

Faithful Citizenship



August 9, 2008

The sentencing of the 47-year-old man responsible for the accident on Kunia Rd. that took four lives in 2006 was probably one of the saddest things I've ever seen. He looks much older than his years which I'm sure has something to do with the burden he's carried since the accident and which he will carry until he dies. The woman driving the worker's truck who had to swerve to avoid his on-coming-in-the-wrong-lane vehicle still cannot forgive herself or drive past the accident scene without thinking about it. And the families who lost their mothers, wives, sisters and friends will live on without the joy of their presence. None of these people woke up that morning expecting any of this to happen. It makes you appreciate life a little more.

As Catholics we value life from conception until natural death. Our job in the space between those two is to take care of ourselves and others. Our Catechism includes obvious references to this in many of its lessons, including a discussion of the four cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance. In the New Testament, the word temperance is modernized for us and is referred to as "moderation" or "sobriety." My parents always stressed "moderation" to us eight kids. When my dad split the stick of Wrigley gum into three pieces, or when he poured three drinks out of one 12 oz. soda bottle, we just thought he was being cheap! What he was teaching us was to enjoy something without overdoing it.

The Kunia driver indicated that he was taking medication that caused him to have this momentary lapse. There is hardly a week that goes by that we don't hear about an accident that involved alcohol. And, of course, tied to that often is the issue of speed. Today we can add in the distraction of cell phone usage. Government tries to address these concerns through legislation and local enforcement; but without our individual commitment to behaving responsibly, we will continue to have newscasts like the one this week.

Gotta go boot up my hard drive! Aloha - Mary B.