

## Honoring the Value of Life (Pt 2)

Series: Cracks – Navigating Our Divided Times

Brad Bailey – March 27, 2022

NOTE: The following notes are more extensive than what time would allow presenting, but provide both the main points and heart of the message. One will also find “further resources” with links and extensive footnotes that I hope can serve them.

Intro

Today we are **concluding our series entitled Cracks**...navigating our divided times.

I want to take a moment and express appreciation for those who have been a part of engaging these challenging issues over eight long weeks.

It can feel like you’ve been **invited into a meeting to resolve conflict...** which is a **bit uncomfortable in itself....and hard if you don’t really feel you’re a part of the conflict.**

What I hope you have found... is that this **hasn’t been about** bringing **conflict...** but rather **to bring some clarity.**

I believe that the work and words of Christ are true...and good. And when Christian culture begins to get infused with certain narratives... ways of reacting to cultural and political dynamics... and I don’t hear what is true or good... I believe it is vital to stop and assess some issues.

So the purpose of these weeks....was to clarify some commitments ...and these have included...

1. **Our Commitment to Truth with Love**
2. **Our Commitment to Staying Centered in Christ**
3. **Our Commitment to Truth**
4. **Our Commitment to God’s Kingdom (as distinct from any nation.)**
5. **Our Commitment to Racial Justice**
6. **Our Commitment to the “Foreigner”**
7. **Our Commitment to Life**

I don’t believe that what I have presented is **by any means the whole word or last word...** but I do believe that it has **been faithful to some primary truths about God and what we are called to.**

My desire has been to **provide some guardrails for our minds...and our hearts...** to serve us as we go forward.

What is fundamental in being faithful to God... to Christ.

I believe that there is a wide area that **those following the way of Jesus** can disagree and learn from each other... but there are boundaries.

And I want to also take a moment to recognize that there is a **whole team of pastors and elders...** that care about you...and that have supported this series. **I don’t know how they all identify politically....**but I do know that they **all support guarding that which is true and good...** understand that Jesus can’t be reduced to any political ideology.

Today I want to come back to the most sensitive topic of all...which is that of

### **Honoring the Value of Life**

... the sanctity of life and it’s relationship to abortion.

**I know that some of us here...** and **watching online...**may identify as **“Pro-Choice”** and others as **“Pro-Life”**...and my hope is that both will **feel welcomed....and challenged.**

I believe that part of the challenge in engaging the “Pro-Choice” vs “Pro-Life” divide...is that there are aspects of **the terms themselves** that form **a poor frame from which to reason well.**

I trust **those who identify as “Pro-Choice” are not simply anti-life....** and that those who identify as **“Pro-Choice” are not simply anti-choice.**

I think that the two banner terms **tend to avoid as much as they affirm... because they tend to reduce the moral issue** merely to a matter of rights...and **can tend to avoid the responsibility that is inherent with those rights.**

**So last week...** I shared how I believe that **the Pro-Choice position ensues from a desire to protect women from injustice ...which is a desire that in itself...reflects the heart of God.** The challenge is the need to recognize that such a choice is ultimately a responsibility... and **without a serious consideration of the life at hand... we will neither honor the reality of life nor the true substance of choice.**

I believe that we need to **elevate our moral reasoning...and moral responsibility...above merely that of personal rights.**

***“In the current age in which individuality is deemed the highest virtue, there is often no higher guiding moral principle other than that of exercising “personal rights” and making “personal choices.” Jesus has come to reveal that there is no greater love than that which lays down one’s rights for the sake of others. Personal rights do not define moral responsibility.”***

I believe that God calls us out to make choices in the light of responsibility ... the actual process of making an informed decision. **And last week I shared reasons why I believe we should honor the unborn life.** One may come to a different moral decision...but **I believe that a truly moral process will engage those points.**

I believe that the Bible reveals that...  
**Life is a sacred gift.**

**Every life bears a sacred value.**

**No one has more or less** of it than another human being—no matter whether we are **male or female... no matter what our ethnicity is...** no matter what **level of virtue, intellect, skill, ability, power, or wealth.** All share this quality equally.

