

# **The Duty to Protect**

## **the Weakest and Most Vulnerable**

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I want to thank Cardinal O'Malley for his extraordinary moral leadership, vision and courage. Cardinal O'Malley radiates the love of Christ. He encourages us to keep our hearts fixed on our Lord in our personal lives and reminds us that our faith comes with the holy burden to lead others to the Kingdom of Heaven, forgive when forgiveness seems difficult, or even impossible, and to take the social implications of the gospel into our confused world. Thank you Your Eminence for inspiring us.

While history tells us something about centuries past, the zeitgeist of any time can only be truly known by the generation that lived it.

And only by those who invest the requisite time, prayer and mental energy to understand what is truly happening all about them.

Today, we—perhaps more than ever—need to ask the hard questions. Surface appeal arguments and cheap sophistry far too often go unchallenged, especially these days. And with the help of God, we need to be ever-willing to act and bend into any prevailing wind to combat the evil and injustice we discover along the way.

I have real idea what it must have been like to experience the great depression or the Second World War – my dad was a combat infantryman in the South Pacific – or the dawn of the nuclear age. But my parents did, and told me often of such things. But how much do I really understand concerning what they faced and overcame.

The distance of even one generation obscures.

Occasionally, however, the clarity and nobility of someone shines across the centuries.

St. Thomas More fills that definition to a tee.

A distinguished lawyer, statesman, scholar and martyr, one can only wonder what it might have been like to have it all as he did, risk it all as he did, and stand firm throughout it all as he did – even unto death.

Thomas didn't seek to showcase his depth of character. For a time he longed for a reasonable and principled way out. And as far as he knew execution invited ignominy, not only is losing one's life a big deal, his legacy might be tarnished forever, as well. The victors after all write the history books. But when the chips

were down, Thomas More's impeccable character was revealed as sound, true, and brave.

The historical record tells us he brought wit, humor and an almost preposterous lack of malice to his confrontation with Henry VIII and Cromwell. Jesus admonishes us to love our enemies, do good to those who persecute, and to have malice towards none. St. Thomas did that and more.

It is recorded that as he laid his neck on the chopping block, he pushed his beard forward with his hands saying, "that at least, has not committed treason."

I am reminded of a scene in Robert Bolt's play, *A Man for All Seasons*, when Thomas was asked by the Duke of Norfolk to go along with him and others out of fellowship and publicly agree with the king. He says:

"And when we stand before God, and you are sent to Paradise for doing according to your conscience, and I am damned for not doing according to mine, will you come with me, for fellowship?"

St. Thomas More once said he was the King's servant, but God's first. How many of us have so personalized and marginalized our faith in God—at one time or another or as habit—so as to render it meaningless in the public square?

But we, just like Thomas, need to ensure that we put God first and our own self-interest and preoccupation with being liked, honored, popular or elected, a distant second.

We need to use our strategic positions as judges, lawmakers, lawyers, and public servants to promote justice and compassion for all—and do His will on earth as it is in heaven.

We need to engage wholeheartedly, not counting the cost, without fear or trepidation over unpleasant consequences.

Today, there is a beguiling tendency in our society— especially in the political arena —to accept the euphemism—choice, death with dignity—over a difficult truth.

Nowhere is that more apparent than in the clash of what Blessed John Paul II famously described as the culture of life versus the culture of death.

The Catholic Church has been clear and consistent in its teaching that all human life is profoundly sacred. In both word and deed—heeding the commandment of Jesus Himself to care for the least of our brethren found in Matthew 25—the Church is the leader in defending the unborn, helping the poor, disabled, orphans, frail elderly, feeding the hungry, assisting the refugee, caring for the AIDS patient, embracing the guilty prisoner, rescuing the victim of human trafficking, and presenting God's awesome gift of reconciliation to all of us who have lost our way.

