

BISHOPS BLAST ABORTION

In a statement released on November 12, Francis Cardinal George, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, made it clear that the bishops will fight any expansion of abortion rights that may occur under the next administration. Specifically, the bishops—who were gathered in Baltimore for their annual fall meeting—objected to the Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA), a bill so sweeping and draconian that it would not only repeal every single state restriction on abortion, it would seriously jeopardize the right of Catholic hospitals and doctors to opt out of performing abortions.

Cardinal George was right to label FOCA “an evil law that would further divide the country.” At stake are two issues: a) the rights of the unborn and, b) religious liberty.

First, those who admit that abortion should be rare unwittingly acknowledge that there is a reason to limit its frequency: as Cardinal George said, “abortion kills.” By contrast, no one maintains that root canals should be rare, and that is because this medical procedure—unlike abortion—does not result in the total denial of someone else’s rights.

Second, religious liberty is enshrined in the First Amendment and cannot be trespassed upon lightly, and certainly not by abortion zealots. Those who support FOCA must realize that if Catholic hospitals are ever required to perform abortions, the bishops will close every one of them; no one would be hurt more than the poor.

Cardinal George’s statement on November 12 dovetailed nicely with his address to the bishops at the plenary session of the meeting. Cardinal George said that “The common good can never be adequately incarnated in any society when those waiting to

be born can be legally killed” via abortion. His statement was greeted with a warm and welcome response from his fellow bishops.

More bishops spoke up this past election season about the horrors of abortion than ever before. Predictably, they were hammered not only by those who are squarely in the pro-abortion camp, but also by apologists for abortion who ascribe to a “common ground” approach: This group is comprised of men and women who feign an interest in pro-life issues, but who nonetheless work tirelessly for pro-abortion politicians. It is not certain whom they have fooled.

Among those not fooled is Cardinal George. Nowhere in his magnificent address did he cite the need for an increase in the minimum wage or the welfare budget as an adequate response to ending abortion. Indeed, he picked up on the “common ground” lingo only to say that the “common ground cannot be found by destroying the common good.”

Following Cardinal George’s statements, we issued a news release drawing attention to his explicit rejection of the “common good” mantra of the Catholic Left that justifies abortion while pursuing ameliorative social policies that may reduce abortions. Cardinal George said that the “legal protection of the unborn” is at stake. We noted that this is “something which is rejected by Catholics United, Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good and Catholic Democrats.” Our news release closed by saying: “We hope they amend their ways and fall in line with Catholic thought on this grave matter. If they do not, they will become indistinguishable from Catholics for Choice, a fully discredited organization.”