

Abortion and slavery

By Fr Linus F. Clovis

Spiritual Director of Family Life International

History's uncanny facility for repeating itself exists not so much in the recurrence of same events as in the individual and collective response to the issues, and particularly, the moral issues of the day. Human nature does not change: it is a time traveller encumbered with the seven deadly sins, and history is the record of its efforts, in each succeeding generation, to humanize itself, individually and collectively, by the cultivation and exercise of the cardinal virtues. From this perspective, moral challenges are simply the divine mechanism to make us more humane, more human, and perhaps, even divine.

The modern world faces the same moral challenge of yesteryear, namely, to acknowledge the inherent dignity of the human person. Previously manifested as the rights of workers, the just wage, the (im)morality of slavery, etc., it is now articulated as the right to life of the pre-born, the aged, disabled, the (im)morality of embryonic experimentation, etc...

Against the modern assault on human life and dignity, the Catholic Church has mounted a determined opposition which has such striking parallels with her 400 year struggle against slavery and the slave trade that it appears that history is repeating itself again.

A common but false perception holds that not only did the Catholic Church do nothing to halt slavery but that she even supported it until the end of the nineteenth century when she "changed her doctrine to suit the times." This claim is currently being used to argue that Catholic doctrine in regard to contraception, abortion and other life issues can likewise be modified to suit the times in which we live; a view sadly that has the support of some bishops, priests and religious. However, the truth of the matter is that the Papal Magisterium, the Church's highest teaching authority, to its honour and credit, did consistently condemn slavery and the slave trade from its first appearance in the fifteenth century. The questions, however, may justly be raised as to why slavery flourished if it had indeed been consistently condemned by the popes, and more importantly, why, despite her opposition to it, has the Church not escaped charges of collaboration, support and participation in that most heinous institution of rapine, murder, exploitation and greed.

Found in all cultures and in every quarter of the globe, slavery, as a social institution, has from ancient times received wide social acceptance though this does not make it any more moral, than abortion is made moral by its existence in antiquity or its current universal proliferation.

Slavery, as generally understood, is the condition of involuntary servitude in which one human being is regarded as no more than the property of another, a being without any human rights; in other words, as a thing rather than a person. Under this definition, slavery is intrinsically evil, since no person may legitimately be regarded, or treated, as a mere thing or object. This form of slavery is properly called "chattel slavery."

There is however, a legitimate form of slavery called “just servitude” which may be voluntary or involuntary. The former is a system of indentured service where people could “sell” their labour for a period of time, or even for an entire life time. The modern equivalent is found in the many immigrants and foreign workers living in developed countries who accept harsh conditions and low wages in order to obtain the necessities of life. Historically, debtors and children of indigent parents who might otherwise have been left to die by exposure would also all into this class. The latter, or “just involuntary servitude”, arises from circumstances in which a person can legitimately be forced into servitude against his will. Criminals and prisoners of war, for example, can justly lose their circumstantial freedom and be forced into servitude, within certain limits, but paradoxically this is simply a humane substitute for death. Although the enforced servitude of criminals is proscribed today, the 1949 Geneva Conventions still recognize the right of detaining powers to utilize the labour of prisoners of war.

“Just servitude” differs not only in degree but in kind from what is called “chattel” slavery. Although prisoners of war and criminals lose their freedom against their will, they do not become mere property of their captors, even when such imprisonment is just. They still possess basic, inalienable human rights and may not justly be subjected to certain forms of punishment—torture, for example. Similarly, indentured servants “sell” their labour, not their inalienable rights, and may not contract to provide services which are immoral. Moreover, since they freely agree to exchange their labour for some benefit such as transportation, food, lodging, *etc.*, their servitude is not involuntary.

The Second Vatican Council condemned slavery (i.e., chattel slavery): “Whatever insults human dignity, such as subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, deportation, slavery . . . the selling of women and children; as well as disgraceful working conditions, where men are treated as mere tools for profit, rather than as free and responsible persons; all these things and others of their like are infamies indeed . . . they are a supreme dishonor to the Creator” (*Gaudium et spes* 27; cf. no 29).

