

AFFIRMING LIFE

ROCKY MOUNTAIN DISTRICT LCMS

Martin Luther on Abortion and the Matter of Words

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Words and their context matter. When you change the words, you change the meaning and context. We have seen and heard this approach in the use of subjective language and double thinking.

Doublethink (from Orwell's book 1984) is an indoctrination process wherein you are simultaneously expected to accept two conflicting concepts as the truth even though you believe that they are at odds with one another. For example, as I have heard some politicians say: "I am prolife, but I support embryonic stem cell research", or "I am prolife, yet I will not speak against a women's right to choose to have an abortion." Lastly, "I am prolife, yet I support human abortion up to 5 or 15 weeks" You cannot serve 'two masters.'

Pastor Luther never used subjective language or double thinking. He was very specific and absolute on his word choice and context relating to the beginning of a human being's life and our relationship to the Incarnation. Our human life is a continuum from fertilization to death to eternal life in Christ (Is 7:14).

Pastor Luther wrote the following: "How great, therefore, the wickedness of human nature is! How many girls there are who prevent conception and kill and expel tender fetuses, although procreation is the work of God!" (Luther's Works, v. 4, Lectures on Genesis, chapters 21-25, Pelikan, J and W. Hansen, eds, CPH, St. Louis, MO, page 304).

In addition, Pastor Luther wrote about the meaning and presence of embryonic human beings in the womb. Referring to the incarnation: "... on order that the normal course of nature might be preserved, the Virgin Mary carried Christ in this manner up to the tenth month; and during the entire time He, like other embryos, received nourishment from the drops of blood of His mother, who was sanctified by the Holy Spirit" [Luther's Works, vol. 3, 206].

And again, Pastor Luther writing on Psalm 37:7- " . . . Be still before the Lord, and wait patiently for Him." "Just as an embryo in the mother's womb God formed it, so in this case you have been conceived in God, and He will form you in the correct shape if you will only be still" [Luther's Works, vol. 14, 214]

Indeed, abortion of the unborn child remains in this 'wicked world' testifying to its brokenness. Even though Luther used terms such as embryo and fetus, they were scientific terms of his time, and our time. He used these terms in service to the word of God. Luther's use of these words identified the unborn child as a creature of God nourished by its mother throughout her pregnancy. For Luther, the embryo and the fetus was always an unborn child, a human creature of God.

Dr. Jeff Gibbs, Concordia Seminary writes (CJ, 2022, p. 48), "But in Jesus, God has defined what it means to be human—perfectly human. . . . for Christians, the incarnation of the eternal *logos* provides a rationale by which we can know human life, . . . and (at least by implication) begin to esteem it at every stage, from conception to family . . . The incarnation directly teaches us what it means to be human."

The overturning of Roe v Wade has resulted in the increase of aborting children who are unwanted and unneeded. Recent articles in the Wall Street Journal quote the following: "(Abortion) Procedures Rise Since High Court Overturned Roe," and "Support for Abortion Access Nears Record."

Catechesis on this subject is of utmost importance. This must be viewed from our Christology, especially the Incarnation, as well as the direct and uncompromising word of God: "You shall not murder". God's word doesn't 'doublethink' to justify His Word or our Christian faith that holds to His words and promises. He is our God, and we are His people to proclaim His words: "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for

the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). This is important for all couples who have had an abortion and wondered if God will forgive them.

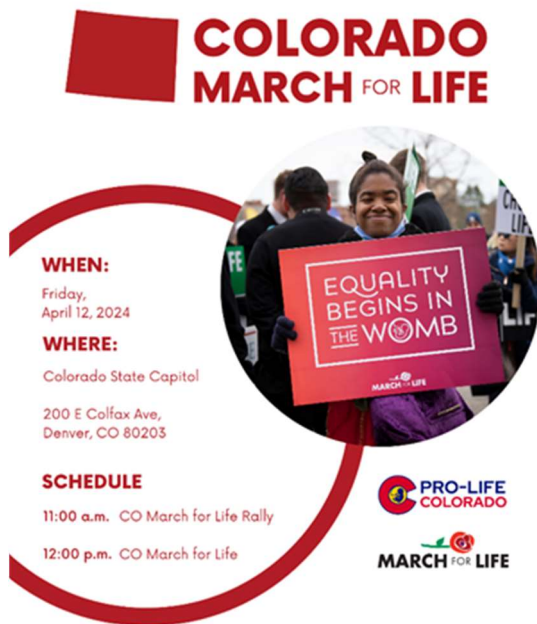
As Pastor Luther wrote: his main point and subject of the unborn child in the womb is the work of God—*opus Dei*! To believe and think otherwise, is to flee creation.

Resources on this topic:

- Oliver O'Donovan, *Begotten or Made?*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 88 pages.
- Peter Kreeft, *The Unaborted Socrates: A Dramatic Debate on the Issues Surrounding Abortion*, InterVarsity Press, 155 pages.

COLORADO MARCH FOR LIFE

Friday, April 12, 2024, Colorado State Capitol
Rally at 11:00 a.m., March at 12:00 p.m.



Let's be sure we have a great LCMS presence at this event! We're planning an LCMS Prayer Service close by prior to the rally (probably around 10 or 10:15am). More information to come!

Please also respond on our LCMS Life Ministry event page at this link:

https://www.lcms-life.org/need/detail/?need_id=819363

Click on the "Respond" button to register. Please share this and encourage those planning to participate to register on this page, also. It allows us to get a good count of LCMS participants.

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Questions? Comments? Send an email to
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