

26th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A) - Respect Life Sunday
10-4-2026 Homily

I. Introduction

If we were moral detectives, examining a murder case and trying to figure out what made it possible for someone to kill a fellow human being, we'd discover that the first step is always lying. A murderer must lie to himself and convince himself that his victim doesn't deserve respect and isn't worthy of living, and that killing the person will be easy or satisfying and beneficial, and won't have any negative consequences. In the Gospel the tenant farmers in the vineyard were murderers, but first of all they were liars. They made an agreement with the owner to share the produce, but they had no intention of keeping this agreement—and when the moment of truth came, their tenaciousness in clinging to their dishonesty led them to kill first the owner's servants, and then his son—thereby ensuring a terrible death for themselves when the owner took vengeance.

Satan is the father of lies, and those who let themselves become ensnared in his deceptions inevitably experience spiritual death. Truth is life-giving; lies eventually led to self-destruction. Today's observance of Right to Life Sunday is an important occasion to remind ourselves of this inevitable progression, and it's quite apparent in the history of the pro-abortion movement in the United States. Dr. Bernard Nathanson was a leading figure in early efforts to legalize abortion; after he repented and converted to Catholicism, he admitted that he and his colleagues made up fictional opinion polls to help convince the news media and state legislators that there was strong public support for allowing abortion. In 1973 the U.S. Supreme Court invalidated all state and national laws forbidding abortion. The plaintiff in one of the cases the Court used in doing this, a woman named Norma McCorvey, herself later converted to Catholicism and became active in the pro-life movement; she too admitted that her case was based on a lie. So-called "counselors" and other abortion-clinic workers were trained to lie to potential clients, ignoring inconvenient facts and telling them whatever they had to in order to get them to undergo an abortion—so as to make as much money as possible for the clinic. One woman who worked at an abortion clinic in Livonia later said, "The women were never given any type of alternatives to abortion. They were never told about adoption agencies, that there were people out there willing to help them, to give them homes to live in, to provide them with care, and even financial support."

The world's largest provider of abortion is Planned Parenthood. Even though they claim that's just one of many "services" they provide to their clients, the truth is that for every adoption referral they make, they perform or commit 138 abortions. It's also instructive that the magazine *Consumer Reports* tested the effectiveness of 23 different brands of condoms, and the type of condom given out at Planned Parenthood clinics just happens to be the worst-rated of the 23. This strongly suggests that Planned Parenthood is using the lie of "safe sex" to help ensure continued demand for its abortion services. The whole abortion industry is based on a lie, and our society is lying to itself if it believes that we can continue murdering over 1 million unborn children a year without any negative consequences. Just as lies and death go hand-in-hand, so truth and life are inseparably linked. A commitment to truth is essential if we want our earthly lives to be happy and fruitful, and if we want to prepare ourselves for eternal life in the Kingdom of Heaven, Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life; He is the cornerstone—and our lives will certainly collapse and crumble unless they're rooted in Him.

II. Development

Accountability is a word people in our society don't use very often, and certainly don't like to think about or hear—but this theme of personal responsibility comes through very clearly in today's readings. The prophet Isaiah used the analogy of a vineyard to show that because the people of Israel had been untrue to God by ignoring their covenant with Him and breaking His commandments, the Lord in turn allowed them to be conquered by their enemies. Rejecting God's truth inevitably leads to disaster; no other outcome is possible. This is true for societies, and—as Jesus shows in the Gospel—it's also true for us as individuals. Those who lie to the owner of the vineyard, and use their lies as a justification for their evil deeds, will experience the terrible fulness of divine justice; God will punish them and entrust their authority and possessions to others who *will* produce a harvest of righteousness. Everyone is accountable to God, but this doesn't have to be a frightening message; St. Paul commands us in the 2nd Reading to have no anxiety at all, and to think about whatever is true, honorable, just, lovely, and gracious. Seeking and living in God's truth can and should be a joyful experience, for rooting ourselves in the truth assures that on the day of judgment, we will be found worthy to stand in God's presence.

III. Conclusion

If it's the case that our society is ignoring or even rejecting the truth that all human life is sacred in God's eyes, it must also be said that many Christians are ignoring the truth that they have a personal responsibility to help defend human life and dignity. The Catholic Church has upheld this fundamental truth more vigorously and consistently than any other organization, group, or religious denomination, and we as Catholics can rightly be proud of this fact—but that doesn't excuse us of our personal responsibility to be involved in the right-to-life movement in some manner. We can do this through our financial contributions to pro-life groups, through participating in pro-life demonstrations and events, through letting our elected representatives know our views and committing ourselves to voting only for pro-life candidates, through writing letters or sending emails to the editor of newspapers and TV news shows, through joining or volunteering or otherwise supporting a local pro-life agency or crisis pregnancy center, and above all by praying for an end to abortion and every other assault on human life and dignity, and praying for the well-being of everyone involved in or affected by these things—including the conversion of everyone in the abortion industry.

Truth will ultimately prevail; the only question is how many people will cling to Satan's lies to the bitter end. Jesus does not want anyone to be lost, and as the cases of Dr. Bernard Nathanson and Norma McCorvey show, His Church has room for even the worst sinners, if only they'll humbly accept the truth of their need for conversion. A 20th century Catholic philosopher [Etienne Gilson] once said, "It is not hard to find the truth. What is hard is not to run away from it when you have found it." May later generations never say of ours that we ran away when confronted with the terrible truth about abortion; instead, may it be said of each one of us that we honestly opened our eyes and our ears to God's message of life, and that we courageously proclaimed it in our words and deeds.