It gives us all dignity and value. **Because this quality is innate in the human person** - not achieved but endowed by God—it **can never be lost.** Nothing alters it—not age or illness.

**Honoring the sacred gift of life....begins with your own life.**

**If you wonder** how valuable your life is... **God is very clear...** you are the **pinnacle of all creation...** the bearer of **God’s very image.**

We are to live surrendered to God’s sovereignty over life... over when we are born...and when we die.

**And let me add... that even if you have violated another life... by participating in an abortion... your life is no less a sacred gift.**

Jesus has come to take the weight of all our sin...all our shame...and all our separation.

**Jesus knows the weight of our sin... even that of denying another life.** He knows that we have all denied God... that we all are responsible for his own death...his own crucifixion.

And **that is where he meets us.**

As the Scriptures declare...

### Romans 5:6-8

At just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. <sup>7</sup> Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. <sup>8</sup> But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

And when we grasp this... we can gain a new sense of how to live.. of our moral responsibility...then do our best to faithfully live accordingly in all that lies ahead.

As he said to a woman being condemned to die for her sin... he silenced the shame...and then said..... neither do I condemn you.... now go and sin no more. (John 8:1-11)

### PRAY

**Today... I want to apply a similar distinction ...between rights and responsibility to the position of claiming a “Pro-Life” position.**

If we are considering our commitment to honor the value of life.... then we need to allow God to call us out beyond the mere claim that a woman should not have a right to an abortion... and into the light of responsibility of **what God has to say about honoring life.**

I don't want to imply that those who identify as being either “Pro-Choice” or “Pro-Life” are intentionally lacking responsibility or clarity by the use of those terms. I am simply challenging the limits of those terms...by bringing them out of the limits of merely rights...and into the light of the responsibility they lead to.

If we come with a desire to be right with God...then we come with a call that is not simply about rights... but responsibility. We will understand that righteousness is about more than our claims about the rights of others...it's about our own responsibility before God.

As such...

**Any claim to honor the sacred value of life...is a claim upon ourselves... a responsibility to embody that value.**

**The term “Pro-Life” implies that one is a proponent of life... that we support the value and equality of all human life.**

Being a proponent of life **cannot be defined merely by our political positions or the laws we support... unless we actually serve those values.**

**> That was the central conflict we see Jesus was constantly raising with the religious leaders in the time of his earthly ministry.** He was constantly challenging the very nature of **having the right position in the wrong way.**

We read in the Gospel of Matthew,

*Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples: <sup>2</sup> "The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. <sup>3</sup> So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. <sup>4</sup> They tie up heavy loads and put them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them. <sup>5</sup> "Everything they do is done for men to see... <sup>13</sup> "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! - Matthew 23:1-5, 13*

**What is Jesus saying?** He is bringing to light the truth that **the right moral interpretation in itself does not make one the right moral person.**

Jesus confronts how **a moral position used to presume superiority ...rather than responsibility is vain and hypocritical.** When having the right position is a source of superiority in which we judge others, rather

than a source of responsibility to help others, then we are hypocrites ...who not only don't reflect the heart of God... but will face his judgment for being those who actually reflect the opposite.

The point is that...

### 1. The way of Jesus is empowering in it's honor of life.

**Being "Pro-Life" must not simply be a call to tell people what they should not do...but to help people be able to do what one believes God desires.** Voting according to what we deem to be consistent with "Pro-Life" politics related to abortion... or signing a petition... or joining a rally... may all mean something ...but they could be as much a source of indictment if we are not actually helping those bear new life. Jesus is quite clear that such help does not reflect what is optional about our moral nature... it is essential to our moral nature.

When the gift of life is shown value and honor... the heart of God is declared. This is what we see in ...

#### **The Early Church**

This is what was so powerful about the Early Church. They saw what Jesus had done... what he revealed about violence...and they embraced a different way... they stopped attending the gladiator events in the Coliseum... they began to take care of the weakest...to take the infants being left to die. At first, they were mocked...but it began to speak to the culture of violence and served to bring a transformation to the Roman Empire.

In a world that had always assumed that those who were healthy and wealthy were blessed by the gods... Christ had made it clear how far from the truth that was. The early church had a different reality to live and share.

