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A Larger ProLife Framework for our Times

Peg Spindler
pspindler47@gmail.com

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A Larger ProLife Framework for our Times

— **SISTER PEG SPINDLER**

The late Cardinal Joseph Bernadin of Chicago tried to help us see that being pro-life meant more than making sure babies are born no matter what. He coined the phrase “seamless garment of life” which encompassed other life issues such as poverty or capital punishment. Now, with all that COVID has laid bare in our societies, we can no longer define a pro-life stance as just being pro-birth as Sister Joan Chittister, OSB, has noted.

We need to enlarge our understanding of what it means to be pro-life to include the collective life of our planet. Whatever a child is born into must be healthy and participative — its family of whatever nature, its community, its culture, its country, its bioverse, its world. That means that every child’s birth must be an occasion of worth. That means the same opportunities for housing, health care, education, nutrition, and equity must be available for EVERY child, no matter its origin or circumstance. That means as that child grows, s/he will easily access whatever assistance needed to thrive, without blame or judgment. That means we consider the health and well-being of the entire planet itself and the web of life dependent on it. That means we come to understand that Earth cannot sustain unending population growth. That means we cannot continue a consumeristic, militaristic, environmentally unsound lifestyle. That means we can no longer live within artificial boundaries or borders, but must learn to work cooperatively for the good of all. That means we break down the various caste systems that hold so many hostage. That also means we define freedom differently to support a more communal life because, like it or not, we are on this journey together. And, really, isn’t that a wonderful, comforting thing?

If we use a framework like this (and others can flesh this out more fully), perhaps we will end the short-sightedness of being pro-birth and begin to think and decide more long term, as many indigenous first peoples have lived “down to the seventh generation.” Our survival and thriving as a species depends on it!

Sister Peg Spindler, CSA
Gary, Indiana