

## **Homily for upholding the sanctity of Life**

**By Father Paddy**

I think the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary is a most appropriate day for offering Mass for those who work to promote the culture of life. If Mary was preserved from Original sin from the first moment of her conception then her life must have begun at conception. Original Sin only applies to humans. Elizabeth, the kinswoman of Mary referred to Jesus as her Lord even while still in the womb of Mary. John the Baptist 'leapt for joy' in the womb of Elizabeth when Mary visited her. "Blobs of tissue" as the Dean of St Paul's regrettably called preborn human life in 1967, don't weep for joy. The Church has always taught and insisted upon the sanctity of Life from conception to natural death. The first teaching given by the Church (47AD?) on the

subject states "you shall not murder a child by abortion." It was a serious sin then and it is a serious sin now. Church teaching refers to it as 'an unspeakable crime'

The Holy Father tells us that 'everyone has an obligation to be at the service of life. I don't know if you can remember the band aid concert for the helpless people of Sudan some years ago. It was a great success in terms of raising money for the starving people. It shouldn't, however, be an excuse for diverting our gaze away from the bigger evil of abortion in our midst. When some of the young pop stars saw the emaciated bodies of starving Sudanese children on Telly they had to divert their gaze and many broke down. How much more will they shield their faces when they see what happens to an aborted baby. But this is what the proponents of abortion don't want us to see. They (the unborn) are indeed the new holy innocents sacrificed on the altar of our own convenience. It is an affront to the dignity of

the human person and an offence to God who is the source of all life. It is unnatural to kill one's offspring.

Because the issue doesn't concern us directly, doesn't mean we can walk away from it. St Paul says we are ambassadors for Christ and if He showed pity and compassion for the vulnerable and defenceless people of his day, so must we. Who is more defenceless than the baby in the womb? In the Holy Father's recent letter he says: "our support and promotion of human life must be seen as a great work of charity which finds expression in personal witness, various forms of volunteer work, social activity and political commitment". And again he says: "among the crimes which can be committed against life, procured abortion has characteristics making it particularly serious and deplorable". He goes on "a great prayer for life is urgently needed - a prayer which will rise up throughout the world". If Christians and people from other religions

don't uphold the value of life in our world, then who will.

May God bless you all

Fr Paddy