Chattel slavery is undoubtedly the greatest blot not only on Christian civilization, but on the very name of Christ, and the Church, despite her opposition to it, has not escaped contamination. Abortion, the slaughter of innocent, defenceless human beings in the womb, is undoubtedly the greatest crime against humanity in our time and, despite the Church’s opposition, is enshrined in and sanctioned by law. Between slavery and abortion there is a striking parallel, namely the sad fact that the Papal Magisterium’s clear and unequivocal condemnation of slavery was not echoed, supported, preached on or translated into action by the generality of local hierarchies, clergy and laity in much the same way that the Magisterium’s teaching on the immorality of contraception and abortion is ignored by many Catholics today.

Servitude, as a punishment imposed on criminals and prisoners of war and as a condition freely embraced for economic reasons, has biblical approbation. The first instance of slavery is that of Noah punishing his son Canaan for some serious sexual sin (the details of which are unknown): “Cursed be Canaan; a slave of slaves shall he be to his brothers.” (Gen 9: 27). This text is widely used by racists to justify their oppression of Negroes.

Thieves and enemies of the Jews could be enslaved, (cf. Ex.22:1; 2 Chr 28:8-15) but a Jew who arbitrarily took a slave would be punished by death. (Ex.21:16).

Mosaic Law, however, afforded the slave certain rights and corresponding protections, such as his master being punished for killing him (Ex 21:20). If the master were responsible a woman slave's miscarriage, he would be liable to a fine determined by the woman's husband, and "If any harm follows, then you shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe."(Ex 21: 22-23) Slaves would rest on the Sabbath day (Ex 20: 8-11) and be restored to freedom after six years of servitude (Ex.21:2). The Law, however, forbade the practice of slavery based upon poverty: "When, then, your countryman becomes so impoverished beside you that he sells you his services, do not make him work as a slave. Rather, let him be like a hired servant or like your tenant, working with you until the jubilee year, when he, together with his children, shall be released from your service and return to his kindred and to the property of his ancestors." (Lev 25: 39-41) In view of the Israelites reluctance to release non-Jewish slaves after six years, Moses allowed them to keep them until death with the caution: "You shall not oppress a stranger; you know the heart of a stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt."(Ex 23:9)

Within the Mosaic dispensation slaves were never the objects of contempt since manual labour was regarded as a noble work. In fact, every educated Israelite had a manual trade: Our Lord was a carpenter and St. Paul was quite proud of being a tent maker. The New Testament teaches that despite the inequalities of this life, in God's eyes, there is a fundamental equality: "there is neither slave nor free ... you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal.3:27-28). St. Paul made no general defense of slavery, but rather equally exhorted slaves to obey their masters (Col. 3:22-25; Eph. 6:5-8) as he appealed to masters to treat their slaves justly and kindly (Eph 6:9; Col 4:1), implying that slaves are not mere property for masters to do with them as they please (Philem.16).

The early Church ameliorated the harsher aspects of slavery in the Empire, even promoting legal protection for slaves, until slavery all but disappeared in the West. Several of the early popes were themselves manumitted slaves. As a social condition, servitude is not ideal, but it is not contrary to the Scriptures or to the natural law.

Slavery, on the other hand, the total and arbitrary subjugation of a group of people, is without moral foundation and was described in 1557 by Pope Paul III as a crime "unheard of before now". Neither natural law nor Scripture sanctioned it since the people captured and enslaved were not at war; neither were they guilty of any crime; nor was there any economic pressure on them to sell themselves into slavery as they were not only free and in possession of their own goods but they also had the means for earning their livelihood. Modern or chattel slavery is a total violation of natural and divine law since it targeted a specific group of people because of their colour or race, and unjustly deprived them of their liberty and goods.

Sixty years before Columbus crossed the Atlantic, Pope Eugene IV, responding to news of the Portuguese enslavement of the Canary Islanders, condemned this activity with the

Bull *Sicut Dudum* (1435). This was the first papal condemnation of modern slavery and its significance lies in that it

1. identified the crime, namely, the deprivation of the natives of their property and their being enslaved and sold;
2. was addressed to all Christians, lay and clerical, regardless of rank;
3. called on them to desist from "illicit and evil deeds" against the natives and to prevent others (and, if necessary, to "restrain them rigorously") from taking advantage of them;
4. ordered the liberation of all the unjustly enslaved natives within 15 days of the Bull's publication without any payment or reception of money; and
5. imposed an excommunication¹ *ipso facto*, reserved to the Roman Pontiff, on the recalcitrant.

