



WEEKLY LETTER FROM MONSIGNOR KEN

There is a powerful short story entitled *The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas*, written by Ursula K. Le Guin published in 1973. It tells about a mythical city that lives in complete happiness, joy and prosperity, in other words, Utopia. However, there is one condition. There is a young child kept in a locked basement in strict isolation, neglected, malnourished and fated to suffer. The happiness of Omelas depends upon the suffering of this child. When each citizen reaches a certain age, they are told about the child and are permitted to see him. Initially, everyone is appalled, but when they consider the alternative, most choose to accept the child's suffering in order to continue to live in happiness. There are a few, hence the title, who cannot accept the immoral trade-off and walk away.

What choice would you make? This story has many lessons and presents a serious moral challenge. Matthew 25:45 immediately comes to mind: "He will answer then, 'Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for Me.'" I was reminded of this story when I heard the news that the "Catholic" governor of Massachusetts, signed into a law a bill that permits abortion up to full term. What especially troubled me is that a spokesperson stated that she was a "proud" Catholic and considered the bill an act of compassion. Compassion for whom? Certainly not the unborn child! Everyone acknowledges that this is a difficult issue, but I believe that anyone who supports such legislation should be required to watch an actual late-term abortion.

While such laws are being enacted, we at St. Mary's work hard to defend all life. We support the St. Michael Pregnancy Help Center. It's mission is to assist mothers in difficult circumstances and offer assistance to mother and child in their need. This help is physical, financial and spiritual. The care is for both the mother and child. This ministry is passionate and tireless in its mission. Facing many challenges, most recently having to vacate their current building, they are undeterred. They are committed to life, that of the child, the mother and the father.

I find it difficult to grasp how anyone can believe that their happiness, or the happiness of society, depends on the ability and the right to take the life of an unborn child. Unlike the city of Omelas that allows the child's suffering for their happiness, abortion, especially late term, does not create Utopia. A just and good society can only be built on love of life, not conditional or restricted. And, the love and concern for the unborn child also extends to those who have had abortions or are considering them. They, too, are loved and held up in prayer. Our world is sadly imperfect. However, we do not want to make our happiness dependent on another's suffering.

"And this is the verdict, that the light came into the world, but people preferred darkness to light because their works were evil." (John 3:19)