



**Office of the Bishop**  
Roman Catholic Diocese of Lubbock

April 6, 2021

In August of 2020, I responded to word of Planned Parenthood's return to the Lubbock area with how it posed an opportunity for reflection, giving "... all people of conscience on the South Plains an opportunity to reflect on the dignity which every human life deserves. That dignity begins at the moment of conception and must be protected throughout the course of human life through the moment of natural death. The natural dignity of human life, deriving from its origin and likeness to the image of its Divine Creator, is subjected to assaults of various kinds in our individualistic, materialistic throwaway culture."

I had so hoped—naively, I guess—that Planned Parenthood in Lubbock would not receive the needed authority to perform abortions. Distribution of the "morning-after" pill is egregious enough, but I've been informed that abortions may have already begun in Lubbock.

Participating in the prayer effort of "40 Days for Life-Lubbock," across the street from the facility, during the past six weeks put me in too-close physical contact with the reality of the "services" offered there. Planned Parenthood will couch their services as promoting the health of women—perhaps health services are offered there—but the reality of death at the hands of Planned Parenthood, now in Lubbock, must not be denied.

The willful taking of human life—murder, it is called—is taking place in the heart of Lubbock. Innocent lives are being taken just down the street from the life-saving work of Covenant Medical Center.

Lubbockites cannot be silent in the face of such evil.

I have not been supportive of the political efforts promoting the Sanctuary City for the Unborn Ordinance in the city of Lubbock. Consultation with legal experts whom I trust, as well as with my brother Bishops in Texas, leads me to the same conclusion as the legal experts consulted by City of Lubbock officials.

We need to be prepared for the work needed to create and maintain an environment that nurtures a respect for life in Lubbock and on the South Plains. I wish that resources and energy could have been directed toward efforts that were more likely to succeed and have lasting impact.

I wish those promoting the proposed ordinance would put resources and energy into other life-saving matters that are at stake when one hears of "Sanctuary City" measures. Alas!

The citizens of Lubbock face a vote on May 1 regarding the proposed Sanctuary City for the Unborn Ordinance. Voting is inherently political.

When matters are put to a vote of the people, separation of Church and state requires that Church scrupulously refrain from political activity on one side or the other. The Church's role certainly seeks to inform consciences and encourages its members to be informed about matters being put to a vote.

The Catholic Church respects the consciences of the individual voters. Thus, the Catholic parishes of Lubbock have been—and still are—prevented from "campaigning" on one side or the other of this issue. Such political activity is inappropriate for our Catholic Faith Communities to engage in.

I certainly encourage the Catholics and all citizens of Lubbock to get informed and exercise their right and duty to vote in any and every election. I must not dictate to any person—including members of my own flock—how they must vote.

However, I will, due to the egregious acts occurring at the hands of Planned Parenthood, cede my right to privacy about my own vote. On May 1, I will vote in favor of the ordinance. Human lives must be saved!

  
+ Robert M. Coerver  
Most Rev. Robert M. Coerver  
Bishop of Lubbock