While it was expected to care for the poor of one's family or tribe, Christians' cared about others... even of other races and religions, as taught in Jesus's parable of the Good Samaritan ([Luke 10:25-37](#)) – it was unprecedented. During the urban plagues, Christians characteristically didn't flee the cities but stayed and cared for the sick and dying of all groups, often at the cost of their own lives.

Unwanted infants were literally thrown onto garbage heaps, to either die or be taken by traders into slavery and prostitution. Christians saved the infants and took them in. [1]

#### **Mother Theresa**

Mother Teresa – She came to India as a 19 year old Albanian woman...and began to care for the poorest of the poor on the streets of Calcutta. In 1950, Teresa founded the Missionaries of Charity, a Roman Catholic religious movement... and by 1996, she operated 517 missions in over 100 countries

She held a deep grievance against abortion.

"Abortion kills twice. It kills the body of the baby and it kills the conscience of the mother. Abortion is profoundly anti-women. Three quarters of its victims are women: Half the babies and all the mothers."

On a few occasions she was invited to address the political leaders of our nation...at the National Prayer Breakfast in 1994...with the president...and his wife... and hundreds of our national political leaders...she said...

**"How do we persuade a woman not to have an abortion? As always, we must persuade her with love and we remind ourselves that love means to be willing to give until it hurts. Jesus gave even His life to love us. The father of that child, whoever he is, must also give until it hurts.**

**I appeal everywhere — “Let us bring the child back.” The child is God’s gift to the family. Each child is created in the special image and likeness of God for greater things — to love and to be loved.**

**Please don’t kill the child. I want the child. Please give me the child. I am willing to accept any child who would be aborted and to give that child to a married couple who will love the child and be loved by the child. From our children’s home in Calcutta alone, we have saved over 3000 children from abortion.” - Mother Theresa [2]**

I want the child. Please give me the child.

If ever the old adage were true ...it was true that day... that **“actions speak louder than words.”**

**And the point is** not that we share the exact same calling as Mother Teresa or anyone else... but that **moral authority is rooted in what we do.** As it’s been said: We need to become the change we want to see.

### **Harvest Home**

Harvest Home is a **local residential home** for women in crisis pregnancies... a home that **we have financially supported from its inception.** Harvest Home has the unique opportunity to open a new home in a former convent, made available by the Los Angeles Catholic Archdiocese ... a second home in Los Angeles that will allow serving an additional 18 women at a time.

**Video: - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9j9OWIqHPAo>**

> In just a few weeks... I’m privileged... join in blessing that home in prayer.

**Individuals and families of this community...** who have supported Harvest Home... supported young mothers... who have chosen care for **foster kids**...and some to **adopt those in need.**

**In all these ways... we are reminded that the way of Jesus is empowering in it’s honor of life.**

We are not to be those who lay the heavy loads onto others...but who help them carry the heavy loads.

Let’s continue to listen to what Jesus says. In another setting, Jesus expands on what the heart that honors life must involve.

***I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven. <sup>21</sup> "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.'<sup>22</sup> But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca,' is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell. - Matthew 5:20-22***

Jesus is saying something about the nature of law and legislation. When Jesus said, **“You have heard that it was said...”** he was **referring to the Laws set forth through Moses**...or at least how they were narrowly being understood and applied by the current religious leaders. He is making it clear that the law could not define the heart in itself, he was **reflecting the limits of law to create righteousness**... to create what is ultimately right in people. He is making it clear that true righteousness is that which embraces the heart of the law... the deeper value. [3]

With these words, Jesus is using a common form of hyperbole to make a point...and the point is that we cannot merely judge the most ultimate expressions of sin that may be reflected in the laws...without taking the unseen sin that reflects the same nature seriously as well. I believe this speaks quite clearly to the nature the “Pro-Life” position. If abortion is deemed to be murder because it does not reflect the sacred

value of life...then **we must embrace that our call is to reflect a value for life is everything we say and do.** The **way that we speak about others** and treat others can reflect that which murders others.

