

# To Change Society, the First Step Is to Shift Our Mindset on the Value of Life

Today, my heart is heavy. In the past few days and weeks, I have been confronted with the reality that we live in a society that does not value human life.

Over a month ago in Orlando, nearly 50 people were murdered in cold blood—an act I cannot even comprehend, no matter the shooter's ideology. This was a deliberate attack motivated by devaluing minority and self-identified LGBTQ lives.

Weeks ago, five out of eight people decided common sense health regulations didn't make sense, [endangering the lives](#) of countless women and babies. The U.S. Supreme Court ruling on *Whole Woman's Health v. Hellerstedt* entrenched the idea of a "right to abortion" as greater than the value of human lives.

Then only days ago—indeed, the incidents seem to be tragically ongoing—the shootings of men in Baton Rouge, Louisiana and Falcon Heights, Minnesota [reopened wounds](#) related to historic injustice and unequal treatment of black Americans. Violent responses by lone gunmen have led to revenge murders, notably in Dallas and Baton Rouge where several police officers were gunned down in the line of duty.

My grief over these incidents stems from the same source: I believe in the sanctity of human life. I do not make a distinction between one human life and another, whether progressive or conservative, self-identified LGBTQ or [Little Sisters of the Poor](#), an octogenarian Supreme Court Justice or an unborn child.

Every life has value, purpose and meaning—every single one.

The past few years have been increasingly turbulent as violent outbursts and domestic terrorist attacks have become more and more common, something unheard of when I was growing up (at least, where I lived). However, rather than digging out the root of the issue—our society as a whole does not properly value life—saving lives has become politicized.

It's not about gun control. It's not about "pro choice" or "pro life" positions. It's not about welfare, immigration or hate speech. It's not about insulating ourselves, building barriers to protect ourselves or blaming others for our condition.

Political posturing ignores the bigger picture. The core issue is about honoring, respecting and valuing every life—even sometimes at the expense of other perceived "rights."

The Declaration of Independence [states](#) the principles at work: We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. Life comes first!

I don't have the answers to the problems facing our country, but I do know that our political posturing only makes the situation worse and a solution that much more difficult to find. Rather, I believe a focus on preserving life should be our guiding principle.

Life should take precedence over comfort and convenience. Life should take precedence over ideological differences. Life should take precedence over "an undue burden." Have we become so addicted to comfort and so entrenched in our ideologies that we are no longer willing to preserve life at all costs?

How would the news stories of the past few weeks—or the past couple of years—have played out differently if the decision-makers had chosen to value life first and foremost?

What about the stories we are reading today? What about the stories that will be published tomorrow ... can we change the outcomes? I stand for life. As we navigate creating community among diverse people, it gives us a starting point for living together and loving one another.

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