

Wednesday, June 3, 2009

Dear Community Friends:

This week some thoughts about ... *George Tiller's Tragic Death....*

The murder of Dr. George Tiller, this past Sunday, on Pentecost, May 31, at his home church in Wichita, Kansas, is a heinous act that should sadden all hearts. This latest violence exacerbates the divisive debates that have attended the issue of abortion for nearly two generations, debates that have left Americans heart-broken and soul-weary.

It's obvious there isn't sufficient time or circumstance to disentangle all the various claims regarding scientific, medical, ethical and/or spiritual "facts" which various camps believe about human life's beginnings. Still, all people of faith should be on guard against self-righteousness, something which Jesus and the Hebrew prophets before him consistently and adamantly warned against. And everyone needs to avoid any inclination toward demonizing (and thus dehumanizing) those with whom they disagree.

Regarding the whole gamut of reproduction issues, I have no quarrel now and have had no quarrel ever before with various religious groups taking stances against abortion, birth control, fertility regimens, in vitro fertilization, and then enacting guidelines for themselves. But I'm profoundly glad that birth control is now universally available for U.S. citizens who want it, that fertility regimens and in vitro fertilization are legal and safe options for previously infertile couples, and that safe and legal procedures are provided for rape and incest victims. And I will remain vigilant in my advocacy for the legality of those procedures and options being maintained while at the same-time working diligently for there being far fewer unwelcome pregnancies.

What is paramount for Americans at this time, I believe, is a "dialing down" of what can, at best, be called a "rhetoric of vehemence," a way of pressing one's opinions that exudes out of a fanatical and exclusionary fundamentalism. Acts of violence like the senseless slaying of George Tiller in church this past Sunday, and other before him, are too often the end-game results of such vitriolic speech and reckless political beliefs.

We are presently called to pray for the solace of Dr. Tiller's family and for the soul of the perpetrator, as well. Let justice now prevail, and let us proceed with calmer minds, softer edges, more tender hearts, and a more finely tuned grasp of the complications and nuanced situations involved in difficult ethical issues.

Love,

Bob

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"Se hace camino al andar." - Antonio Machado  
(We make the road by walking.)

**CORE COMMITMENTS:**

*Transforming Lives by*

*Connecting the Unconnected,*

*Reconnecting the Disconnected, and*

*Deepening the Committed,*

*In the Community of Christ's Love*