

## Don't Forget Those With No Voice

Have you ever wondered why the U.S. Catholic Bishops chose October as Respect Life month? I have often thought that perhaps they are trying to remind us of our duty to remember the less fortunate as we prepare to vote in the November elections. And this year is no different.

Abortion is still legal up to and including the ninth month of pregnancy in the United States. Over 40 million babies have been aborted since Roe v. Wade in 1973. Despite repeated attempts to make it illegal, partial-birth abortions are still performed several thousand times a year, often on healthy babies and healthy mothers. Euthanasia continues to gain wide acceptance in our society. The elderly, the sick and dying, are being told the "noble" course is to choose suicide. The redemptive value of suffering is losing respect.

In our own state, our university in Madison is the center of unethical research on embryonic stem cells, much of which is supported through taxpayer dollars. These cells are taken from babies only a few days old, destroying the human life. The scientific research shows that embryonic stem cells are no more valuable than stem cells taken from adults, in a procedure that does not harm human life. Yet our state continues to fund the research that destroys human life.

Certainly, the pro-life movement has made some important strides over the last few years. Public opinion polling shows more people than ever are concerned about abortion. Scientific advancements, including those in ultrasound, show that the babies are human beings from the moment of conception. Many people are becoming aware of the dangers of "physician-assisted" suicide, and the attempts to legalize it are going slow.

Unfortunately, anti-life proponents are well-funded and ready for battle. NARAL (National Abortion Rights Action League) and NOW (National Organization for Women) have powerful lobbying arms not only in Washington, but also in Madison. NARAL alone has committed \$40 million over the next several years to promote abortion in the U.S.

So please take the time to carefully consider the candidates when it comes time to vote this November. Find out the positions on these important life issues. Visit a candidate's web site, call the campaign headquarters, or ask the candidate in person to explain their stance on pro-life issues. Remember, the baby in the womb, the person dying in a hospice, the Alzheimer's patient in a nursing home, can't vote. You can be their voice this November.

-Written by Helen Michaletz for the *Messenger* parish newsletter, Fall 2002.