

Dear Friends in Christ,

Everything in life comes down to one question - who's your God? It's really that simple. Jesus put it best. **“No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other” (Matt 6:24).** Jesus then says that you cannot serve God and money. Jesus mentions money here because he knows it's the idol we are most drawn to. What's the number one issue for voters year after year? The economy. It means that we've made money into god.

The number one issue should be, “What would glorify the true God, the God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?” This puts everything into perspective. God certainly cares about the world, and He feeds the world, both believers and unbelievers. God cares about the economy because He wants to take care of you.

There's a bill being considered in Minnesota currently that we need to discuss. It's Bill HF 1930/SF 1813. Here's the summary of the bill by Compassion and Choices, an organization that advocates for assisted suicide. “A terminally ill, mentally capable adult with a prognosis of six months or less to live, the option to request, obtain and take medication — should they choose — to die peacefully in their sleep if their suffering becomes unbearable. The bill is modeled after laws in other authorized jurisdictions and the Oregon Death with Dignity Act, which has been in practice for 25 years without a single instance of abuse or coercion.”

There's a lot to say, but before we get into the specifics, just ask the question - who's God here? It is God who gives life, and it's also God who takes away life. We are pro-life, but we don't punish a woman for having a miscarriage, recognizing that it's God's right to give and take away life. We mourn when a miscarriage happens, and it's one of the toughest things anybody has to endure. We'd never celebrate a miscarriage. It's okay to have anger and sadness when God takes a life; it's important that you give that anger to Him. It's okay; He can handle it. When you let God have your anger, you're recognizing that He's in charge. He's the one who gives and takes away life.

Suicide is a horrible thing. I know some of you reading this have loved ones who have died this way. People often ask, “Do people who commit suicide go to heaven?” I always answer like this, “That depends. Suicide is not the unforgivable sin; unbelief is the unforgivable sin. Luther helps us out here - he says there are 2 kinds of suicide. The first is, and excuse the expression, but it's giving the finger to God. It's saying, ‘I'm god, and so I'm going to go out on my own terms.’ That suicide is done in unbelief. The second kind of suicide is when one is overcome by the devil, who is trying to devour them. This person still has faith, but was overcome in this life.” Both situations are difficult, but I always pray when I hear of suicide that it's the second kind.

This bill is representative of the first kind of suicide. It's saying, "We're god, and Jesus is not. We get to decide when people are born, and we get to decide when people die." You can hear it with the language used to describe the bill. In Oregon, it's described as death with dignity. Dignity according to which god? The Oregon bill is described as having no instances of abuse or coercion. Abuse according to which god? People who abort children for a living?

So who's your God? My God is Jesus Christ. He died so that I could live. He rose so that I could live forever. He is the life, and He gives me abundant life. We will all die, but that day is picked by God, not any of us. All who believe in Jesus as Lord, as the author and giver of life, will live forever with Him.

If you're curious about what you can do to support the life that God gives, check out lcmcloud.org and go to the blog section. Pastor Zach Hoffman (Holy Cross, St. Cloud), in his post "Sometimes You Have to Say Something" posted a template for a letter you can send to our legislatures. The assisted suicide bill isn't specifically mentioned in the templates, but I know you're smart enough to adapt those letters for this issue and others.

In Christ,

Pastor