

# Catholics for Choice Gambit Fails

By Bill Donohue

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Advocacy campaigns, especially when conducted in the print media, are very expensive. Fortunately, whether they work or not is not hard to determine: if they generate a lot of controversy, they work; if not, they fail. Catholics for Choice's (CFC) latest effort has failed. Indeed, it is a monumental failure.

How do I know? Two days after its print advertisement blitz in several newspapers, it has been cited in less than a half-dozen papers. Even that is an exaggeration: the only place it garnered any attention is in the letters section. More bad news: the letters-to-editor are uniformly critical of CFC. Most important, there has not been a single news story about its bigoted campaign in any newspaper in the nation.

Here are some indisputable facts. CFC is not Catholic: it is expressly anti-Catholic. Its idea of choice does not extend to safeguarding the premier human choice—the right to be born. In fact, it works tirelessly to undermine this fundamental right. It is not an organization: it is a letterhead greased by the establishment; it has no members. Twice condemned as a fraud by the bishops, it is kept alive solely by such sources as the Ford Foundation, the MacArthur Foundation, and the [Warren] Buffett Foundation. Rank-and-file Catholics have nothing to do with it.

CFC's latest gambit is two-fold: It wants the public to pay for abortions; it wants the public to believe that child abuse in the womb is a legitimate Catholic social justice issue.

This is a war it cannot win. First, the public is strongly opposed to taxpayer-funded abortions, and this includes a large swath of those who are not pro-life. Second, there is nothing in Catholic social teachings that justifies the intentional killings of innocent human beings.

The latest campaign by CFC has a long pedigree.

CFC was founded in 1973 as Catholics for a Free Choice, setting up shop in the headquarters of New York's Planned Parenthood office building. Once *Roe v. Wade* legalized abortion, CFC joined with the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights, moving decisively to counter efforts for a Human Life Amendment.

Its first president, Father Joseph O'Rourke, was expelled from the Jesuits in 1974; he served as CFC president until 1979. Frances Kissling took over in 1982 and has been more responsible for shaping its agenda than anyone else. Jon O'Brien succeeded Kissling in 2007.

In October 1984, CFC ran an ad in the *New York Times* titled "Catholic Statement on Pluralism and Abortion." Not surprisingly, it was designed and marketed by Planned Parenthood. The ad illegitimately maintained that there were "legitimate Catholic positions" on abortion. Such reasoning fast became a staple of CFC's agenda. Today, it is being prominently promoted by Senator Tim Kaine, vice presidential candidate for the Democratic Party; he also supports CFC's call for taxpayer-funded abortions.

CFC continued in the 1980s hawking the line that there is "an authentic prochoice Catholic position." It was due to lies such as this that on November 4, 1993, the bishops released a statement saying CFC is not "an authentic Catholic organization." Indeed, it stressed that "It has no affiliation, formal or otherwise, with the Catholic Church." It issued a similar condemnation in 2000.

Perhaps the most severe blow to the reputation of CFC came on April 21, 1995. That was the day the *National Catholic Reporter*, a dissident newspaper that rejects the Church's teachings on sexuality, printed a letter by Marjorie Reiley Maguire blasting CFC. She was a prominent CFC activist for years, and no one doubted her credentials or credibility. But like many others who came of age in the 1960s, Maguire began to have second thoughts; included in her intellectual migration were second thoughts about CFC and Catholicism.

In her letter, Maguire branded CFC "an anti-woman organization," one whose agenda is "the promotion of abortion." She argued that Kissling's organization defended "every abortion decision as a good, moral choice," adding that it pursued a "related agenda of persuading society to cast off any moral constraints about sexual behavior."

Maguire explained that it was not the Catholic Church that was "hung up on sex;" rather, it was liberals who were obsessed with sex. Questioning the right of CFC to call itself Catholic, Maguire said that "When I was involved with [CFC] I was never aware that any of its leaders attended Mass. Furthermore, various conversations and experiences convinced me they did not."

Nothing has changed since. In other words, CFC is the propaganda arm of pro-abortion anti-Catholics, funded by fat cats. Its latest campaign is such a bust that one wonders just how stupid its donors are. When the best it can muster is a few letters-to-the-editor nationwide—and they all slam CFC as a fraud—then it's time to regroup. Better yet, it's time to pack it in.

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