

Editorial: The new Texas law is an opportunity to address what abortion is and what it isn't

Abortion is back in the national spotlight in a big way – and not just as a political football to be tossed around during a presidential campaign. The controversy surrounding the adoption of Texas SB8, [a groundbreaking statute](#) that allows any private citizen to sue any individual who “aids and abets” an abortion once the baby’s heartbeat has been detected (usually around six weeks), means that the country is once again abuzz over what so many people call “women’s rights” and “women’s health care.”

Conversation and debate will continue in the media and among Americans as the law is applied and, inevitably, tested in the judicial system. With abortion back in mainstream public consciousness, Catholics find themselves with a prime opportunity to speak the truth about what it really is and is not, and what is really at stake when we talk about abortion. It’s these kinds of conversations – rather than participation in political debates – that can help make ground in the cultural struggle for life and help move the country in a pro-life direction. Here are some points to keep in mind.

Abortion is:

- **An act that intentionally ends life in the womb, pure and simple.** And it does so in a way that attacks those who are unable to speak for themselves. “It is not right to ‘do away

with' a human being, however small, in order to solve a problem," Pope Francis [said](#) during a general audience in 2018. "It is like hiring a hitman to solve a problem."

- **A violation of the Fifth Commandment and a grave sin that separates one from the Church.** As the Catechism of the Catholic Church states: "Human life is sacred because from its beginning it involves the creative action of God and it remains forever in a special relationship with the Creator, who is its sole end. God alone is the Lord of life from its beginning until its end: no one can under any circumstance claim for himself the right directly to destroy an innocent human being."
- **Not the end of the story.** God's mercy is always available. If you know someone who has had an abortion, encourage her with respect and compassion to go to confession and seek proper counseling. A local Project Rachel office is equipped to assist women in post-abortive healing.

- **Not the only way an unwanted pregnancy can play out.** Thousands of pro-life crisis pregnancy centers across the country stand ready to provide mothers in need with compassionate, nonjudgmental and practical care. These centers provide medical assistance, help mothers meet their basic needs, and can even offer housing. Adoption agencies also are available to assist moms in crisis pregnancies, and can connect babies with parents desperate for a child to love.

Abortion is not:

- **A political tool to be used by politicians in order to appeal to or secure voters on a whim.** Most unfortunately, we find ourselves currently with a Catholic president who at one point proclaimed himself to be pro-life but who just this month said he no longer believes that life begins at conception. When abortion becomes just another political party talking point, we have

truly lost sight of what is really happening in this country's abortion clinics.

- **An act that affects only the mother and the child.**

When a child is killed in the womb, lives are changed forever in families and in communities. Doctors and nurses at abortion clinics are hardened. A life created by God, along with all of its future potential, is gone, and the world is changed.

- **Women's health care.** As a [document](#) from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities says, abortion "does violence to a very young child, has no clear justification in terms of women's health, and may attack women's health and their very lives." Framing abortion as essential health care is damaging to health care practices that legitimately have the best

interest of women at
heart.

Today's culture would frame abortion as a right to which every woman is entitled, whenever and no matter the circumstances. That is a lie. What isn't a lie is the right to life of every child within the womb. "From the first moment of his existence, a human being must be recognized as having the rights of a person – among which is the inviolable right of every innocent being to life," states the Catechism (No. 2270). And this is the message we must share.

Our Sunday Visitor Editorial Board: Gretchen R. Crowe, Scott P. Richert, Scott Warden, York Young