

Second Friday of Advent, December 10

Is 48:17-19; Mt 11:16-19

As I write this reflection, I am listening to today's news stories on the television, and one story in particular, stands out. I hope to use today's readings to provide our Lords' guidance as to how to make a morally and ethically correct decision on the subject matter of this news story.

Today the Supreme Court is hearing *Dobbs vs Jackson Women's Health Organization*, a case that challenges a Mississippi law that bans abortion after 15 weeks. While 24 weeks has previously been considered the age of viability, modern studies of fetal heartbeats and fetal pain has prompted the age of viability to be adjusted downward. However, fetal viability is not the only thing at stake in this case. Some feel the decision made in *Dobbs vs Jackson Women's* could potentially lead to overturning the 50-year-old landmark *Roe vs Wade* decision, which legalized abortion in the United States. While well-meaning Catholic Christians can be found on both sides of the abortion debate, today's readings offer wisdom to clarify which side most accurately depicts Christian thinking on this topic.

In the first reading (Is 48:17-19), the Lord says, "I, the LORD, your God, teach you what is for your good, and lead you on the way you should go. If you would hearken to my commandments, your prosperity would be like a river." Who would not want that type of prosperity? It is when we oppose the commandments that we no longer have peace and prosperity. The sixth commandment is very simple, "Thou shalt not kill." Abortion terminates an unborn child's life; thus, the practice of abortion directly opposes the sixth commandment and does not bring the peace and prosperity referred to in this reading. However, adhering to the sixth commandment brings peace "like a river."

In the Gospel (Mt 11:16-19), Jesus says to the crowds, "To what shall I compare this generation? It is like children who sit in marketplaces and call to one another, 'We played the flute for you, but you did not dance, we sang a dirge but you did not mourn.' In other words, this generation is being told the truth, but they do not necessarily recognize it as the truth. The truth of abortion is that it terminates an unborn child. These words may sound harsh, but that is the truth of this practice. Human nature is flawed in that it believes what it wants to believe, and sometimes, not what actually is. Jesus goes on to say, "Wisdom is vindicated by her works." That is exactly what will happen in the abortion debate. Wisdom and truth will prevail in the end.

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