Thus *Sicut Dudum* condemned unjust racial slavery in the strongest terms possible as soon as it was discovered. But the sorry business continued even though two other popes, Pius II and Sixtus IV, both likewise protested against it. This showed not the indifference of the Church to the sin of slavery but rather the weakness of papal authority at this time and the rejection of papal teaching by European Christians operating in Africa and the New world.

The parallel with abortion which is also condemned in the strongest possible terms as a grave moral evil and which is never permissible, even for therapeutic reasons, is striking. Canon Law² also imposes an excommunication *ipso facto* on all those directly involved in an abortion, yet many Catholics give no more than lip service to the Church's teaching and in some cases this includes bishops, priests and religious. We know that Christ guarantees that His Church will always teach the truth, but whether her clerics and laity will give the required internal assent and obedience to that truth is quite another matter.

The age of exploration was initiated by Portugal and Spain and since explorers declared newly found lands the dominion of their sovereigns, papal intervention was sought primarily to avoid war between these two nations. Pope Alexander VI's Bull *Inter Caetera* (1493) is one such intervention though it has been interpreted incorrectly as "giving away" the New World to Spain. As Paul III subsequently made clear, Alexander VI was neither "giving away" newly discovered lands nor yet was he giving Spain and Portugal the right to make war on and to enslave the peoples of the New World. *Inter Caetera* merely gave Spain and Portugal the Church's authority to bring both the Catholic faith and their own civil authority "to those people who are freely willing to accept

¹ Excommunication is the most severe ecclesiastical penalty and is for grave crimes against the Catholic religion. It can be imposed by ecclesiastical authority or incurred automatically from the very commission of the act, in which case it is called an *ipso facto* or *latae sententiae* excommunication. If it is reserved then, outside of danger of death, only the pope can lift it. Excommunication excludes the offender from taking part in the Eucharist or other Sacraments and from the exercise of any ecclesiastical office, ministry or function.

² **Can. 1398** -- A person who procures a successful abortion incurs excommunication *latae sententiae*.

them." Alexander and his successors repeatedly express concern about maintaining the free will of the Indians.

Since the Church had ruled in favour of the Indians, it was not long before an attempt was made to circumvent the teaching by questioning the Indians humanity. It was argued that if they were not rational men capable of receiving the faith, then they could be conquered. Spain actually suspended further conquests, something never done before or since by an expanding empire, to debate the ethics of colonization. Theologians meeting at Valladolid examined Aristotle's dictum that some people are "slaves by nature". Following St. Thomas Aquinas' teaching that "one man is not by nature ordained to another as an end", Aristotle's dictum was rejected and it was established, once and for all, that the natives were, in fact, rational and capable of self government. And even if they weren't, they could be governed by others only for their own advantage and benefit, and not for the advantage of the governors. Thus to Spain's credit, the Law of Burgos (1512) decided in favour of the Indians' humanity and initiated ambitious programmes for their conversion. Human perversity, however, soon kicked in and hijacked this good start with the fallacious argument that the Indians could be justly conquered and enslaved not because they were "slaves by nature" but because they would not peaceably accept the Christian faith.

Again, there is a striking similarity with abortion. The humanity of the pre-born child is debated by highly intelligent individuals and prestigious institutions of learning, in some cases, with the invocation Aristotle's antiquated biology. It is worth noting that the countries of South America constitutionally recognise the full humanity of the pre-born.

The questions raised about the Indians humanity were addressed by Paul III's Bull *Sublimis Deus* (1537) which, as the central pedagogical work against slavery, is the most important papal pronouncement on the human condition of the Indians. *Sublimis Deus*'s teaching was supported by two other bulls. While the first imposed sanctions on those who rejected the teaching, the other expounded on the sacramental consequences of the teaching of the Indian's humanity.

Sublimis Deus, addressed to all the faithful, taught the only qualification for receiving the faith is the possession of human nature which is common to all the different peoples of the world. Thus the specious theories that the Indians lacked a rational nature and consequently were "slaves by nature" are definitively rejected. Then because some argued for the conversion of the Indians by any means necessary and so would use the faith as an excuse for war and enslavement, the pope, without any mincing of words about the evils of slavery, declared that Satan, "the enemy of the human race ... has thought up a way, unheard of before now, by which he might impede the saving word of God from being preached to the nations. He has stirred up some of his allies who, desiring to satisfy their own avarice, are presuming to assert far and wide that the Indians of the West and the South who have come to our notice in these times be reduced to our service like brute animals, under the pretext that they are lacking in the Catholic faith. And they reduce them to slavery, treating them with afflictions they would scarcely use with brute animals. ... Therefore, We ... noting that the Indians themselves indeed are

true men . . . by our Apostolic Authority decree and declare by these present letters that the same Indians and all other peoples—even though they are outside the faith . . . should not be deprived of their liberty or their other possessions . . . and are not to be reduced to slavery, and that whatever happens to the contrary is to be considered null and void.”