Throughout it all the Church has withstood the world's hatred, endured an endless

barrage of withering criticism and mocking in its valiant defense of human life and Judeo-Christian values. With generosity and charity towards even its most obnoxious and violent critics, our Church has modeled Christ, who from the cross forgave His tormentors.

We—the laity—need to be inspired by the Church’s stand and the courage of our clergy—especially leaders like Cardinal O’Malley. And we need to fight—as St. Paul told us—in a way so as to win.

The fact of the matter is that almost 40 years after the infamous holdings of *Roe v. Wade*, abortion remains a serious, lethal violation of fundamental human rights. The right to life is or ought be for everyone, regardless of age, race, sex, disability, condition of dependency or stage of development.

Sadly, it is not.

Tragically, since 1973, more than 54 million children have been killed by abortion—that’s more than eight times the total number of people living in Massachusetts today, a staggering loss of children’s precious lives.

Unborn children, like their older brothers and sisters have inherent worth, value, and dignity. They are children too. They are not disposable commodities nor are they junk. American jurisprudence—and public officials in all three branches—too often treat them that way. Re-establishing durable protections for the most at risk minority in America today—unborn babies—begs our immediate attention, time and commitment.

Today, ultrasound technologies and other diagnostic tools have helped doctors diagnose illness and disability before birth. New and exciting breakthrough health care interventions for the unborn—including microsurgeries—are leading to an ever expanding array of successful treatments and cures of sick or disabled unborn babies in need of help. Unborn children are society’s littlest patients. They deserve our respect. Life is a continuum and it is about time we recognize birth is merely an event—albeit an important one—but only an event in the life of a child.

In stark contrast, abortion methods rip, tear and dismember, or chemically poison the fragile bodies of unborn children. There is nothing benign, compassionate, or just about an act that utterly destroys the life of a baby and often physically, psychologically, or emotionally harms the woman.

Today, at least 104 credible studies show significant psychological harm, major depression and/or elevated suicide risk in women who abort.

The Times of London reported that, “[S]enior...psychiatrists say that new evidence has uncovered a clear link between abortion and mental illness in women with no previous history of psychological problems.” They found, “that women who have had abortions have twice the level of psychological problems and three times the level of depression as women who have given birth or who have never been pregnant”.

In 2006, a comprehensive New Zealand study found that 78.6% of the 15-18 year olds who had abortions displayed symptoms of major depression as compared to 31% of their peers. The study also found that 27% of the 21-25 year old women who had abortions had suicidal idealizations compared to 8% of those who did not have an abortion.

Post abortive women need help. Thankfully, the Boston Archdiocese sponsors Project Rachel—an amazing outreach of love and reconciliation to post abortive women.

In a Mother's day letter, one woman writes:

"Often during the last years, I would think, "How old my children would be now if they had lived?" But last November, at a Project Rachel retreat, I let myself realize the full truth...that they are a live, that they exist today. I named them. Rachel and David. I acknowledged their eternal existence, and I love them..."

In "My Story," another woman writes:

"Thirteen years ago I was volunteering at a crisis pregnancy center. It was during this time that everything came bubbling to the surface and I realized all the negative ways the abortion had impacted my life. I became depressed, I felt empty and shattered inside, I hated myself. It will be thirteen years this November since I attended my Project Rachel Retreat. During that life-changing weekend I knew somewhere deep in my heart that God called me there because He still loved me and wanted me to experience His tender mercy and forgiveness..."

Yet one more woman writes in "My Decision:"

"Today, thanks to Project Rachel, I am a different person. To experience the power of forgiveness is something that I cannot put into words. I actually feel lighter. My shoulders are not hanging so low. The power of forgiveness is life altering..."

A few years ago, I heard two women speak as how they were literally in the parking lot of an abortion clinic, in route to procuring an abortion, when the director of a pregnancy care center approached them and gently counseled them to reconsider.

They did. And gushed with gratitude as to how happy they were to have chosen life.

