



DIOCESE OF FORT WAYNE - SOUTH BEND

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Ash Wednesday 2019

Dear Friends in Christ,

It was not only very disappointing, but horrifying, that the U.S. Senate recently failed to pass the Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act. Those who voted against this bill extended *Roe v. Wade*'s license for killing unborn children to killing newborn babies born alive following an attempted abortion. It is hard to believe that our nation allows infanticide. It was horrifying that weeks earlier the legislature of New York State, with the support of the governor, had removed the protections of their laws for infants born during an abortion. I was hopeful that our U.S. Congress would have sought their protection.

The Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act would have protected the lives of babies born during or after an abortion attempt. It would have required doctors to provide the same care as they would for any other child born at that same gestational age if an abortion had not been attempted. It would have required the newborn to be immediately transferred to a hospital, thus ensuring the baby was provided with appropriate neonatal care outside the influence of the abortionist who was paid to end the baby's life.

I am grateful that our two Indiana senators voted in favor of the Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Act. The vote to advance the bill was 53 to 44, with 3 not voting. The bill did not advance since 60 votes were needed to overcome a filibuster and pass the bill.

Where do we go from here? I am hoping that this vote will be a wake-up call to the American people. A recent poll showed that 77% of Americans agree that babies born during an abortion attempt should be given medical treatment like other babies. Hopefully, more people will be motivated to let their legislators know of their abhorrence that our laws do not require basic medical or humanitarian care for infants who survive an abortion.

I ask that we join in prayer throughout our diocese for an end to infanticide, using this simple prayer:

Jesus, Lord of Life, transform the hearts of all elected leaders to recognize that infanticide is wrong and must not be tolerated. Open hearts and minds to recognize and defend the precious gift of every human life.

Lent is a season in which we do battle against evil through prayer and works of penance and charity. Let us do battle against the culture of death and let us work and pray for a new culture of life!

We are journeying towards Easter. In the Sequence that the Church sings before the Gospel on Easter Sunday, one of the verses says: *Death and life have contended in that combat stupendous: The Prince of Life, who died, reigns immortal.* These words assure us that in Christ the forces of death are defeated.

May Saint Michael the Archangel intercede for us and our nation!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ *Kevin C. Rhoades*

Most Reverend Kevin C. Rhoades
Bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend

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