

PELOSI GETS AN “F” IN RELIGION

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi would have us believe that the Catholic Church was not always opposed to abortion. And she says this while admitting that she has studied the subject for a long time. Perhaps she should take time out to read what the Catholic Catechism says.

“Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception. Since the first century the Church has affirmed the moral evil of every procured abortion. This teaching has not changed and remains unchangeable.”

Pelosi’s office muddled this issue further when it released a statement on August 27, three days after the House Speaker’s infamous “Meet the Press” interview. This time her office mentioned St. Augustine’s remarks on ensoulment; it was done to justify her position that the Catholic Church has entertained different ideas about conception and abortion throughout the ages. But it didn’t work. Australian Cardinal George Pell made a clear-cut statement about this issue in his 1997 book, *Issues of Faith and Morals*.

Cardinal Pell wrote that St. Augustine “believed that the embryo was ensouled at 46 days. Nevertheless, he also believed it was gravely wrong to kill a formed or unformed fetus.” It is instructive to note that philosophical discussions about the soul, and research on embryology, continue to advance beyond the knowledge available in the 5th century. In any event, Pelosi finds no relief for her bizarre reasoning by citing St. Augustine, or any other Church Father.

Pelosi also said that not all Catholics agree with the Church on abortion. To which we told the press, “So what? There are plenty of Catholics living a life rife with sin that seek to

justify their behavior by saying they disagree with the Church on the source of their delinquency. What the House Speaker doesn't get is that the Church is no more a democracy than the Democratic and Republican parties are: none arrive at conclusions based on referenda. Moreover, in the instance of the Catholic Church, the Magisterium is not the functional equivalent of the DNC or the RNC."

We ended our statement by saying, "Maybe that's the source of Pelosi's confusion—she really doesn't understand the difference between the teaching authority of the Catholic Church and the DNC."

The USCCB was so upset with Pelosi's second statement that it issued a two-page reply that offered a historical account of the Church's teaching on abortion. The bishops released this document to "help end confusion caused by recent misrepresentations of Catholic Church teaching on abortion," a process that was "prompted by misleading remarks by Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi."

All of this suggests that Pelosi is wildly out of touch with the Catholic Church. She no doubt travels in some strange social circles in San Francisco, the most anti-Catholic city in the nation. But this is no excuse: she has an obligation to know, and abide by, what her religion teaches.

Just as we went to press, we learned from the Archdiocese of San Francisco that Archbishop Niederauer's meeting with Pelosi would be a "personal and private conversation."