with you today. I wrestled with trying to select the perfect words, but I sensed the moment needed to be less about choosing perfect words and more about you hearing the heart of your Pastor.

We, as a church, believe in the sanctity of life. We don't apologize for that...for it is who we are at our very core.

I want to read to you our statement from the Manual of the Church of the Nazarene and then follow it up with some thoughts.

"Induced Abortion. The Church of the Nazarene affirms the sanctity of human life as established by [God](#) the Creator and believes that such sanctity extends to the child not yet born. Life is a gift from God. All human life, including life developing in the womb, is created by God in His image and is, therefore, to be nurtured, supported, and protected. From the moment of conception, a child is a human being with all of the developing characteristics of human life, and this life is dependent on the mother for its continued development. Therefore, we believe that human life must be respected and protected from the moment of conception. We oppose induced abortion by any means, when used for either personal convenience or population control. We oppose laws that allow abortion. Realizing that there are rare, but real medical conditions wherein the mother or the unborn child, or both, could not survive the pregnancy, termination of the pregnancy should only be made after sound medical and Christian counseling.

Responsible opposition to abortion requires our commitment to the initiation and support of programs designed to provide care for mothers and children. The crisis of an unwanted pregnancy calls for the community of believers (represented only by those for whom knowledge of the crisis is appropriate) to provide a context of love, prayer, and counsel. In such instances, support can take the form of counseling centers, homes for expectant mothers, and the creation or utilization of Christian adoption services." (Paragraphs 30-30.1).

I woke up Friday morning to learn that Roe vs Wade had been overturned. As I turned on the news, I was overwhelmed with emotion. It truly seemed unbelievable. I was struck by what that would mean for life (and the value of the unborn child) and the voice it gives those who can't speak for themselves.

Then I went to social media...and saw a firestorm of posts and I was overwhelmed with emotion as well. I saw people tearing each other part and the great divide broke my heart.

A few things that came to mind:

- 1. We don't apologize for position, it is who we are as a people...But, we also lead with love, it is who we are as a people. Be careful what you say, what you post, the posture you take. I wonder if this is a time for less social media arguments and more cups of coffee to discuss, listen, and love with those that might think different than you.*
- 2. This is an opportunity to reflect Jesus. We are not merely "anti-abortion, we are pro-life." We have more responsibility at this point than we have had in a long time to support our people on the front lines (including those that are working in our pregnancy centers). We have the responsibility to provide loving care and support for young women in very difficult positions, to step up in the areas of fostering and adoption, to initiate and support programs to help mothers and children when they need us most, and working to ensure that health care and childcare is available and affordable to those in need. Wouldn't it be beautiful if the Church led the way in this new day!¹*
- 3. Our mission is to lead people into a growing relationship with Jesus. Let's remember that these decisions are deeply personal for people. Many lives have been touched by abortion, adoption, and decisions related to this decision. It is ok that people know our positions on social issues but I hope and pray that even when those positions don't align that our posture is one of compassion, love, grace and forgiveness that point others to the evidence of Christ who lives within us.*
- 4. **A personal story:** I remember pastoring years ago when a group of women came to discuss with me their passion for their pro-life position. The meeting was going exactly as I expected but then it took a turn. One of the older ladies in the group said, I don't know that you ladies know this, but I had an abortion. You could feel the atmosphere change. The position didn't change, but the posture in the conversation changed for sure. Whether you are sharing with a friend, or in the lobby after church, you never know the story of the person sitting next to you, or walking by you. Jesus, help us to know how to walk this path.*
- 5. Thanks for letting me share my heart with you today. This is a difficult and polarizing world we live in...but let's commit to live in a way that reflects the heart of our God as we come together in prayer.*

¹ Inspired by a Facebook Post from District Superintendent Dale Schaeffer.

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