Concerned also with restoring and maintaining the liberty of the Indians, *Sublimis Deus* continues that the Indians are “true men” who together with “all other peoples _ even though they are outside the faith” must not be deprived of their possessions nor reduced to slavery. In this way it is made clear that Alexander VI did not give away the Indians’ right to liberty and property. That teaching, being universal, applies to any and to all peoples. Further, it is insisted the goal must be the conversion not the domination of the Indians, and this is to be achieved not by violence but “by preaching and the example of a good life”. Analogously, we may note that the child’s humanity exists as much inside as outside the womb.

The Brief *Pastorale Officium* which accompanied *Sublimis Deus* was given the strongest possible ecclesiastical backing by the attachment of a *latae sententiae* excommunication remittable only by the pope himself. There was also an exhortation to the Archbishop of Toledo to do whatever he deemed necessary to protect the Indians in this regard. These two letters of Paul III were epoch making and simultaneously laid the foundations and marked the true beginning of international law in the modern world. They were the first intercontinental proclamation of rights inherent in all human beings and the liberty of nations.

It is worth noting that the Spanish, in contrast to the Portuguese, were more compliant to Church teaching. In fact, Philip II of Spain forbade the taking of slaves "whether by just or unjust war" in the Philippines. Gregory XIV gave his support with the Bull *Cum Sicuti* (1591) where he noted that although the Indians were "very fierce and many took up arms" in self defence, nonetheless, "much harm was done" them, and restitution, under pain of excommunication, must be made. In this he had support from the Spanish civil authorities. Thus the argument that native hostility towards accepting the faith was a justification for war was officially rejected.

The papal antislavery teaching was widely ignored and had to be repeated by successive popes such as Urban VIII who, at the request of the Jesuits of Paraguay, issued the Bull *Commisum Nobis* (1639). The pope reiterated the teachings of *Sublimis Deus*, listed the unjust actions that are condemned and confirmed the penalty of excommunication *latae sententiae* reserved to himself alone. Urban, aware of the opposition to the pontifical teaching on slavery, warned that the penalty would fall on “all who would give counsel, aid, favour and help of any kind and under any pretext or who preach or teach such acts are legitimate and all others who dare or presume to cooperate.” He recognised also the source of the resistance and made a point of including the various religious orders. The Jesuits in Paraguay and Brazil defended the Indians but were themselves attacked by slaveholders and expelled for publishing the Bull. This action undoubtedly intimidated other well-disposed clergy. *Commisum Nobis* reminds us that we can share in others

sins by approval³. Of course, the principle is equally applicable to those who support or promote abortion today.

By the middle of the seventeenth century, the colonization of North America was well under way and, in Central and South America, the Indian population was in decline. The need for a cheap source of human labour led to the shameful European enslavement of Africans. Whilst Europeans admittedly are not responsible for initiating enslavement in Africa, they did however expand tremendously a system which, during the eleventh century, had already begun in Africa under Arab and Moslem auspices.

The same arguments used to enslave the Indians of the New World were now presented for Africans: since they were non-Christians, war could be waged on them as "enemies of Christianity", especially those who were Muslim. Abortion and euthanasia's hard cases are strikingly alike. During the pontificate of Blessed Innocent XI, the Congregation of the Holy Office (the Roman Inquisition) took up the matter and responded in 1686 with the *Instruction Number 230* in the form of questions and answers.

It was asked

1. Whether it is permitted to capture by force and deceit Blacks and other natives who have harmed no one? It answered no!
2. Whether it is permitted to buy, sell or make contracts in their respect Blacks or other natives who have harmed no one and been made captives by force of deceit? It answered no!
3. Whether the possessors of Blacks and other natives who have harmed no one and been captured by force or deceit, are not held to set them free? It answered yes.
4. Whether the captors, buyers and possessors of Blacks and other natives who have harmed no one and who have been captured by force or deceit are not held to make compensation to them? It answered yes.

