

PRIESTS FOR LIFE

Assisting God's people to respond to the evils of abortion and euthanasia

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ANSWERING PRO-ABORTION POLITICIANS

If you've ever written to a pro-abortion politician about the right to life, you've probably received a form letter that utilizes one of several worn-out arguments. Let's review how we answer them.

1. *"I respect your views, but I have to represent all the people."*

Our response: That's what we're trying to say to you. Representing all the people starts with protecting all the people. If you neglect the unborn, you are not representing all the people. Roe vs. Wade excludes them from protection; we demand that they be included. A public servant cannot legitimately ignore an entire segment of the public that is being destroyed.

2. *"I'm personally opposed to abortion, but can't impose my views on others."* Our response: This is not a matter of views, but of violence. The law is supposed to protect human life despite the views of those who would destroy it.

3. *"The government should not be involved in such a personal decision as abortion."* Our response: The government got "too involved" in abortion when it claimed to have the authority to deprive some human beings of their right to life. The Declaration of Independence asserts that government exists to secure the rights already bestowed by the Creator. Moreover, when somebody's "choice" destroys somebody else's life, that choice is no longer merely a personal, private matter.

4. *"Legislators should not be practicing medicine."* Our response: We're not asking you to practice medicine, but to prevent the abuse of medicine. The practice of medicine is regulated by all kinds of laws that protect the lives of patients. All we ask is that the unborn be included in that protection.

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UPDATE FROM THE DIRECTOR



Dear brother Priests and Lay Supporters,

Thank you for your ongoing support of Priests for Life, which continues its growth at rapid pace and expects perhaps its greatest year of growth ever in 2004. This is thanks to all of you. Let me update you on a few points.

1. *Voter Registration Continues*

We are making progress, both within and beyond the bounds of parishes and dioceses, in registering people to vote. Please be mindful of the deadlines for voter registration in your state, both for the primary and for the general election. (See www.priestsforlife.org/vote/deadlines). Here are a few suggestions: a) include in mailings to your parishioners, and in the parish bulletin, a simple reminder to register; b) if you belong to a Bible study or prayer group, ask the participants if they are registered, and bring them the forms to do so; c) have voter registration forms available at the back of church and announce it periodically.

2. *"Does Priests for Life endorse candidates?"*

The answer is "no." We never have, and in fact we cannot, given our nature as a 501-c-3 organization. Interestingly, despite the fact that we have never made an endorsement, some have told us that we endorse Republican candidates.

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www.priestsforlife.org

UPDATE FROM THE DIRECTOR *continued from p. 1*

Thanks for the update -- it's news to us! Seriously, I suspect I know where this comes from. We do say, without apology, that being in favor of abortion disqualifies a candidate, morally, from public office, and we quote constantly from the US Bishops' 1998 document *Living the Gospel of Life*, where it is made clear that abortion is the foundational issue in elections. Now it just so happens in our country that the Republican platform says that the unborn have a right to life that cannot be infringed and that should ultimately be protected by Constitutional amendment. Meanwhile, the Democratic platform upholds the "right to choose" abortion. For some, that translates into "Priests for Life endorses Republican candidates." By that mistaken logic, the same would be true of the Pope and bishops themselves!

3. Finances great.

From day one, Priests for Life has had an excellent set of professional associates to manage our finances, and we are happy to say that all the audits, which we have voluntarily sought from independent companies, have shown highly favorable results. Moreover, the percentage of our budget dedicated to our actual projects far exceeds what is dedicated to administrative/fundraising costs, in a ratio that does better than most groups of our size.

4. Rachel's Vineyard.

This retreat program for healing after abortion continues to be run by Dr. Theresa Burke and her husband Kevin. Having sought our input and participation for years, they have now joined the Priests for Life staff. Priests for Life is happy to take this on as a ministry for our priests nationwide, and we look forward to a fruitful, collaborative relationship with the many dioceses and other institutions that hold these retreats.

5. Silent No More Awareness Campaign.

This effort continues to grow as women who have had abortions speak out nationwide, saying "I Regret My Abortion." This campaign is not a separate organization, but rather a project of Priests for Life and NOEL (a national Episcopalian pro-life group) and the co-founders are Janet Morana and Georgette Forney. Jennifer O'Neill is our national celebrity spokesperson.

