

HOMILY
PRO-LIFE MASS
Santa Fe, New Mexico
January 22, 2010

IF JESUS WERE HERE, he would preach once more the Sermon on the Mount which we have just heard. It is the best sermon ever preached. IF JESUS WERE HERE, he would once more tell us of his preferential option for the poor, the oppressed, the forgotten, the forsaken and those who are considered of no value or use to the world.

Today we remember those in our society who are of no value nor of use to the world, the unborn. IF JESUS WERE HERE, he would tell us how much he loves those in their mothers' womb. IF JESUS WERE HERE, he would say they are among the children he calls to himself, "Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these" (Mt. 19: 14).

IF JESUS WERE HERE, he would share with us that the unborn are his great love and that they are deep in his heart. IF JESUS WERE HERE he would speak for the small lives of the unborn who have no voice, the most vulnerable, the most defenseless, whose little lives are most in danger.

IF JESUS WERE HERE, he would announce the good news that all those who suffer innocently will be vindicated because he, the Lord of Life, is on their

side. He will defend them and give them the reward reserved for those who most need compassion. IF JESUS WERE HERE, he would once more say, “Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is great in heaven.”

At this Mass and later at the rally in front of the state capitol, we will echo the concern of Jesus for the defenseless of the world and will march for life through the streets of Santa Fe. The events in which we participate today, state loud and clear: WE CHOOSE LIFE. The reason we choose life is because we believe that God is the God of Life. Throughout the Bible, God is, above all, a God who stands for life, who defends life and who maintains life. Every breath of air that we breathe is a gift of God who wants us to continue the life he has given us. We are made in his image and likeness; therefore, we must behave as children of the Father of Life. As children of the God of Life we choose to give and maintain life

IF JESUS WERE HERE, he would extend his arms in a sign of compassion to those who have an unexpected pregnancy. Jesus tells the parents of an unborn child to respect that life and to make sure that child sees the light of life. IF JESUS WERE HERE, he would tell them:

- Do not worry about material things,
- Put aside your shame or guilt,

- Consider your options for adoption,
- And do everything you can to bring your child into the world.

And someday that child will thank them with love and joy that even infants can give. I read the other day that even a child in the womb is able to communicate its love and gratitude.

IF JESUS WERE HERE, he would also show compassion for those persons, women and men, who, at one time in their lives made the bad choice of having an abortion. To them Jesus says, “I love you in spite of what you did and I forgive you, please receive my gift of forgiveness and peace.”

IF JESUS WERE HERE, he would say “thank you” to all those who are involved in the ministry for the unborn. He would thank those mothers and fathers-to-be for deciding to give birth to their children for accepting of a child into their lives. He would thank parents for making sure that the child grows up healthy and in an environment of love and respect. He would commend those in the medical field for tending to the health of the mother and the child. He would thank those who assist pregnant women during their pregnancy and in the early years of the child.

We have come here today to express our sorrow and ask God’s forgiveness of the crimes against life in our society. IF JESUS WERE HERE,

he would comfort us in our sorrow and he would forgive those, if they are truly repentant, who ask for God's forgiveness of any life that has been violated.

IF JESUS WERE HERE, he would challenge all of us to love, care, defend and protect all life. There are many ways in which we can all respond to the challenge of defending life. There are many organizations, some of which are represented here today, whose main reason to exist is to work to defend life and to eliminate abortion.

Jesus would ask us to pray in the most earnest manner for a society that would promote a culture of life and not a culture of death. He would ask us to work for peace, to help the poor, such as those in Haiti, to work for justice and for others whose lives are in danger such as immigrants and refugees throughout the world. He would ask us to be generous to victims of natural disasters such as earthquakes, hurricanes and tsunamis and to pay special attention to all children who need to be fed, clothed and nurtured.

We bishops of New Mexico pledge our support to all your efforts which we make our own. We will continue the fight against abortion and for the defense of life. Let us walk together knowing that the God of life is guiding us and someday we will happily meet in heaven those children whose lives we defended. May God bless you.