

Demagoguery Marks Planned Parenthood

In an advertisement in the *New York Times* of January 5, Planned Parenthood blamed Cardinal O'Connor and Cardinal Law for the killings by John Salvi of two receptionists at an abortion clinic in Brookline, Massachusetts on December 30.

The ad labeled Cardinal O'Connor's statement that "you cannot prevent killing by killing" as "a backhanded apology for the attackers." It further noted that Cardinal O'Connor "seems to justify Friday's murders by blaming women who seek to end their unwanted pregnancies with abortion and blaming clinics that help them." Similarly, Cardinal Law's call for a temporary moratorium on anti-abortion protests was met with disdain, questioning "How many more murders will it take before we see a permanent national moratorium?" The ad continued by saying that "The leaders of the extreme religious right whose rhetoric destabilizes their followers have the lives of these innocent victims of violence on their consciences."

The Catholic League responded with a press release on the subject:

"Planned Parenthood's inflammatory ad makes it clear that it cannot distinguish between John Cardinal O'Connor and John Salvi. By doing so, it indicates who the real extremist really is.

"Cardinal O'Connor has a legal right and a moral obligation to say that 'you cannot prevent killing by killing.' As Planned Parenthood well knows, Cardinal O'Connor has repeatedly condemned the killing of abortionists, even going so far as to say that would-be killers of abortionists should kill him instead. To tie Cardinal O'Connor to the immorality of John

Salvi is a demagogic outrage that demands an immediate apology.

“True to form, Planned Parenthood threw Cardinal Law’s good will gesture back in his face. Not satisfied with Cardinal Law’s offer, Planned Parenthood seeks to up the ante by calling for a permanent national moratorium on the First Amendment right of Americans to protest abortion. This is not good will at work, rather it is a pernicious call to silence debate and stifle a central constitutional right.

“Just as Martin Luther King was not responsible for the behavior of the Black Panthers, Cardinal O’Connor and Cardinal Law are not responsible for the behavior of the John Salvis of this world. Accordingly, Planned Parenthood should immediately desist in its McCarthyite attempt to discredit responsible voices in the Catholic community.”

On January 9, the president of the Massachusetts chapter of Planned Parenthood, Nikki Nichols-Gamble, added fuel to the fire by lambasting Cardinal O’Connor for not following the lead of Cardinal Law by requesting a moratorium on peaceful prayer vigils outside abortion clinics. This is what she said: “I think Cardinal Law is talking to the kind of God that I know and it seems to me that Cardinal O’Connor hasn’t gotten in touch with the right God.”

The Catholic League released the following statement on this matter:

“Planned Parenthood has once again gone beyond legitimate dialogue and has entered the arena of gutter politics. It wasn’t bad enough that it blamed Cardinal O’Connor and Cardinal Law for the killings in an abortion clinic in Brookline,

Massachusetts, or that it called for a permanent national moratorium on the First Amendment right of Americans to protest abortion. Now it calls into question Cardinal

O'Connor's life of prayer and his contact with God.

"Planned Parenthood isn't engaged in business as usual. It has embarked on a kind of verbal search and destroy mission, the likes of which are normally associated with the politics of fascism. Bigotry, invective, demagoguery, lies-nothing is off-limits with the moguls of the abortion industry. If there is any good to come out of this, it is that the mask of reason has been fully pulled from the face of Planned Parenthood. With this remark, Planned Parenthood stands in the public square for all to see, and what it shows is not a pretty sight.

"The Catholic League explicitly does not ask for an apology. To do so would be to suggest that what was said was inadvertent, and this is surely not the case: what was said was meant and there is no getting around it. But we do call on Americans of all faiths to join with us in denouncing this incredible statement and ask that the federal government reconsider its lavish funding of this bigoted enterprise."