

Today is Respect Life Weekend and Dr. Sarah Bartell will speak after communion. I want to begin my homily with a trend I've noticed developing. The Germans had a national election last month, and during the election campaign Chancellor Angela Merkel was taking part in a Town hall event where she took questions from the live audience. One question she received was from Natalie Dedreux, an 18-year-old girl with Downs syndrome. She asked the Chancellor, "Nine out of ten babies with Downs Syndrome are not born in Germany. Why is it allowed to abort babies with Downs syndrome until just before birth?" You could hear a pin drop. Merkel appeared troubled and eventually stumbled out with answer about the government's efforts to help young mothers care for their children, etc. But the question clearly touched a nerve.

And then there was the story last November of a French court banning TV ads showing happy children with Downs syndrome. A Downs Syndrome advocacy group had created the ads in the hope of

persuading mothers to give birth to their children if they were diagnosed with Downs. In suppressing the ads, the court said they could “disturb the consciences of women, who, in accordance with the law, have made personal life choices.”

There were also news stories out of Iceland this summer concerning that nation’s becoming a Downs Syndrome-Free society. Since 2008 every child diagnosed with Downs before birth has been aborted. This was presented by some people there as being an obviously good thing, like the eradication of polio or small pox.

But Downs Syndrome is being eradicated in our culture, not by new cures, but by destroying the lives of those with the syndrome. The Roman historian Tacitus once bitterly commented on the violence of the Roman Empire’s conquests by writing, “The Romans create a desert (by killing the natives) and call it peace.” To paraphrase him, we destroy those with a health condition we don’t want and call it medical progress.

Decades ago, when the Church and others first warned that legal abortion would eventually mean screening out unwanted people by abortion, and, in effect, allowing human beings to be designed and manufactured, proponents scoffed. But what's happening to Downs children shows the accuracy of that prophecy. If there can be no limits on the legal right to abortion, then what possible argument can be made against such freedom of choice? And, as the technology for reading a pre-born child's genetic code grows, the temptation to abort children who are less than perfect in our eyes will also grow.

Those with Downs syndrome don't have a lot of powerful advocates in the media or among the elites. So, I was thinking about a hypothetical situation that might touch more consciences and help us see more clearly the tragedy of aborting unwanted people. Our society is increasingly, and rightly, valuing people who are gay, that is, who are attracted to people of the same sex. To date, we don't know how a person winds up with a homosexual orientation. But there's

speculation about a genetic aspect to it. Let's imagine that, in the near future, a prenatal genetic diagnostic test is discovered that will be able to tell if an unborn child will likely develop a homosexual orientation. What would we, as a society, do with that?

First, imagine what persons with Downs syndrome, such as Natalie Dedreux, must feel like when they realize that there are fewer and fewer people like them in the world. Surely, they won't miss the point that they are unwanted and feel the negative stigma attached to their very existence. So what about gay people under such a technological regime? Won't some – many -- parents informed that their child in the womb has tested positive for a predisposition to a homosexual orientation think, "We can't deal with the stress of such a life. Let's try again, Honey"?

If you think that we've grown too enlightened for such thoughts you're kidding yourself. One can have the most progressive attitudes in the world, and still prefer a heterosexual child to a homosexual one.

Remember, it would not be just a matter of acceptance. It would be a matter of choice. How many parents will actively choose a gay child?

Ironically, given the commonly accepted lie that the Catholic Church hates gays, I also prophesize that if/when that day, and that technology, comes – and if the abortion culture hasn't changed – then the last people still defending the lives of children pre-disposed to homosexuality from abortion will be the Catholic Church. I personally promise to do so.

I mention such a hypothetical future scenario only to suggest the danger to our humanity that we're drifting into. The eradication of people with Downs syndrome has started. The modern eugenics program is well under way. Soon it will be applied to others, gay, gender-dysphoric, autistic. We want perfect children – and increasingly we're gaining the knowledge and technology to make it happen.

Those advocating for legal abortion like to say, "Every child a wanted child." They think that sounds compassionate. But it doesn't

mention the second, unspoken, half of the slogan – “therefore, if a child is unwanted, then it’s compassionate to abort him or her.” And we adults get to decide that life and death question of: who’s wanted?

Regarding the current killing off of those with Downs Syndrome, I wonder if we’ll miss them when they’re all gone. Will we miss the gays? But the problem is deeper than any one group’s elimination. The problem that causes these disappearances is the power to abort a human life in the first place. That power is illegitimate. It is the killing of a human being. Yes, a human being who is imperfect and unwanted in somebody’s eyes – but, then there are no perfect people. The only slogan we can live by that will stop this drift into moral disaster for humanity is to recognize the truth that, “Every child is a loved child,” if not by any of us, at least loved by God, and therefore every child is wanted.