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### **Does Pro-Life Mean Vegan?**

"I became pro-life and vegan." According to what I read on the blogosphere, these two things are connected in some people's minds. Here and there, little testimonials tell the story of the writer's conversion to the pro-life cause (perhaps after seeing some gruesome images) and how they now opposed abortion...but also decided to go vegan.

For one thing, I welcome people deciding to celebrate life, and I'm fine with people being vegan (just don't expect me to cook for you). But I don't think that pro-life logically requires veganism. Here's why:

1. Vegetarianism is abstaining from eating meat (often on philosophical grounds that it kills animals). But the dairy products that vegans avoid do not hurt the animal to manufacture. Cows need to be milked. Drinking milk and manufacturing cheese does not cause any harm to animals.

So, even if vegetarianism was required by being pro-life, it could not logically extend to veganism. The choice to be vegan is simply one's own. However, being pro-life doesn't even require vegetarianism because:

2. There is a moral difference between humans and other animals. Animals are not moral agents. Think about it, we would never consider asking them to give account of their actions. It would be absurd to look demandingly at Fido and say, "It was wrong to dig up the petunias and bite the cat. Why did you do it?" Yep, animals just have regular mortal, non-rational souls, not immortal souls like humans. (I could provide more information on souls if you are interested).

Because animals don't have immortal souls, they don't have the same inherent dignity that ascribes to them human rights. Thus it is not immoral to eat meat or animal products. (This is not a justification for animal cruelty. Such violent and abusive behavior would be wrong in and of itself. I support the humane treatment of animals while acknowledging the reality of the food chain and the humane slaughtering for human meals).

But lest you think I'm just an animal hater, know this: my family owns six cats and a big, Collie dog. I have volunteered as a foster animal caregiver for the SPCA, and I have an annoying habit of feeding and quasi-adopting pets that belong to my neighbors. It saddens me that animals do not have moral souls and so cannot go to heaven, but that's just life.

So yes, you can be pro-animals and pro-life without being logically required to go vegan or vegetarian.

What do you think of moral objections to eating meat? Do you think pro-life should include animal life? Do you agree with the author that there are moral/philosophical distinctions between humans and other animals?

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