However, even though the papal bulls against slavery were hushed up in the New World, the antislavery views of the Church did have a significantly moderating effect in the Catholic Americas by means of the *Code Noir*⁴ and *Código Negro Español*. In both cases, the Church took the lead in their formulation and enforcement, thereby demonstrating its fundamental opposition to slavery by trying to ensure "the rights of the slave and his material welfare," and by imposing "obligations on the slave owners, limiting their control over the slave." While the Church did her best in the circumstances, it must be noted that the introduction of slavery into the New World was not denounced any leading Dutch or English Protestant. In fact, the Church of England usually did not recognize slaves "as baptisable human beings."

³ We can share in the sins of others by direct and voluntary participation, by ordering, advising, praising, or approving them, by not disclosing or not hindering them, or by protecting evil-doers. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no.1868.

⁴ Operative in Catholic countries from 1724, this Code, inter alia, established legal protection for slaves, required the provision of religious instruction for them and encouraged marriage and family life among them. It stands in strong contrast to the British *Code of Barbados*.

The struggle against slavery continued unabated into the eighteenth century causing Benedict XIV to issue *Immense Pastorum* (1741) to the Bishops of Brazil and other regions governed by King John of Portugal. He recalled the Church's past efforts to prevent slavery and lamented that "there are... members of the True Faith who deal with the unfortunate Indians... by reducing them to slavery, or selling them to others as if they were property or depriving them of their goods, or dealing with them inhumanly." Then exhorting his bishops, even "to the detriment of (their) names and dignity", to provide both material and spiritual help to the Indians, he confirmed, in full, both *Sublimis Deus* and *Commisum Nobis*. Benedict made specific mention of the various religious families and warned that the penalties also fell on "those who offer counsel, aid or favour" to slaveholders.

It is note worthy that the Bulls issued from the time of Eugene IV to Paul III were directed primarily at civil and military authorities, while those issued from Urban VIII to Benedict XIV explicitly and forcefully include all members of the clergy and religious orders - a sign perhaps there had been a growing clerical resistance to papal teaching on slavery. This corresponds to the modern tragedy of Paul VI's exhortation in *Humanae Vitae* (no.) to the hierarchy and clergy falling on too many deaf ears, leading to the fulfilment of his prophetic utterances (no.) about the lowering of moral standards, etc.

The continued resistance of the bishops, priests and laity to papal antislavery teaching was struck at by Gregory XVI in the 1839 Constitution *In Supremo* when he wrote "We prohibit and strictly forbid any ecclesiastic or layperson from presuming to defend as permissible this trade in Blacks under no matter what pretext or excuse, or from publishing or teaching in any manner whatsoever, in public or privately, opinions contrary to what We have set forth in these Apostolic Letters." He also praised Pius VII for using "his good offices with those in power to end completely the slave trade." These good offices were, in fact, exercised after the Napoleonic wars at the Congress of Vienna when Pius VII demanded the suppression of the slave trade. An argument was made that the trade was the lesser of the two evils since blacks were living in a miserable state in their own countries, unable to govern themselves, but this was a mere pretext to cover greed, just as wars were being waged simply to obtain title to slaves in order to sell them.

In North America, *In Supremo*, if not resisted was ignored. In 1840, John England, the Catholic Bishop of Charleston, informed John Forsyth, the US Secretary of State, that Pope Gregory XVI had condemned the trade in slaves, but that no pope had ever condemned domestic slavery as it had existed in the United States. He also stated that the bishops attending the 1840 Council of Baltimore did not interpret the papal teachings against slavery as applying to the institution as it existed in the United States. Francis Kenrick, the archbishop of Baltimore, concurred and, arguing that changing the law would bring more harm than good for those held in slavery, counselled "nothing should be ... done or said that would make them carry their yoke unwillingly: but rather prudence and charity ... should be shown in such a way that slaves ... should offer obedience to their masters." Bishop Augustine Verot of Florida proposed a biblical basis for a "proper kind of slavery" and with the other bishops opposed the papal position that "it is the right of slaves who have been unjustly reduced to slavery to flee." This remains

a shameful period of history for the Church in America, yet it could have been glorious had the Faith been preached in its integrity. *Humanae Vitae* once more comes to mind.