(See www.SilentNoMoreAwareness.org)

Please note that there are other groups that go by the name "Silent No More." In particular, "*Operation Outcry - Silent No More*" is a separate organization under the auspices of the Justice Foundation and other groups. This group is working to present affidavits, from those harmed by abortion, to the courts in the hope of eventually overturning *Roe vs. Wade*. Priests for Life have supported this effort for years and continue to do so. But the difference is that while *Operation Outcry/Silent No More* works within specific litigation efforts, *Silent No More Awareness* is geared toward raising awareness, more broadly, about the harm abortion brings. There are a number of other efforts currently underway that

should be distinguished. The cluster of activities by which Priests for Life advocates for women go under the name "Solidarity with Women." Another distinct effort, coordinated by *Feminists for Life*, is called "Women Deserve Better." This campaign is dedicated to promote women-centered solutions to significantly reduce abortion and protect women's health. Priests for Life have supported this effort from the beginning and will continue to do so. Some ask why there are so many different efforts. The reason is that while all these efforts overlap, there are different audiences that respond to different approaches. The pro-life movement has the obligation to reach and serve all these different audiences, and therefore to present the message in different contexts. Meanwhile, the leaders do communicate and work to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort.

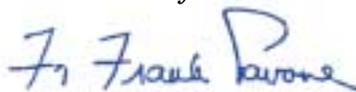
6. Information we need from you.

We need to hear from you at this time for a few reasons:

a) we are collecting the names and emails of every parish respect life coordinator in the nation, so we can communicate information they may not otherwise get. Please let us know who that person is for your parish. Email cchilds@priestsforlife.org. b) We are asking priests to sign our political responsibility pledge. See priestsforlife.org/elections/politicalresponsibility.htm. c) We need volunteers to help with the elections; please visit:

www.priestsforlife.org/elections to find out how you can help. d) As you seek to give financially to the pro-life cause, don't forget Priests for Life!

Thanks for all you do!



Fr. Frank Pavone

**National Director, Priests for Life
and Gospel of Life Ministries**

President, National Pro-life Religious Council

BULLETIN INSERT IN SPANISH

The following quote from the Holy Father is an appropriate insert into the parish bulletin, especially in an election year.

"La inviolabilidad de la persona, reflejo de la absoluta inviolabilidad del mismo Dios, encuentra su primera y fundamental expresión en la inviolabilidad de la vida humana. Se ha hecho habitual hablar, y con razón, sobre los derechos humanos; como por ejemplo sobre el derecho a la salud, a la casa, al trabajo, a la familia y a la cultura. Esa preocupación resulta falsa e ilusoria si no se defiende con la máxima determinación el derecho a la vida como el derecho primero y fontal, condición de todos los otros derechos de la persona..." (*el Papa Juan Pablo II, Sobre la Vocación y Misión de los laicos en la Iglesia y en el mundo, no.38*)

BAD DOCTRINE LEADS TO BAD MORALS: QUOTES FROM ABORTION INDUSTRY WORKSHOPS

Below are two quotes taken from the 20th Annual Meeting of the National Abortion Federation held from March 31 to April 2, 1996 in San Francisco. The gathering was titled "20 Years of Courage," and the workshop from which these quotes were taken was called "Case Studies in Counseling," presented by Joan Garrity, Maria Corsillo, Joseph Feldman, and Ellen Godwin. The quotes are from Mr. Feldman's presentation.

The first shows the effort on the part of the abortion industry to confuse "mercy" with "permission," a confusion all too common, except in the mind of the young woman referred to here. Feldman relates,

"Well, I'm distracted by the issue of God. One time I had a client who was very unsophisticated, not real bright, not real educated, and I said something along the lines of, you know, "forgiving God" and then, "You're okay. Go ahead and do it." And she said, "No, no, no, no. You only get forgiven if you've done something bad and you feel bad about it. If-- You don't get forgiven for deciding to do something bad and then doing it. That's evil." And I went, "Hummm. (AUDIENCE LAUGHS) Bad strategy." So I don't do that anymore. I don't believe in doing the God thing. That's only good in post-abortion. (HE AND AUDIENCE LAUGH) Now I do, "If God really loves you, do you think she wants you to have kids you don't want?" "If God really loves you, do you think she wants you to be in a situation there's no ethical way out of?" This is a loving God. Forget the forgiving God." (AUDIENCE LAUGHS)

This second quote shows the place that dualism and reincarnation play in the justification of abortion.

"Years ago, talking about forgiving Gods, loving God, one other phrase I did, that I found useful to share with people who are making a decision for abortion out of a lot of pain and the face of their religious beliefs, a number of years ago there was a letter to the editor to Ms. Magazine. There had been a series of articles about abortion and a gentleman wrote in and kind of saying, "I don't get what the big deal is here. I mean, after all the soul is immortal, so if a woman has an abortion, it's just kind of like the soul missed the bus." Now, that sounds kind of crude but you know, worded gently, that is a really useful notion for a woman who is coming from a place of belief in a soul and in an immortal soul, that this wasn't it's moment, that there be another corporeal opportunity for it, if you will."

As teachers of the faith, we can understand from these quotes how the imparting of solid doctrine plays an integral role in the saving of lives!

PRAYER INTENTIONS

You are encouraged to remember the following intentions as you pray the Liturgy of the Hours:

MAY INTENTION: For women pressured to abort their children.

