The Pro-Life Feminist

Lindsi Reller

Being pro-life isn’t about taking away women’s choices. It is about giving a voice to the voiceless.

Ring Ring. The school bell rings and the last of us shuffle into our Moral Theology class. Today we start our unit on abortion. I’m personally looking forward to it.

I was raised in a Catholic family that goes to Church every Sunday, and I have attended private Catholic school my whole life. I knew what abortion was and I knew that I was pro-life, but abortion had never really crossed my mind. I had put it on the backburner, that is until sophomore year.

In my sophomore religion class I learned the truth about abortion. I learned that abortion wasn’t just something that happened on occasion or in extreme circumstances. I learned the dark secrets of our screwed up world. I learned that humanity crossed a line that we should never have crossed. Gave ourselves the power no one should have: the power to end an innocent life.

40-50 million babies are aborted every year around the world, with the USA accounting for at least 1 million of them.

Most believe that after an abortion their problem is solved. They cut the chain attaching the ball to their lives, so everything should go back to normal, right?

Wrong.
Women who have had an abortion are 81% more likely to develop a mental illness than those who have not. 67% of women who have had an abortion also report having symptoms of PTSD. In the end, you will never change the fact that you are losing your child.

The state of Georgia has decided to take a stand. Lawmakers signed into law a bill that will make abortion illegal after a fetal heartbeat is detected. We still haven’t made abortion completely illegal yet, but baby steps. This bill gives me hope that we are moving into a future where every child will be given the voice and rights they deserve.

The bill doesn’t go without opposition, though. Many women believe that lawmakers should have no say in what women do to their bodies, saying “my ovaries, my choice.” But in the case of abortion, it’s not just your life in question. There is a living human growing inside of you that wants a chance to live and make their own mark on the world.

This then leads to another concern: when is the baby considered living?

This question is one of the most debated when it comes to justifying abortion. As a Catholic, I believe that the zygote is a living human. Others believe a heartbeat marks life, while others believe breath is the key.

According to many scientists, though, the human life begins at contraception: “The life cycle of mammals begins when a sperm enters an egg.” If the human life begins at contraception, then how can we justify putting our life before our living child’s?

As Mother Teresa says, “It’s a poverty to decide that a child must die so that you may live as you wish.”

Abortion is also believed to give women more control over their lives. Men don’t have to walk around with back pain and cankles for nine months, so why should we? But if you abort your child, aren’t you giving up one of the biggest advantages you have over men, motherhood? My mom and I have a special bond that I will never have with father. I am not saying that I don’t love my father because of course I do, but he will never know me as well as my mom knows me. As a child, when we went out to eat I would ask her “would I like this?” as if she knew my tastes better than I did. Abortion takes away that experience for millions.

Along with being a pro-life advocate I am a feminist. So when I express my views I am asked, “If you’re pro-life then are you anti-women? I thought you were a feminist.”

Being pro-life isn’t about taking away women’s choices. It is about giving a voice to the voiceless. Giving a basic human right to everyone.

As feminists, our goal is to give everyone equal opportunities. So how can we call ourselves feminists if we take that right away for millions every year? We cannot expect
others to give us the rights that we won’t even give our own children. We have no right to say we do what we preach if we take away something as simple as the right to life. As Audrey Deho defines it, feminism is “fighting for people no matter their gender identity, their social status, their class, their sexual orientation, it’s about fighting for their humanity without exceptions or conditions.”

Another thing I disagree with in regards to abortion is abortion in the case of rape. When I object to abortion in the case of rape, I am not trying to undermine the seriousness of rape or the victims of rape themselves. Rape is one of the biggest human rights violations, along with abortion. When a woman is raped and it results in a pregnancy and they decide to get an abortion, they have to realize that they aren’t just aborting the rapist’s child but their child as well. The baby is still 50% theirs.

Instead of fighting fire with fire and making the child the problem, we should be giving blame to the rapist. There should be stricter laws and punishment in the case of rape. Trials regarding rape and sexual assault shouldn’t be taken as lightly as they are. They shouldn’t be excused and women shouldn’t be called liars or emotional for coming forward. There should also be more and better outreach programs for those who have been raped, especially those who get pregnant as a result.

When women get pregnant, whether as a result of rape or not, they feel alone, like they have to do it all by themselves. As a society we should be holding the father to a higher standard. A pregnancy doesn’t just make a mother but a father too. Our child support system is lacking in that it doesn’t work to make a father more involved. Instead, it focuses on just collecting payments. Even in that it lacks: many payments aren’t made, and mothers get stuck in legal fees trying to get the help they deserve.

Even when a father is present, there is always the question of quality of life. When parents find out their child will be born with major birth defects they think they have the right to decide if they should let their child be left into this world. They confuse a selfless act with a selfish act. We have no right to decide who has a “good quality of life” or a “bad quality of life.” No human should have control over life and death.

The next case is that of teen pregnancy and unplanned pregnancies. In these cases, we must not forget adoption. There are long waiting lists of families who want and will love your child. There are also hundreds of outreach programs willing to help with bills and daycare so you can still work.

Living with the problem of abortion, I pray, I hope, and I dream of a day when abortion is a thing of the past, a myth, a whispered story. Until that day, I will continue to fight and raise my voice for those who cannot, because if no one does what will happen to our world? I believe Mother Teresa conveys it best when she says “We must not be surprised when we hear of murderers, of killings, of war, of hatred. If a mother can kill her own child, what is left but for us to kill each other.”

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