To be clear... the use of hyperbola is rather clear... and I don't believe that Jesus is intending to say that there is no distinction between contempt in the heart and actual murder of a life. What he is saying...is that we cannot claim to have become right in our hearts before God...if we simply oppose murder but hold murder in our hearts. He is not speaking against the nature of anger as a whole...but of the type of anger that speaks harm to the other... that is the nature of contempt. When our judgment of others is about their value... as Jesus describes...then we bear the heart of murder.

And this captures a **second principle**...

## **2. The way of Jesus is consistent in it's honor of life.**

Jesus calls us to a value for life that is formed more deeply in our heart and then lives out more consistently in our lives.

**This raises what many refer to** as the **challenge to hold a “consistent life ethic.”** A “consistent life ethic” **simply refers** to a value for human life that is **consistent in all stages and spheres** of life. A consistent life ethic knows that **not all issues are equal**... but it does call the heart to truly value all life...not just the unborn.

The Catholic Church has understood a commitment to a consistent ethic of life as one in which issues may not be the same or equal... but complement one another. A consistent ethic of life maintains a **moral principle**. [4]

As Pope John Paul II expressed,

***"Where life is involved, the service of charity must be profoundly consistent. It cannot tolerate bias and discrimination, for human life is sacred and inviolable at every stage and in every situation; it is an indivisible good" - Pope John Paul II (The Gospel of Life, no. 87).***

The Catholic commitment continues...**“Any politics of human dignity must seriously address issues of racism, poverty, hunger, employment, education, housing and health care.” (Living the Gospel of Life, no. 23).**

If we really do aspire to be Pro-Life...that is... proponents of life... we will care about **more than criminalizing abortions.**

***“If we desire to honor the sacred value of every human life, we will aspire to cultivate a personal conscience that affirms the rights of the unborn, supports those facing the challenges of carrying the unborn, opposes any unnecessary and unjustified war, and supports that which serves the needs and dignity of all live... particularly those most easily marginalized and exploited.”***

**The point is not that we carry the weight of the whole world** upon us. The point is simply that our value for life will “aspire to cultivate a personal conscience” that engages these issues as connected to the value of human life.

**It means that it will be natural for us to value....**

- Supporting those faced with unplanned pregnancies
- Supporting adoption
- Supporting all means for peace to limit war
- Supporting that which protects and provides for those lives most often vulnerable to oppression and exploitation: the poor, fatherless, foreigner, and women.

In all these ways... we can express God's sacred gift of life.

**And let me close with one more point** related to the honor of life... but also as a **fitting point to conclude our series.**

### **3. The way of Jesus is counter-cultural in it's honor of life.**

Jesus didn't fit in this world... he didn't fit into any of the religious-political groups.... he didn't fit in the Roman Empires system. He represents another kingdom... that is not of this world.

And that is what the early church.... grasped.

**Those who followed the way of Christ** became those who brought **transformation to the Roman Empire (and the western world) ....because they were distinct.**

They had **no sense of being separate or superior to anyone...** but they **knew of another kingdom to which they had become citizens.**

That involves being defined by God more than any other source... and that will always mean being prepared to live with some distinction from any mere political circle that wants me in the club... even when I want to belong.

When we embrace our distinction from any political club... when we embrace our distinct identity from any political party... we can discover a freedom to be united in something bigger.

**When we allow our spirit to declare that "Jesus is my King"** there is a freedom that comes with it. **Regardless of who may get my vote, they will not get my allegiance.**

I do not have to accept evil as good and good as evil, in whatever way it may be manifest in the policies or persons who I may choose to vote for.

It is this declaration of distinction that we actually can find freedom for political diversity.

#### **Freedom to differ in voting while maintaining unity in our central values**

Voting should involve a process of thoughtfully weighing God's heart across multiple relevant issues... including both the multiple positions a candidate may express...as well as their nature as a person and leader.

This is certainly a process by which one can and should gain perspective from their pastors (those entrusted with their spiritual lives) and fellow Christ following friends, but because any party or particular political figure represents multiple elements in their positions and nature, ultimately each individual must follow their personal conscience... and this involves what elements one believes will have the most practical impact ...and how the nature of their leadership will influence the common good.

This means it's **quite possible for two people to share very similar convictions about an issue...**but ultimately make a different choice in voting because of other issues and their assessment of priorities.

