



MY TWO CENTS

Pro-Life or Not?
Martin Pender, May 2018

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, it is not so unusual to perceive the confusion that is rampant in society when it comes to the question of being pro-life or not. Many people are often at a loss when asked if they are pro-life or not. For the modern mind, the subject of pro-life is almost always reserved to the issue of abortion and applied to this problem exclusively. However, it is the purpose of this short article to show that being pro-life is not a question that pertains solely to issues surrounding the subject of abortion, but a question that involves and affects the deeper reality of “being” itself.

TO BE OR NOT TO BE

From a philosophical perspective, it is a rather foolish question to ask someone “are you pro-life or not?” In philosophy, we study “being” as “being”, i.e. “being” which is common to *all* things. This is not as difficult as it may first appear. Philosophy studies whatever exists and can exist, the actual and the possible, the divine and the created, the spiritual and the material – in other words, *reality* in all its different phases.

If a philosopher were to be asked, “Are you pro-life?”, the philosopher must reply in all honesty that the question is nonsensical in essence. It would be impossible for the philosopher to legitimately answer “no” to this question because by so doing it would deny the very basis upon which the philosopher is dependent – “being”.

THE PREMISE OF PHILOSOPHY

This philosophical approach to the topic of pro-life is not as labyrinthine as it may seem at first. The basic premise is that everything that exists, all “being”, must be pro-life in its nature, as it participates in “being” itself.

Using this philosophical premise as our starting-point, we can begin by saying that the true sense of “being” is lacking in the modern mind. After centuries of being poisoned by false philosophies and the political agendas they spawn, the human person is on the verge of losing the true and essential sense of “being” and, consequently, becomes confused about his own being.

A “modern” individual is often both confused and anxiety-laden because, fighting against his true nature,

he attempts to make his “being” to the likeness of an efficient machine in the greater machine of a mass culture of non-entities. This is an immense human tragedy as it is only in recollection that the problem of “being” looms in consciousness. However, the modern mind is too busy skating on the surface to take time to probe the depths.

Where is “being” in our modern culture? If you are lost in a town while looking for the local library, for example, someone could point you in the right direction or even point out the library itself to you if you were close enough to it. But where is the “being” of the library? You can *not* point out the “being” of something in the same way as you can point out a physical thing – in this case, the library. *Being* is not precisely and properly some “thing” as in the example of the library.

Using this logic, we can see the stupidity and irrationality of asking the question, “Are you pro-life or not?” It is “being” itself that is at stake here, not some “thing”! You do not have to be a philosopher to note that everything that exists or can exist is not the same, nor is it entirely different. Reality is not made up of a strict uniformity, a sameness in all things. On the other hand, reality is not composed of entirely different beings that have nothing in common. The common and the different go to make up the order of “being”. In philosophy, we call this “analogy”, and this fundamental insight is of vital importance for any proper philosophical reflection.

THE INSIGHT OF THEOLOGY

Up to now, I have avoided using theological words like faith, religion or God when reflecting on the subject of being pro-life or not. I have only used the method of philosophy. I have done this consciously and deliberately in order to demonstrate that the question of being pro-life is not something that solely and exclusively belongs to the realms of religion and consequently does not apply to the “lived reality” of a modern, secular and godless world – as most political factions, cliques and lobbyists would have us believe.

Using non-religious terminology, philosophy can show us that the question of being pro-life is not in itself “religious” in nature, but something that touches the deeper core of all things that exist and therefore shares in “being” itself.

Please do not get me wrong. I am not saying that religion is incapable of endowing our consciousness with insights and wisdom when reflecting on "being" itself. Even though the human person can ponder reality without the need of divine intervention, the Christian faith offers the human mind a superior form of knowledge and wisdom. However, we are all rational creatures and remain so, even if we are endowed with the light of faith.

However, using this insight from philosophy, we can progress to the field of theology. We can say that all being has its being in "being" itself. What does this mean? Intrinsically, it means that God is "being" and that he has shared his "being" with everything that is, everything that exists. In fact, in the Bible God tells us that his name is "I am" – the first person of the verb "to be" in the *present* tense (not the past tense as if God only belongs to the archives of the past and not to the "liberated" world of the present). God's nature is simply "to be". Therefore, being pro-life is confirming that your "being" is a participation in the very nature of God, that all "being" is a participation in the nature of God. How can you then not be pro-life?

CHOOSE LIFE

In the Book of Deuteronomy we read,

"Moses said: I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life, that you and your descendants may live, loving the LORD your God, obeying his voice, and clinging to him; for that means life to you and length of days, that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them."
Deut 30:19-20

So being pro-life is to say yes to life as Moses did, to choose life.

"Life" in this context means something much more than just pure old biology. Using the principles of philosophy mentioned above, we can say that a truly Catholic understanding of "life" incorporates all levels of human life, from the psychological to the biological, from the religious to the interpersonal.

So, are you pro-life? I hope so, as being pro-life means that you must:

- love others as you love yourself;
- love and care for the psychological and spiritual lives of other humans as you care for your own;
- love the moral law that tells you how to love nature and the nature of everything – man, woman, animals, God, and even death itself;
- love and care for your bodily health and the health of the planet that nourishes it;
- love the source of all life – in the Bible, in children, in the Mass, in conscience, in nature (everywhere);
- love and care for other human biological lives, not killing them by starting wars, by euthanasia or by abortion.

CONCLUSION

Way back in the year 450 BC, long before the dawn of Christianity, Sophocles, the great Greek poet and philosopher said: "Children are the anchors that hold a mother to life." I only wish that the world today would rediscover the wisdom that was spoken almost three thousand years ago by this "pagan" poet and philosopher. It is essential that we uproot the lie upon which the modern world is based, established and functions. Our society, our world, depends on us uprooting this matrix, this lie. It is my hope that the old Greek proverb "No lie ever reaches old age" will soon be realised.