

**Homily for the Participants of the March for Life
in St. Augustine, Florida
by Bishop Felipe J. Estevez
January 18, 2020**

Psalm 9: 1-4, Mark 2: 13-17

Mother Teresa said, “The greatest destroyer of peace today is abortion because it is a war against a child.”

St. John Henry Cardinal Newman had a most lovely prayer entitled, *I Have a Mission*: “Oh my God, you have created me to do some definite service, you have committed some work to me that you have not committed to another. I have my mission, I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons. I will trust you in whatever, wherever I am. If I am in sickness, may sickness serve you. If I am in perplexity, my perplexity may serve you.”

All of us have a unique role, a unique territory, each relates to a particularity. All of us have a common mission – the commitment to the legal protection of unborn children, because only God has the power to impart the breath of life which He has formed in each one of us in our own mother’s womb. Our mission is to be responsible stewards of safeguarding the dignity of each human life. The Bible states so clearly in the Book of Genesis that each one is made in the image and likeness of God. Our society has a great need to be reverent towards God’s holy work. We are here together as citizens of our country to nurture, sustain the precious gift of human life in the manner, the limitations, looks we are called not to be decisive on who lives and who does not live, but to accept the gift that God gives us, that human life. This is our mission.

On Monday, January 20, 2020, in many places we celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s holiday. How fortunate we are that this outstanding leader promoted an inclusion of all races without any type of discrimination, and he did it in a non-violent way by advocacy of persuasion. He had, indeed, a dream that we are all brothers and sisters because we are all children of God, a God who obviously loves diversity of races, colors, sizes and yet, all are His children. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. marched publicly, and he is also an inspiration as we stand here to march, to protect the dignity of every human being from conception to natural death. And the next March, on Friday, January 24, more than 20,000, especially young people, will march in front of the Supreme Court with the hope of a change for the legal protection of all unborn children. There will be marches in Miami, San Francisco, Phoenix, Dallas, like this march that we are about to begin because the growing number of those who seek the reversal of *Roe v. Wade* increases by the day. Yes, *Roe v. Wade* will be overturned one day soon. This is our dream, this is the reason why May Oliver, the director of our Human Life and Dignity Office has organized this march for so many years already.

The Gospel today can be seen by the painting of Caravaggio which we find in the French church of St. Louis in Rome. Caravaggio paints Levi in the midst of a corrupt mess. And there we see the hand of the Master, calling him to stand up, to move from death to life, to rise up to a new life. He is the master of mercy, and mercy was given to Levi in that moment not only to renew him and become a new man, but to call him to follow Him as well, to become a healer of others. Yes, we as well want a culture of life that does not judge anyone, that is not violent toward anyone. It is a culture of life, of mercy and truth.

So, in this first reading Matthew said “yes,” but above all Mary of Nazareth said “yes,” she said “yes” to the child of God in her womb. Taking the revelation of Our Lady of Guadalupe, a pregnant woman, she said “yes” to life and so do we; to every human life regardless of the form, or the limitations that it may have.

We say “yes” to life.