It is with this understanding that **I can sincerely respect** those who may **tend to vote Republican, Democrat, or for third party choices.**

If I find something offensive in the party or person they voted for... I don't assume that they chose to vote that way **BECAUSE** of that issue...but potentially **DESPITE** that issue....just as I hope they can understand the same in the choice that I may make.

We do well to consider that the different “sides” represent so many issues... and even changing dynamics...and should never be deemed to simply “represent” ourselves or others in any simplistic or complete way. We must accept that voting is fundamentally an expression of how each of us accepts we are never doing anything more than deciding significantly imperfect choices ...rather than expressing our moral allegiance.

**There may have been less adversity** among those who first followed Jesus...because they **weren't part of a democracy... they didn't hold elections for Caesar.**

But I believe **what served their unity most...was how Jesus revealed the true nature of power.**

**Those who first followed... were transformed by the way of the cross.**

There they watched their Lord... dragged away... beaten...at the hands of this world's greatest empire... but by the direction of the religious establishment ... which were more akin to political parties.

They must have thought... Master...tell Pilate what he wants to hear... agree with the Pharisees.

Things just got worse....until finally he was sentenced... and raised up.

There is no greater love than he who lays down his life.

**It would appear to be an act of defeat.** But in the end they would realize...**it was an act of defiance.**

And as we begin to conclude today... I want to invite us into the final weeks of the Lenten season.. these final weeks that prepare us to remember the death and resurrection of Christ.

What we see upon the cross...is an act of defiance...and Jesus invites us to follow him....to embrace being distinct from the powers of this world. In a moment... there will be an opportunity to come and receive the elements of communion... that which symbolized the life of Christ given for us.

As we come to receive that sacrifice...I invite us to affirm in our hearts our own distinction... and defiance from this world.

And in preparation I invite you to join with me in this prayer... a prayer often referred to as the Prayer of St. Fancies...or the prayer of Peace.

**Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace;  
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
Where there is injury, pardon;  
Where there is doubt, faith;  
Where there is despair, hope;  
Where there is darkness, light;  
And where there is sadness, joy.**

**O Divine Master,  
Grant that I may not so much seek  
To be consoled as to console;  
To be understood, as to understand;  
To be loved, as to love;  
For it is in giving that we receive,  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
And it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.  
Amen.**



## Communion

### Further Recommended Reading:

Are You Truly 'Pro-Life?' - Russell Moore, Jan 24, 2020 - [here](#)

A good challenge to American Christian culture is reflected in Living the Gospel of Life: A Challenge to American Catholics - [here](#)

Ancient Christianity and the Consistent Life Ethic By Rob Arner (Jan 3, 2013) - [here](#)

An excellent assessment that shows that there is absolute consistent life ethic in every statement of the church leaders from 90-314 C.E.

10 Reasons Why I Oppose Abortion, Rich Nathan, January 26, 2019 - [here](#)

### Notes:

1. Matt Crawford explains: “When famine and war had afflicted the city of Caesarea, the plague hit in the early fourth-century, and the populace was already weakened and unable to withstand this additional blow. The populace began fleeing the city, one of the larger ones of the Roman Empire, for safety in the countryside. However, in the midst of the fleeing inhabitants, at least one group was staying behind, the Christians. As bishop of the city and a historian of the early church, Eusebius, recorded in “The Church History” that during the plague,

“All day long some of them [the Christians] tended to the dying and to their burial, countless numbers with no one to care for them. Others gathered together from all parts of the city a multitude of those withered from famine and distributed bread to them all.”

Eusebius goes on to state that because of their compassion in the midst of the plague, the Christians’ “deeds were on everyone’s lips, and they glorified the God of the Christians. Such actions convinced them that they alone were pious and truly reverent to God.” A few decades after Eusebius, the last pagan emperor, Julian the Apostate, recognized that the Christian practice of compassion was one cause behind the transformation of the faith from a small movement on the edge of the empire, to cultural ascendancy. Writing to a pagan priest he said:

“when it came about that the poor were neglected and overlooked by the [pagan] priests, then I think the impious Galilaeans [i.e., Christians] observed this fact and devoted themselves to philanthropy.”  
 “[They] support not only their poor, but ours as well, all men see that our people lack aid from us.”

