

DECEPTION

By Jim Seghers

Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi

On August 24 Nancy Pelosi was interviewed on Meet the Press. When asked when human life began she replied: “I would say that as an ardent, practicing Catholic, this is an issue that I have studied for a long time. And what I know is over the centuries, the doctors of the church have not been able to make that definition. . . . St. Augustine said at three months. We don’t know. The point is, is that it shouldn’t have an impact on the woman’s right to choose [an abortion].”

Speaker Pelosi’s remarks are deceptive. She cites the “doctors of the church” who lacked the biological precision to know when human life began. Therefore St. Augustine and others speculated differing opinions when the human soul animated the child during the pregnancy. However, neither St. Augustine nor any of the doctors of the church used this speculation based on their limited knowledge of human biology to justify abortion.

Contrary to Speaker Pelosi’s claim that she studied this issue “for a long time,” Archbishop Charles Chaput and Bishop James Conley of Denver reference one of the premier studies on this subject, John Connery’s *Abortion: The Development of the Roman Catholic Perspective*. The author of that work concluded:

“The Christian tradition from the earliest days reveals a firm antiabortion attitude. . . . The condemnation of abortion did not depend on and was not limited in any way by theories regarding the time of fetal animation. Even during the many centuries when Church penal and penitential practice was based on the theory of delayed animation, the condemnation of abortion was never affected by it. Whatever one would want to hold about the time of animation, or when the fetus became a human being in the strict sense of the term, abortion from the time of conception was considered wrong, and the time of animation was never looked on as a moral dividing line between permissible and impermissible abortion.”¹

The earliest Christian condemnation of abortion is found in the first century *Didache*, which is also called *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*:

“You shall not abort a child or commit infanticide.”²

From that time the Church’s condemnation of abortion was a universal chorus. It’s absurd that Speaker Pelosi cited St. Augustine’s primitive understanding of human biology as her justification for the killing innocent babies, but she ignored his condemnation of this crime.

For someone who claims to be “an ardent, practicing Catholic” and to have studied this issue “for a long time,” her apparent ignorance of the Catholic faith is surprising. The Church’s teaching is clearly expounded in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* – a work readily available:

“Since the first century the Church has affirmed the moral evil of every procured abortion. This teaching has not changed and remains unchangeable. Direct abortion, that is to say, abortion willed either as an end or a means, is gravely contrary to the moral law.”³

¹ “Denver Bishops on Church’s Stance Against Abortion,” www.zenit.org/article-23469?|=english.

² J. B. Lightfoot & J. R. Harmer, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 2nd edition, p. 150.

³ [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#), # 2271.

It's regrettable when any Catholic proclaims their adherence to the Catholic faith, but rejects it's teaching in practice. Isn't that the very definition of hypocrisy?

Senator Joe Biden

When Senator Obama chose Senator Biden as his running mate, he stressed Joe Biden's Catholic identity. Clearly, Senator Obama hoped that Senator Biden Catholicism would attract Catholic voters in some key states - so far so good.

However, during his interview on NBC's Meet the Press, Senator Biden appealed to the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas to cast doubt on the Catholic Church's consistent condemnation of abortion. St. Thomas, like St. Augustine before him, speculated when the soul animated the child's body. It's difficult to imagine that Senator Biden would appeal to St. Thomas' 13th century knowledge of human biology as a basis for modern law. It would have been more honest to also cite St. Thomas's condemnation of abortion.

Modern medical science leaves no doubt about the reality that each person's life begins at conception. It is not a question of religious belief, but of science. Senator Biden acknowledges his personal belief that life begins at the moment of conception, but he states that he cannot force his personal belief on others. Senator Biden's offensive moral relativism is more disturbing to me than his attempt to muddle Catholic teaching.

The character of political candidates is vital in determining their fitness for the offices they seek. Part of the frustration of our electoral process is the difficulty in sifting through the claims and counter claims of the various candidates. Frequently, the behavior of elected officials is far removed from their pre-election pledges of protecting the common good. The greed, fraud, and misrepresentation that caused our present economic crisis are the most recent example. Therefore, acting on one's personal belief system is a critical component of integrity.

To acknowledge that ones personal conviction is that abortion is destroying innocent human life, but refusing to prevent this awful crime under the guise of not wanting to impose personal values is similar to Pontius Pilate washing his hands while protesting his innocence of Jesus' murder after he declared him innocent three times. This is why Fr. Groeschel said we should give these politicians the Pontius Pilate Award.

Personally, I'm appalled by the behavior of Catholic politicians, who broadcast their Catholicism to gather votes, but fail to follow or attempt to distort its precepts.

Final Thoughts

The hurricanes, skyrocketing gas prices, and the recent earthquake in Wall Street should wake us up to the vulnerability of our economy. I learned a long time ago that our salvation is not in the politicians of either party. Psalm 127:1 gives us the correct perspective, and it contains a sobering warning:

“Unless the Lord builds the house [dynasty, kingdom, nation, etc.], those who build it labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain.”

I urge that we daily beg the Lord to guide our Country's voting in this election, so the candidates that win will be Jesus' choice.

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