Later in the program, two young girls—ages 12 and 13—told us about their lives, school, sports and their commitment to protecting innocent life. Near the end of their comments, they turned to the director of the pregnancy care center and said: "had she not been in the abortion clinic parking lot that day, they would have died."

Outside the U.S. Supreme Court, my wife Marie and I heard several post-abortive women from the Silent No More Awareness Campaign, describe their tragic personal stories. One woman told us that during her abortion partially sedated she heard

the abortionist say that “it’s trying to get away.” Hearing that, she pleaded with the abortionists to stop. He told her to “shut up.” She was crushed emotionally.

One thing you never hear about, is the deleterious effects on children born subsequently to women who have had an abortion.

At least 113 studies show a significant association between abortion and subsequent premature births. Researchers Shah and Zao showed a 36% increased risk for preterm birth after one abortion and a staggering 93% increased risk after two.

Similarly, the risk of subsequent children being born with low birth weight increases by 35% after one and 72% after two or more abortions. Another study shows the risk increases 9 times after a woman has had three abortions.

What does this mean for her children? Preterm birth is the leading cause of infant mortality in the industrialized world after congenital anomalies. Preterm infants have a greater risk of suffering from chronic lung disease, sensory deficits, cerebral palsy, cognitive impairments and behavior problems. Low birth weight is similarly associated with neonatal mortality and morbidity.

This past spring, the House of Representatives took up a bill to ban sex-selection abortion. While garnering a solid majority in the House—246 to 168— the legislation won’t be enacted this year. President Obama has made it absolutely clear that he would veto the sex selection abortion prohibition should it be sent to the White House while Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid refuses to even post it for a vote.

While sex-selection abortion almost exclusively targets girls for extermination— simply because they are little girls—this egregious practice remains legal in most states, including Massachusetts and New Jersey. In fact, only four states—Illinois, Pennsylvania, Oklahoma and Arizona –and several countries including the United Kingdom proscribe it.

And if that’s shocking enough, many remain unaware of the fact that sex-selection abortion is part of a deliberate plan of population control—a war on women. Abort the girls so they can’t grow up and have children of their own someday.

Earlier this year, Live Action released several highly disturbing videos— part of a new series, “Gendercide in America” — that show Planned Parenthood personnel advising undercover female investigators how to procure a sex-selection abortion. Caught on tape, one staffer tells an investigator to wait until her baby is 5 months along to get an ultrasound that reveals the sex of the child. Then, if it’s a girl, kill it.

For most of us, “it’s a girl” is cause for enormous joy, happiness and celebration. But far too often, this phrase can be a death sentence.

In her book “Unnatural Selection: Choosing Boys Over Girls, and the Consequences of a World Full of Men,” Mara Hvistendahl traces the sordid history of sex-selection

abortion as a means of population control.

“By August 1969, when the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development and the Population Council convened another workshop on population control, sex selection had become a pet scheme,” Hvistendahl writes. “If a reliable sex-determination technology could be made available to a mass market,” there was “rough consensus” that sex-selection abortion “would be an effective, uncontroversial and ethical way of reducing the global population.

These cruel, anti-woman policies have had horrific consequences.

Hvistendahl writes that today “there are over 160 million females ‘missing’ from Asia’s population alone. That’s more than the entire female population of the United States. And gender imbalance — which is mainly the result of sex-selective abortion — is no longer strictly an Asian problem. In Azerbaijan and Armenia, in Eastern Europe, and even among some groups in the United States, couples are making sure at least one of their children is a son. So many parents now select for boys that they have skewed the sex ratio at birth of the entire world.”

Of course no nation on earth takes population control to the extreme level of abuse and violence as China. Twenty-eight years ago—in 1984—I offered the first amendment to defund organizations that support forced abortions—like the UN Population Fund—and have chaired 41 Congressional hearings on this abuse.

