

Ethan Meunier

As much as we would like to deny it, the way our society functions is changing. We have found ourselves engulfed in a technology-driven culture that is obsessed with efficiency and productivity. We pay to have fast food delivered to our door, we pay thousands of dollars for an extra camera on our phones, and we get annoyed at traffic and long drive-thru lines. If something doesn't bring us value, we see it as insignificant or unimportant. After all, if something is of no use to us, why should we care about it?

Thankfully, us gathered in this room tonight can see the obvious flaws in this logic when it comes to the rights of the unborn. However, mainstream culture, which usually prides itself on being progressive and forward-thinking, somehow fails to protect those who are the lowest and weakest in society, including the elderly, the unborn, and the disabled. Although the issue is never as simple as it is made out to be, some people demonstrate that they value convenience over human dignity when they choose euthanasia and abortion. This utilitarian way of thinking should hold no place in any society, much less a society that boasts all the resources necessary to help the helpless. It's been said that "a civilization is measured by how it treats its weakest members", and the fact that we continue to gather here every year proves that there are still a large number of issues to be dealt with.

One of these issues I happen to know very well. I have a little brother named Jack. Jack is 10 years old, and we enjoy playing basketball together and listening to Run-DMC. If Jack were to be conceived in a country like Iceland, there is almost a 100% chance that he would be aborted (CBS). My brother Jack has Down syndrome, and his survival odds in Iceland, a first-world country with an extremely profitable economy, would be close to nonexistent. The same rate in the U.S. used to be around 90%, but the current abortion rate after positive test results for Down syndrome has dropped to "only" around 67% (Natoli). We have a very long way to go, but yes, this is progress. These advancements are partly due to the efforts of people like Vice President Mike Pence, who has proven to be an ambassador for the unborn. In 2016, as Indiana's governor, Mike Pence signed a bill that banned abortion in cases solely based on a child's disability (The New York Times).

This is a massive and important step, but I think it underlines some of the deep-rooted issues of the subject. Why should it take the efforts of the governor of Indiana to secure the rights of the disabled? Shouldn't more people care about protecting those who can't protect

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themselves? My belief is this: people are afraid of what they don't understand. It's part of a cycle; less children with disabilities are born because of abortion, and more abortions take place because there aren't as many disabled children around to learn from. I've come to discover first-hand that most children with Down syndrome go on to live long and fulfilling lives; even as a 10-year-old, my brother Jack is succeeding in the 3rd grade, just like any other kid. Sadly, when many people look at Jack, they see his disability and forget his dignity. Those in power in some countries would call him "abnormal" or "defective", but above all, he is a human being who is defined by more than his least desirable traits, just like the rest of us.

I thank God for bringing Jack into my life, but sometimes I wonder how things could be different for him. My family was very lucky to be financially stable and living in a supportive community at the time of Jack's birth. What if things hadn't been as ideal? Things are never as simple as they seem, which is why organizations like Right to Life are so crucial in not only protecting the rights of the unborn, but also in promoting adoption and in assisting mothers who are faced with such difficult decisions. As times continue to change, technology continues to advance, and the world becomes increasingly hostile to those who need the most help, we as pro-lifers have taken the call to give a voice to those who cannot speak for themselves. Even when the world seems to turn its back on human dignity, we stay ahead of the curve. While people argue on Twitter, we bring our voices to the steps of the Capitol to march for life. When it seems like no one cares, we are called to be the face of hope to others.

Sources:

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