JUNE INTENTION: For fathers tempted to have their children aborted.

ANSWERING... continued from p. 1

5. "Abortion is the law of the land." Our response: The "law of the land" can be changed, just as it was changed regarding slavery and segregation. Leadership means seeing the injustices that others miss, and inspiring people to utilize the methods the law permits to make necessary changes.

6. "I support women's rights and health." Our response: That is precisely why you should examine the evidence, which is more plentiful than ever, that abortion is destructive of women's health, and listen to the growing voices of those who have been harmed by abortion. That is also why you should examine how the abortion industry, through unregulated and dangerous clinics, continues to deceive and exploit women.

7. "Abortion is just one of many issues; I embrace a consistent ethic of life." Our response: The foundation of a house is only one of many parts of the house, but it is essential in order to build the other parts. That is why the Catholic bishops have repeatedly asserted that among the many interrelated issues within a consistent ethic, abortion deserves "urgent attention and priority" (Pastoral Plan, 2001).

8. "My office does not involve any decision-making about abortion." Our response: Your position on abortion says a lot about your character and worldview. If you cannot stand up for the smallest of children, how will you stand up for the rest of us?

9. "Let's just agree to disagree." Our response: We have the greatest respect for those who disagree with us. But when victims are oppressed, we don't sit back and "agree to disagree" with the oppressor. Rather, we intervene to save the victim. Abortion is not about beliefs; it's about bloodshed. Those who need protection need it despite the disagreement of others.

10. Finally, always use the best response to all the arguments: *I vote!*

YOU WOULDN'T EVEN ASK

-- Fr. Frank Pavone, National Director

If a candidate who supported terrorism asked for your vote, would you say, "I disagree with you on terrorism, but where do you stand on other issues?" **I doubt it.**

In fact, if a terrorism sympathizer presented him/herself for your vote, you would immediately know that such a position disqualifies the candidate for public office -- no matter how good he or she may be on other issues. The horror of terrorism dwarfs whatever good might be found in the candidate's plan for housing, education, or health care. Regarding those plans, **you wouldn't even ask.**

So why do so many people say, "This candidate favors legal abortion. I disagree. But I'm voting for this person because she has good ideas about health care (or some other issue)."

Such a position makes no sense whatsoever, unless one is completely blind to the violence of abortion. That, of course, is the problem. But we need only see what abortion looks like, or read descriptions from the abortionists themselves, and the evidence is clear. (*USA Today refused to sell me space for an ad that quoted abortionists describing their work because the readers would be traumatized just by the words!*)

Abortion is no less violent than terrorism. Any candidate who says abortion should be kept legal disqualifies him/herself from public service. We need look no further, we need pay no attention to what that candidate says on other issues. Support for abortion is enough for us to decide not to vote for such a person.

Pope John Paul II put it this way: "Above all, the common outcry, which is justly made on behalf of human rights -- for example, the right to health, to home, to work, to family, to culture -- is false and illusory if *the right to life*, the most basic and fundamental right and the condition for all other personal rights, is not defended with maximum determination" (*Christifideles Laici, 1988*).

False and illusory. Those are strong and clear words that call for our further reflection.

"I stand for adequate and comprehensive health care." So far, so good. But as soon as you say that a procedure that tears the arms off of little babies is part of "health care," then your understanding of the term "health care" is obviously quite different from the actual meaning of the words. In short, you lose credibility. Your claim to health care is "illusory." It sounds good, but is in fact destructive, because it masks an act of violence.

"My plan for adequate housing will succeed." Fine. But what are houses for, if not for people to live in them? If you allow the killing of the children who would otherwise live in those houses, how am I supposed to get excited by your housing project?

It's easy to get confused by all the arguments in an election year. But if you start by asking where candidates stand on abortion, you can eliminate a lot of other questions you needn't even ask.

For more election related articles and information, visit www.priestsforlife.org/elections

OUR LATEST PRODUCTS

Please use enclosed envelope and mail your order to: **PRIESTS FOR LIFE** P.O. Box 141172 • Staten Island, NY 10314

Mary, Mother of Life Within

Priests for Life is happy to promote the new pro-life statue, "Mary, Mother of the Life Within."

This beautiful statue is available from Priests for Life in two sizes, 8 inches and 14 inches. See ordering details at right.

The statue reminds us that the Blessed Virgin Mary, as Mother of the Author of Life, is also the spiritual mother of every new life that is conceived. She therefore is a loving support to every mother, assisting her to recognize in her child a reflection of God's love, and helping her to overcome every temptation to reject that child.

We are grateful to Birchfield Design Group, Inc., and Artist Joe DeVito, for making this gift to the pro-life movement available.



ORDER FORM

- I would like to order the 8" tall Mary, Mother of Life Within Statue
Quantity _____ @ \$35.00 each for Total \$ _____
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I have made my check payable to: Priests for Life

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