

**Father Brad Neely**  
**St. Mary's-Moscow: Oct 02, 2011**  
**27<sup>th</sup> Sunday Ordinary Time, Cycle A**  
**Respect Life Sunday**  
**Hab 1: 2f; 2Tim 1: 6f; Lk 17: 5-10**

*“Sanctity of Life” covers a myriad of issues concerning the respect that is due to God’s creation and sustenance of life. The following homily centers on abortion, which by proportion affects the largest numbers of people.*

Some of you may have seen a young woman on news shows, or on YouTube videos in the somewhat recent past by the name of Gianna Jessen. She is a 34 year old woman who *survived* an abortion in 1977. At 7 ½ mos., and against all odds, she survived a saline abortion that was meant to induce birth within 24 hours, to a baby who had died as a result of the injected saline solution. A survivor of abortion at the time, *was caused to die, or left to die* outside the womb, because death was the original intention. Yet in Gianna’s case, she was born before the abortionist came to the clinic that day, and a nurse secretly called for an ambulance to transfer her to a hospital. She weighed all of 2 lbs.

This is **Respect Life** Sunday. The word “life” is defined in Webster’s as: “the animate existence or period of animate existence of an individual.” We are all *animated* from the moment of conception, with everything we need to develop as a human being.

And importantly, we possess an infused everlasting soul.

Gianna was left with cerebral palsy due to lack of oxygen during the procedure. She speaks out on behalf of life. As she goes about **defending** life, she receives a lot of love and praise. She also receives a lot of hate and criticism.

During one 2008 speaking engagement in Australia---in the Parliament House of the state of Victoria, she challenged her audience, largely composed of politicians, with the following: “do you want to stand for life, or do you want to stand for death?” If you stand for life, “are you willing to risk speaking the truth, and to stand up and at least **be willing** to be hated?” What an interesting challenge. But in this day and age, it **is** necessary that such a challenge be made.

There are many people who disagree with what **we-the Church** believe has been revealed by God concerning life. There are people in the world willing to usurp God’s dominion over life, as if they believe they know better than God.

Gianna stirs people up as she takes on the cause of life, but as she puts it, “I didn’t survive and live just to make people comfortable.” When we, like Gianna, stand up for life, there is a good likelihood that we will be met with anger and defensiveness.

Herein lies an important question.  
Would receiving that anger and criticism  
*shut us down*?  
Would we back-peddle and retreat?  
Throwing anger at someone  
is very effective at shutting them down.

Since 1973, when abortion became legal  
in the United States,  
the current *gestimate*  
is that approximately 54 ½ million babies  
have been aborted.

Here is another vital question.  
Which is more important on the scales?  
On one side of the scales  
are the 54 ½ aborted babies.  
On the other side  
are our personal comfort levels.  
The issue of what is more important is clear.

So Gianna's challenge is an urgent one:  
again, "are you willing  
to risk speaking the truth,  
and to stand up  
and at least be willing to be hated?"  
In her Parliament address, she continues:  
"Do we [as a human race]  
want to be obsessed with our own glory,  
our self-given decision  
as to who lives and who dies and when,  
or do we want to be obsessed  
with the glory of God?"

Human life **is** the glory of God's creation.  
From conception, we are made  
in the image and likeness of God.  
Remember as well,  
even God became part of His own creation  
in the womb of Mary.  
Jesus has experienced all that we experience  
in the womb of our mothers.  
God is the author of life,  
and each one of us is *unique*  
in all of time.

Respect Life Sunday  
is a day to contemplate  
the pinnacle of God's creation---  
*human life*.  
Those who work tirelessly  
against the sanctity of life  
still have to answer  
a basic question that Gianna asked  
in her Australian Parliament speech---  
and that is:  
"Can any of us make our *own* heart beat?"