

Isaiah 49:1-7: <sup>1</sup>Listen to me, O coastlands, and give attention, you peoples from afar. The LORD called me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named my name. <sup>2</sup>He made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand he hid me; he made me a polished arrow; in his quiver he hid me away.

<sup>3</sup>And he said to me, “You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified.”

<sup>4</sup>But I said, “I have labored in vain; I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity; yet surely my right is with the LORD, and my recompense with my God.”

<sup>5</sup>And now the LORD says, he who formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him; and that Israel might be gathered to him—for I am honored in the eyes of the LORD, and my God has become my strength—<sup>6</sup>he says: “It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”

<sup>7</sup>Thus says the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One, to one deeply despised, abhorred by the nation, the servant of rulers: “Kings shall see and arise; princes, and they shall prostrate themselves; because of the LORD, who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you.”

### “The Icon of Life’s Sacredness”

#### INTRODUCTION

Today’s Old Testament reading is the Second of the four “Servant-of-the-Lord” passages in Isaiah.” In last Sunday’s Old Testament reading, our heavenly Father spoke about and then to His anointed Servant—the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, the pre-incarnate Christ.

In today’s text, we hear the Servant of the Lord speak Himself, yet He speaks prophetically as if His coming in human flesh has already taken place: <sup>1</sup>“Listen to me, O coastlands, and give attention, you peoples from afar. The LORD called me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named my name. <sup>2</sup>He made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand he hid me; he made me a polished arrow; in his quiver he hid me away. <sup>3</sup>And he said to me, “You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified.”

These are the words of the Servant of the Lord who as assumed humanity into His divinity to be our Savior, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Now, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity has always existed as the Son of God. He is eternal—begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, light of light, very God of very God, begotten not made, being of one substance with the heavenly Father.

But according to His human nature, Jesus had a beginning—He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary.

As the Son of Mary, Jesus started out life as a single-celled embryo—just like the rest of us. At about day five of embryonic development he was implanted in Mary’s womb. At about three weeks, his heart would have started beating. At six to seven weeks, you could detect Jesus’ brain function if you had the right equipment. At about three months he may have started sucking His thumb. At around four months Mary would have felt Him move. By the end of the second trimester, the unborn Jesus could hear and react to sounds, feel pain, learn and remember!

During the entire period of His gestation, Jesus was formed in Mary’s womb by the hand of His heavenly Father—just like He did the rest of us! The only difference between Jesus and the rest of us is that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit and was born without sin.

ON THIS SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE SUNDAY, THE BEST ICON OF THE SACREDNESS OF HUMAN LIFE FROM THE MOMENT OF CONCEPTION IS THE VERY LIFE OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST.

Now by icon, I mean image or picture. I could try to describe the Eiffel Tower to you using words: it’s an iron structure in Paris, France; it’s nearly 1000 feet tall; it has four legs that form four arches and gently curve to a square, pointed top. There, now you know what the Eiffel

Tower looks like, right? Not really. But if I showed you a picture or a model of the Eiffel Tower, then you would have a much better idea of what it looks like.

In the same way, the life of Jesus teaches us that human life is sacred from the moment of conception. Because Jesus—the Son of God and our Savior—was fully a human being, created by God in His image, endowed with an eternal soul, given a name and a purpose—ALL from the moment of His conception.

#### I. Life is sacred because God created human life.

In Genesis chapter one, we learn that God created human beings in His own image. That doesn't mean that we're spirits like God is a spirit, but that God created humans with a spiritual part—He endows each and every person with a soul that lives forever. Furthermore, God created Adam and Eve holy and perfect as He is holy and perfect; He created them to live forever; He gave them the power of reason and communication; He gave them dominion over the created realm; and above all, God gave made human beings to be in relationship with their Creator.

While the Fall into sin brought an end to our holiness and perfection, and broke our relationship with God; while the Fall into sin corrupted our reason and communication; and while it brought death to us and the world, it didn't change the fact that we are still created in God's image—it didn't change the fact that God continues to knit human life in the womb—it didn't change the fact that human life is still sacred to God. God told Noah in Genesis 9 (v 6): “Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.” While PETA may consider the killing of animals to be murder, in God's eyes, only the unlawful killing of human beings—created in His image—is murder.

The question then is: When does human life begin? When does a human being come under the protection of the Fifth Commandment: You shall not murder? When does human life become sacred in God's eyes?

To answer those questions, we look at the life of Christ.

## II. Human life begins at conception.

For those who believe that human life begins at conception, you have biology on your side. In every part of the animal kingdom, when male and female come together in the procreative act, you have a new member of that species—whether it's cow or horse or cat or dog. What develops in the womb is what science calls a fetus—Latin for offspring. What springs off of a cow is a cow, a horse is a horse, a cat is a cat, a dog is a dog—not a mass of useless cells, not a tumor like cancer, nor is the fetus some kind of alien invader—but a new member of that species. So, when is a cow a cow or a dog a dog? At the moment of conception. It's no different for human beings! Every medical textbook on embryology that I'm aware of teaches the fact that humans are humans from the moment of conception.

Jesus is evidence that human life begins at conception. He began His earthly life as an unborn child in the womb of Mary. He wasn't a clump of useless cells or a tumor or an unwanted invader like cancer. He was a human being, distinct from His mother, created in the image of God by His Creator.

In our day and age, we hear a lot about personhood. We're told by those in power that perhaps the unborn child is a human being, but it isn't a person until it's outside the womb. But for Christians, it matters not what Barack Obama or the Supreme Court think, but what God

says! When does God consider the unborn child a human being? When does God consider the unborn child to be a person with the right to life?

Again, looking at the life of Christ, though Jesus was in Mary's womb, He was a fully a person. The angel told Mary at the moment of Christ's conception, "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus." You don't name useless clumps of cells. You don't name objects that aren't person unless you wish to personify them. God gave Jesus a name because Jesus was a human person—and that personhood began the moment of His conception.

III. Human life is sacred because God gave Jesus to redeem human life.

Furthermore, human life is sacred from the moment of conception because God has a plan and purpose for every human life He has created.

God had a plan and a purpose for Jesus. Today's Old Testament reading speaks of that plan and purpose long before Jesus was ever conceived and born. "And now the LORD says, he who formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him; and that Israel might be gathered to him—for I am honored in the eyes of the LORD, and my God has become my strength—he says: "It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth."

God had a plan and a purpose for Jesus—to be born, to live, to die and to rise again for your salvation.

Now while you're not Jesus, God still has a plan and purpose for you—even before you were conceived. God knew your name before the world was ever created. And God planned to send His Son as a human person to save you from your sins.

Jesus, as the Son of God in the flesh is the embodiment of the sanctity of human life from the moment of conception. There is no greater issue that we face today than defending unborn life. But also the church is here to proclaim forgiveness in Christ's name to hurting souls who have been deceived by the devilish words of this world into taking the lives of their unborn children.

#### CONCLUSION

Because the unborn baby is nestled away in its mother's womb, it's hard to us to see—and for us to appreciate and love. But God sees what we don't see: He sees human life that He created; He sees a child whose name He's known from eternity—and where we see only a clump of cells, God sees a person with potential—God sees His plan and purpose for that life—just as He saw the plan and purpose for your life!

And the greatest plan and purpose God had for you was to save your soul through the life, death and resurrection of His only-begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary!

In Jesus' Name. Amen.