

CATHOLICS FOR CHOICE GAMBIT FAILS

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 is a monumental failure.

Two days after its print advertisement blitz in several newspapers, it had been cited in less than a half-dozen papers. Even that is an exaggeration: the only place it garnered any attention was in the letters section. More bad news: the letters were uniformly critical of CFC. Most important, there had not been a single news story about its campaign in any newspaper.

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.

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 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. 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 Jon O'Brien succeeded her in 2007.

In October 1984, CFC ran an ad in the *New York Times* that

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.

Perhaps the most severe blow to the reputation of CFC came in 1995. That was the day Marjorie Reiley Maguire, a prominent activist in the group for years, did a 180 and blasted CFC in public.

Maguire branded CFC “an anti-woman organization,” one whose agenda is “the promotion of abortion.” She argued that Kissling’s front group 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, “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. Its latest campaign is such a bust that one wonders just how stupid its donors are. Frankly, it’s time for CFC to pack it in.