

Catholic Diocese of Fargo
5201 Bishops Blvd., Suite A
Fargo, ND 58104

Office of Communications
Tanya Watterud, Director
(701) 356-7958, Cell: (701) 219-3194



Bishop Samuel Aquila on the fundamental right to life: “We will be judged”

Nov. 3, 2008

At a Nov. 2 Mass marking the completion of the 40 Days for Life North Dakota campaign of prayer and fasting to end abortion, Most Rev. Samuel J. Aquila, Bishop of Fargo, spoke of “the four last things... death, judgment, heaven and hell.”

“Judgment is real, just as heaven and hell are real,” Bishop Aquila said during his homily at the 11 p.m. Mass at the Cathedral of St. Mary in Fargo. “When the soul separates from the body and comes before God, we will be judged on how we lived. It’s important to understand the reality of that judgment.”

Bishop Aquila urged the nearly 200 people in attendance to reflect upon the four last things and how they apply to the 40 Days for Life effort. The 40 Days for Life North Dakota effort of prayer, fasting and peaceful, prayerful witness outside the state of North Dakota’s only abortion facility began Sept. 24, in conjunction with similar campaigns in more than 170 cities across the nation. During those 40 days, hundreds of volunteers, representing several faith backgrounds, prayed in one-hour shifts, 24-hours-a-day, on the sidewalk outside the Red River Womens Clinic at 512 1st Ave. N. in Fargo. An average of more than 20 unborn babies are killed by abortion each week at the clinic.

The bishop spoke of the Catholic Church’s teaching on intrinsic evils. “An intrinsic evil is anything that is always and at every time wrong – that can never be seen as a ‘good’.” He noted the intrinsic evils of abortion, contraception, premarital sex, same sex acts and the taking of innocent human life during war. “All of those are intrinsic evils, and no society, and no person if he is Catholic, can ever support an intrinsic evil nor can he or she ever vote for someone who supports intrinsic evil. It is important to understand that, and to understand that truth especially in the upcoming election. Because, yes, all of us will be judged by how we vote. And, yes, there are many Catholics with erroneous consciences who have made prudential judgments that are wrong and have consistently made prudential judgments that are wrong. Either they do not fully understand the teaching of the Church or they choose to ignore that teaching and they choose an evil, and an intrinsic evil.”

“For any society to be just, it must reflect the order of God,” Bishop Aquila said. “There are fundamental rights that no one can violate and those are the inalienable rights that our forefathers recognized so clearly -- and note the order -- life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” He said people must be concerned about the economy, the war in Iraq, the questions about immigration and other issues, but “we must recognize that first must come the fundamental right to life...the respect for human life from the moment of conception to natural death.”

“It is important for us to never give up the battle that is taking place within our country,” he said. “Even as we close these 40 days, I encourage each of you to continue to stand for the gift of life. I encourage you to continue to pray and fast in your own homes. I encourage you to pray in front of the abortion clinic, to

pray for the conversion of all those who support a so-called right to abortion, because, by doing that, they are risking hell. When one looks at the Gospel, and looks at the teaching of Jesus, that is what they are risking.”

The Mass was the final event marking the end of 40 Days for Life North Dakota. Earlier that evening, more than 170 people participated in an ecumenical candlelight prayer service outside the Red River Womens Clinic, led by the Rev. Dave Motta, pastor of Calvary United Methodist Church, Fargo, and Father Charles LaCroix, chaplain of Shanley High School, the Catholic high school in Fargo.

The full homily is posted at: <http://www.fargodiocese.org/bishop/homilies&messages.htm>.