

# Common “Pro-Choice” Concerns

As our nation continues to process the landmark Dobbs case that overturned Roe v Wade, the topics of abortion and abortion rights are likely to come up more frequently in conversation. Below are some common objections that we often hear from pro-choice people, each followed by a pro-life perspective. The author, Dr. R. Jared Staudt, is quoted from his article, “What is Truth,” published by The Pilot, the newspaper of the Archdiocese of Boston. Below is Part 1 of a 2 part series.

## 1. We do not know when life begins.

Roe v. Wade employed this falsehood to justify its decision, even though it is a basic fact of biology that an independent organism begins to exist at the moment of conception. It is true that before the 19th century there was debate about the exact mode and timing of how the human person developed, but the German scientist Oscar Hetwig determined the nature of sexual reproduction through fertilization in 1876. From this moment, there is no scientific debate on the origin of human life and every textbook will present the moment of fertilization as the origin of human life.

## 2. My body, my choice.

This mantra assumes that the conceived child is simply a part of the mother's body. Since we know that human life does begin, biologically speaking, at the moment of conception, there is a distinct human organism within the mother's body. It is true that this child can only survive in dependence upon the mother, but this is also true of young children and anyone who is vulnerable. In fact, there is no such thing as a completely autonomous human being.

## 3. Stop pushing your religious views on me.

This argument assumes that opposition from abortion stems solely from faith. It is true that our faith teaches us that murder (the intentional killing of an innocent human being) is wrong, but it is also a clear precept of the natural law. Abortion is wrong by its very nature because it violates the inherent dignity of the human person as a rational being. We can explain the evil of abortion without reference to faith, even though faith and reason are in agreement on this point. When the government not only allows but also supports the destruction of human life, the rule of law becomes undermined and even arbitrary.

#### 4. What if the mother's life is in danger?

It is never permissible to kill an innocent human life for any reason. The Church also recognizes the legitimacy of taking action to save the life of the mother even if it may result in the death of the unborn child. The foreseen but unintended death of the child is not what is chosen directly, for the moral choice is to save the life of the mother, a principle called double effect. This would not be an abortion, because the child is not killed (there is no procedure directly killing the child), even though he may die as a consequence of a necessary treatment to save the life of the mother.