Leo XIII wrote *In Plurimus* (1888) and *Catholicae Ecclesiae* (1890), the last two papal documents dealing directly with slavery. The former encouraged the bishops of Brazil to do all they could to ensure that former slaves received the full effects of emancipation. The latter asked the bishops of the world to work to bring slavery (which still continued under Islam) to an end in Africa and to support the evangelization of that continent.

Slavery is undoubtedly the greatest and most serious blot on Christian civilization, if not on the name of Christ who "emptied himself, taking the form of a slave" (Phil.2:7). It was the greatest tragedy to afflict the African and Indian nations in the New World. An estimated 12 million Africans were shipped, like brute animals, across the Atlantic, while entire Indian populations were decimated like vermin.

From the very beginning of this holocaust, the popes forcefully denounced the traffic in human beings as an arrant travesty of justice "unheard of before now" and did all within their power to halt it. They were generally ignored by the civil authorities and their teaching disregarded and even opposed by the very ones who, as successors to the apostles, were expected to support it and translate it into action. Where clerically the papal voice was heard and heeded, albeit sporadically and inconsistently, the individual bishops and priests were generally too few in number, too isolated from each other and too feeble in the face of vested interest to effectively halt the progress of this unprecedented evil. The efforts of Philip II of Spain were soon neutralized and there was division and confusion among the clergy. Thus, for instance, the Jesuits of Maryland were slaveholders while those of Paraguay, working with the Guarani Indians, established a flourishing republic (1609-1768) where the Indians were "free subjects of the Crown, equal to the Spaniards." Others, such as the Dominican Bartolome de Las Casas (1474-1566), were very confused about the issue. He had waged a bitter and quite successful campaign against enslaving Indians, but proposed the importation of slaves from Africa; a proposal he later deeply regretted when he expressed doubts as to whether God would pardon him for this terrible sin.

Even though Christ's promise that "the gates of hell shall not prevail" has not failed, the failure of bishops, religious and priests to promulgate the papal perspective has directly contributed to the Church, the spotless Bride of Christ, being unjustly tarnished by this heinous sin of chattel slavery. Christ's promise has not failed in our time either as pope after pope has raised his voice in protest against the unprecedented slaughter of the pre-born. Tragically from the uneven support given by bishops and clergy to the papal teachings in defence of life, it seems that the lesson of slavery has not been learnt. When the humanity of the pre-borns is universally recognised, will it be remembered that from the beginning the popes had defended it and them?

In our secular world, it is argued that Christians ought not to impose their religious values on the wider society and that those who do not approve of abortion are not forced to have one. Such reasoning is spurious at best and certainly as shallow and callous as that of

Chief Justice Roger B. Taney who, in handing down, the infamous Dred Scott decision in 1857, commented that no one who objected to slavery was obliged to own slaves.

What is generally not understood is that abortion (and now euthanasia), like slavery, is not a private, sectarian issue but in issue of the broadest public morality, that basic morality which is the foundation of a viable society.

Morality and religion are not the same. Morality is the body of obligations universally recognisable through the use of reason and through reflection upon experience. Hence, the value of history. Moral obligations may, indeed, be taught by religious groups, but they are not religious obligations in the strict sense of emanating from divine revelation.

In a pluralistic society, the religious teaching of any individual denomination, such as dietary practices, should not be legislated. Legislation against slavery, abortion and euthanasia fall outside of the religious pale because these actions are crimes against persons, against humanity, rather than against any specific religion. Reason itself dictates that no one should be unjustly enslaved and innocent human life should not be destroyed.

Public morality, not private, determines each citizen's duties to society. Abortion, and now euthanasia, is not a trivial matter of personal choice but a fundamental matter of public, life-or-death morality demanding legal regulation. It is no more private than slavery ever was.

The Catholic Church is to the world the “light on the lamp stand” as she is the “pillar and bulwark of truth” to the faithful. To both she proclaims the full message of the Gospel of Life: to the world by interpreting the natural law; to Christ’s faithful by proclaiming the truths of faith. The promise to Peter has not failed. He was criticized by the other apostles him for bringing the Gentiles into the Church (Acts 11:1-3), by their successors for speaking against slavery and today for defending human life from fertilization to natural death. The promise stands! Peter will not fail, nor the bishops, clergy, religious and laity that stand with him!

“Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it,” – George Santayana