The bottom line is this: since 1979, brothers and sisters have been illegal in most of China. If a woman is caught pregnant without explicit government authorization to give birth, she is forced to abort. Unwed mothers are all compelled to abort. Ruinous fines—up to ten times the combined salaries of both parents—jail, torture, property confiscation and health care denial are used as weapons to ensure compliance with China’s one-child policy.

Where are China’s missing girls? Dead. Systematically killed by the millions each year by sex-selection abortion. The huge gender disparity in China is without precedent or parallel and the adverse consequences to family life, stability and even China’s economy are likely to be catastrophic. By 2020, an estimated 40 million men wont to be able to find a wife. Even now, China is becoming a magnet for sex-traffickers.

A little over a decade ago, I authored the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TPVA) of 2000—the landmark law that created America’s comprehensive policy to combat modern day slavery.

Among its many mutually reinforcing provisions designed to prevent trafficking, protect victims and prosecute those who reduce people to commodities for sale—the three Ps—my legislation established the Health and Human Services anti-trafficking grant program.

For over a decade, we have achieved an amazing left-right, religious-secular, bicameral, bipartisan consensus, unified in combating sex and labor trafficking at

home and worldwide without promoting abortion.

Until late last year.

In what can only be described as an unconscionable abuse of power, the Obama Administration refused to renew a large grant that was established by the law I wrote to a demonstrably superior organization—the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)—with an exemplary ten year track record of performance. In vying for the competitive grant, the USCCB scored significantly higher in independent HHS reviews than two of the three NGOs that got the grant. The USCCB was denied the grant to assist trafficking victims for one and only one reason: because they wouldn't refer young people for abortions.

Now, in an unprecedented new assault on religious freedom, President Obama is using the coercive power of the state to force people of faith and people of conscience to violate a fundamental conviction or suffer severe penalty.

By coercing all health insurers including faith-based institutions to pay for all means of preventing pregnancy including subsidizing abortifacients like Ella and Plan B, President Obama has demonstrated a reckless disregard for religious liberty.

In my 32 years as a Member of Congress, fighting for human rights and religious freedom world-wide, I never believed anything like this could happen in America. This is shocking. And wrong.

While several legal challenges to this attack on religious freedom are winding their way through the courts—with no certainty whatsoever about the outcome—the dire situation the Church and faith-based institutions and people of conscience are in only underscores the fact that elections have real consequences. Who we elect matters. What they stand for matters.

Dr. Martin Luther King, wisely admonished us to judge a man by the content of his character. However, politicians should be judged not just by their perceived character, but by the content of their agenda. We should be weary and distrustful of political superficiality, the preoccupation with charisma and pretty words.

Instead, what politicians do once in office—in our name—matters. No unjust policy need be forever. Especially this one.

Finally, let me note that many of us around the country are watching—and are deeply appreciative—of Cardinal O'Malley's brilliant defense of the sick and terminally ill from the slippery slope of physician-assisted suicide. In urging opposition to the pending referendum on November 6th, His Eminence has boldly argued that it undermines the sacredness of human life, corrupts the medical profession and violates the Hippocratic Oath. He has defended those in the last stages of life noting that they are not diminished in their humanity even though some would have them eliminated. Why the arbitrary six months terminal illness diagnosis? What not five or seven? Why the absence of mandatory psychological testing? Very sick people often battle depression, rendering decisions about

suicide highly suspect. Where are the safeguards against pressure and coercion?

Cardinal O'Malley ominously notes that 10 years after Oregon's physician assisted suicide law took effect; suicide has become the leading cause of "injury death" in Oregon and the second leading cause of deaths among those between 15 and 34 years of age.

His Eminence has appealed to the citizens of the Commonwealth not to be "seduced by the language of dignity, mercy, and compassion which are used to disguise the sheer brutality of helping some kill themselves. A vote for physician assisted suicide is a vote for suicide."

I hope and pray that the people of Massachusetts are listening.