The Compassion of Early Christians, By Matt Crawford, February 7, 2020 - [here](#)

See also Gary Ferngren’s essay “[The Incarnation and Early Christian Philanthropy.](#)”

And "As long as it's healthy": What can we learn from early Christianity's resistance to infanticide and exposure? By Louise Gosbell, Updated Fri 18 Dec 2020 - [here](#)

Although it is difficult to articulate the number of Christians in this Early Church, it is estimated that there were a thousand Christians in the year 40, about 7,500 in the year 100, about 217,000 in the year 200, and six million Christians at the beginning of the fourth century. Christianity grew at the rate of forty percent per decade. About ten percent of the empire’s population was Christian by the time of Constantine.

2. Partial text of her speech at the National Prayer Breakfast in Washington, D.C, on February 5, 1994...where she spoke her mind and heart about the right to life. (From [here](#) where you can find full speech.)

3. He is making it clear that the law could not define the heart in itself, he was reflecting the limits of law to create righteousness... to create what is ultimately right in people. This is what Paul and the entire New Testament in particular make so central and so clear. The “Laws” of God could only serve as a good

backdrop for moral understanding...as a “tutor” to provide some guide to the standards involved ...but they cannot make us the kind of people who fulfill God’s heart in and of themselves.

This is true with all laws and legislation. They should be valued as a means to serve the common good by offering reference points... but they cannot and do not fully create a new heart. Laws can help orient life...but by it’s outward nature it cannot change the inward heart. As such, **we should not dismiss the merits of legislation, but nor should we look at legislation as that which enacts the ultimate changes that God seeks.**

The truth is that laws prove most redemptive when they actually reflect values held most commonly ...and they prove to elicit resentment and resistance when they do not reflect values which a majority of those under them embrace. As such, it is vital to be very clear about the difference between winning a legal case and winning hearts. **Jesus did not come to change laws...but to change lives.** Laws reflect God’s heart...but they could not change us. Jesus came to embody those laws and become a source of reconciling and restoring us. This is what should guide our entire perspective in the good but limited nature of political change.

4. This Catholic Church has understood a commitment to a consistent ethic of life as one in which issues may not be the same or equal... but complement one another. A consistent ethic of life maintains a moral principle.

Any politics of human dignity must seriously address issues of racism, poverty, hunger, employment, education, housing and health care" (*Living the Gospel of Life*, no. 23). We pray that Catholics will be advocates for the weak and the marginalized in all these areas. "*But being 'right' in such matters can never excuse a wrong choice regarding direct attacks on innocent human life.* Indeed, the failure to protect and defend life in its most vulnerable stages renders suspect any claims to the 'rightness' of positions in other matters affecting the poorest and least powerful of the human community" (*Living the Gospel of Life*, no. 23).

A good challenge to American Christian culture is reflected in *Living the Gospel of Life: A Challenge to American Catholics* - [here](#)

### **Further Thoughts & Quotes:**

While making abortion illegal and restricted reflects a moral value, the actual effect is not simply the end of abortion, but likely a combination of some decrease of abortions (as there may be greater care in preventing unwanted pregnancies) and an increase in abortion pills and unsafe abortions.

Around 45% of all global abortions are unsafe, of which 97% take place in developing countries.

Unsafe abortion is a leading cause of maternal deaths and morbidities. It can lead to physical and mental health complications and social and financial burdens for women, communities and health systems.

Naturally this raises the tension between legislating the ideal moral position... or providing for the actual needs amidst our moral condition.

As Michelle Oberman, who has researched and written on the consequences of abortion laws in Latin America and the United States, states, “we would do well to look past our southern border to consider what happens when abortion actually is illegal. It’s not the outcome anyone is looking for. Abortions rates are driven not by legality but by economics. Half of the abortions in the United States take place among women below the federal poverty line. Rather than ending abortion, criminalizing abortion will merely create new ways in which the state can intensify the misery of the poorest among us.” (From *What Happens When Abortion Is Banned?* By Michelle Oberman, May 31, 2018)