

**II, Ordinary, A, 2008**  
**St. Raphael, Springdale, AR**

Folks, do you know what is the greatest asset of St. Raphael parish? No, it's not our 30 acres of property with frontage on 412 and our fancy new building. And, no it's not our tireless staff and our army of volunteers – but I do love you! And no, it's not even our “cute and cuddly” Dc. Chuck either! This might come as a surprise to you, but I believe that our greatest asset is our pregnant moms. In fact, if the number of baptisms is any indication, we have lots of pregnant moms! Did you know that we celebrate 50 to 60 baptisms a month here? Yes, 50 to 60 each month! But I admire our pregnant moms for two special reasons. First, they are willing to suffer so much for that little life in their womb: they have to go through 9 months of pregnancy and then there is labor! You know, I'm sure if men were the ones to get pregnant, the human race would have ended a long time ago. The second reason is that pregnant moms teach us to love our neighbor, especially our little neighbor in the womb whom we cannot see. It's amazing how much pregnant moms love their babies, and they help us to love them, too. You see, Jesus commandment to love your neighbor also includes loving the unborn child in the womb.

Recently, I saw some pretty funny F.A.Q.'s (frequently asked questions) about pregnancy and the answers. One asked: “What is the most common craving that a woman has during pregnancy?” And the answer was: “For men to be the ones who get pregnant.” Another one asked: “When is the best time to get an epidural?” The answer was: “Right after

you find out that you are pregnant.” Now, it’s all right to poke a little fun about pregnancy, but we must always remember that having a baby is a very serious and a very sacred matter. Pregnant women are great assets because they teach us the value of the life of the unborn child, and that’s a lesson we desperately need to learn.

In the first reading today we see how God values the child in the womb. Isaiah the prophet says: “Now, the Lord has spoken who formed me as his servant from the womb, that Jacob may be brought back to him and Israel gathered to him.” That is, even while Isaiah was still a little baby in his mother’s womb, God had started forming and shaping him into a great prophet. I’ve heard of mothers who play the music of Mozart to their unborn babies so they’ll have a musical bent when they are born. In other words, they are not playing that music to a blob of tissue, but to a human person, who can hear and respond to great music. Well, God was working on Isaiah even in the womb, so he would be a great prophet. You see, God knows that those 9 months of pregnancy are precious, and He began to bless that baby long before he was born.

You know, I’ve been following the presidential election campaign pretty closely for the past few months. How can you miss it, it’s on every time you turn on the T.V.! But in all the commercials and interviews and debates, there’s been hardly anything about abortion, and the life of the unborn child. Now, obviously, the war in Iraq and immigration, the

economy and the environment are all important topics and need to be discussed. But how can we ignore the issue of abortion? Because you see, if we deny the child in the womb in the right to life, what's the point of winning the war in Iraq or passing better immigration legislation, building a stronger economy or saving the rain forest? If we kill the next generation, who'll be around to enjoy all our so-called progress?!

Archbishop Chaput is the Archbishop of Denver, Colorado. In his weekly column, he recently said this: "But how do we make good political choices when so many different issues are so important and complex? The first principle of Christian social thought is: **Don't deliberately kill the innocent, and don't collude** [that means to cooperate, participate] **in allowing somebody else to do it.** The right to life is the foundation of every other human right." Since we don't have our own bishop, I figured it was okay to quote another bishop! You know, it's like that game "Jenga," where you have this stack of wooden blocks and have to remove them, one by one. (I hate that game because I always lose!) But, the right to life is like that crucial block – right in the middle – which, if removed, causes the entire tower of human rights to tumble over. Every pregnant woman is a reminder to our nation not to remove that block of the right to life of the unborn. But if we do remove that fundamental right, I don't think our country will stand for much longer.

You know, I'm sure that what I'm saying will not sit well with some of you. They say that in polite company you're not supposed to discuss religion or politics; well, you had to put up with a little of both in this homily. But, my friends, God doesn't call prophets and priests to be polite, He calls us to preach. And when it comes to preaching the Gospel of life, I will not worry about being polite. And I hope our dear moms will not worry about getting pregnant.

Praised be Jesus Christ!