Discussing abortion & euthanasia with children

Recently after a pro-life Mass the pastor called me to let me know that a young dad was upset about his four year old son being present. “How am I supposed to explain abortion to my little boy?” he had asked.

This dad’s concern was a legitimate one. While adults have come to accept the public discussion of abortion, parents of young children find it terribly difficult to explain it to their kids. It is understandably troubling to describe what an abortion or euthanasia is and what it does to a child or older person. Many parents would prefer not to raise the subject with their child until they are older and can understand it in context.

There are several problems with ignoring the subjects of abortion and euthanasia. It is frequently covered in news reporting, is included in political debate and sometimes even at school. “Planned Parenthood” and other abortion dealers sometimes distribute literature at youth events and make presentations at schools. Euthanasia, not always by that name, is discussed in the context of health care, Medicare and social security. Young children hear about from the television, radio and overhearing conversations between adults.
Catholic parents want to be certain their children understand the importance of respecting and cherishing every human life, from its very beginning to its natural end.

I recommend that parents and teachers explain to young children (generally under ten years of age) that, in our society, we have heroic people who serve as police, soldiers, firefighters, who drive ambulances, are nurses and doctors and rescuers because everybody’s life is so important that we do everything we can to protect them and keep them safe. Even people who are not police, soldiers or firefighters should do everything they can to protect others, especially children and older people from getting hurt or killed.

I ask them, “Do you think that everybody, especially children and older people, should be protected and rescued if they are in danger?” Of course they do.

Then I tell them, “Sadly, there are some people who don’t believe that babies, before they are born and older people when they become sick and too weak to walk by themselves, should not be protected by police, or ambulance drivers, or nurses or doctors and that they should be left alone and die. They believe in abortion, meaning babies in their mother’s tummies shouldn’t be protected and euthanasia, meaning older and sick people shouldn’t be protected.”
“Isn’t that strange?” I ask them. “Don’t you think that if you and I are protected and saved by police, firefighters, nurses and doctors, that babies and older people and everybody should be saved and protected?” Yes, of course they do.

Then I tell them that the Catholic Church and people who are called “pro-life” (which means; “for everybody’s life”) want to be sure that everybody, babies before they are born, older people when they are weak and sick, and everyone else is always protected and rescued.

Parents need to be the ones who explain abortion and euthanasia to their children, not “Planned Parenthood” or pro-euthanasia groups. If we are going to see the rise of a new generation committed to life, our youngest children need to grow up understanding how important it is to protect and respect every human life.