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Abortion

RT. REV. MSGR. PAUL V. HARRINGTON, J.C.L.

Ultimately, it is in the halls and the chambers of the legislative assemblies of each state where the program for liberalization of the abortion laws will be won or lost, will be victorious or defeated. The effort is an organized one. Many groups have joined together. Every possible media of communication is being used; the public relations techniques are professional and the coverage and exposure are maximum. The appeal is both to the individual and to groups. National societies and organizations with prestige and influence are being solicited for the endorsement of the program and for assistance.

In short, the adversary is clearly defined and we must use our maximum effort, if we ever hope to be able to counteract the influence of the present campaign and if we ever hope to be victorious in bringing to national attention the true doctrine of the sanctity of life, the right to life of every person and creature, even of a fetus just recently conceived, and the supreme dominion of the Creator over life and death. Our program must be national and local; it must be directed to groups and to individuals; it must be a united and concerted effort; it must emphasize an education in moral and ethical living.

It might be of interest to refer to some of the current happenings which clearly indicate the thinking and planning with respect to the liberalization of abortion laws. Lawrence Lader¹, in a recent article, advocated a definite liberalization of the state laws so that more grounds for permitting an abortion would be available and the final decision for the procuring of an abortion might be left to the individual and personal decision of the interested parties. This being his ultimate goal and objective, he presented many emotionally-charged examples to prove that "women suffer needless grief and pain" from poorly managed illegal abortions and that women have a right to the best service and safest techniques that the medical profession can offer. In the course of his article, Mr. Lader quoted Dorothy Kenyon, a lawyer and former judge of the New York Municipal Court, who said: "For a State to force a woman to bear a child against her will is outrageous." He also referred to those interested in changing the law as inquiring "why the mother should not have the right to protect her life and health according to the best judgment of her doctors" and as complaining: "the real sin is the law that demands an unwanted child." This last remark prompted the author to add "though abortion is surely no substitute for conventional birth control, liberal laws (*in re* abortion) might even offer poor mothers with large families an op-

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1. *New York Times Magazine*, April 25, 1965

portunity to limit the number of offspring."

It is abundantly clear from this presentation and these quotations that there is complete moral and ethical bankruptcy among our adversaries. There is absolutely no respect for the miracle of human reproduction, and no concern for the sacredness of the life of a conceived fetus. They have recourse to a purely individualistic, hedonistic and expedient type of philosophy.

Lawrence Lader is conscious that the formidable objection to the system which he advocates will come from organized religion: "though members of other faiths oppose a liberalization of our abortion laws, the most vehement and consistent battle against reform has been waged by the Catholic Church." However, he trusts and optimistically hopes that this opposition will cease and he tries to bring this about by saying "the law (i.e., against abortion) is a heritage of ecclesiastical history, based on religious dogma rejected by most of our population."

It becomes our responsibility to prove to Mr. Lader, his audience, his sympathizers and the general populace that our opposition to abortion is not merely a relic of the past, a vestige of by-gone eras, a merely traditional doctrine, which is subject to change. We must vocally, effectively and dynamically convince them that our opposition is based upon fundamental and basic principles which reflect the complete dominion of God over life and death, the inviolability of life and the right to life, the sacredness

of intra-uterine life and the fact that a conception is not mere matter or protoplasmic fetus, rather, is a human being, a human person, made in the image and likeness of God, the Supreme Being, and, as such, is the subject of rights—particularly the right of protection against assault and murder and ultimately, to be God's Will, the right to live, to be born, to see the light of day, by Christian baptism, to save an immortal soul and secure his eternal salvation.

A World Population Conference, sponsored by the United Nations, was held in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, from August 1965 through September 10, 1965. 800 experts on population problems from 88 countries attended and 500 scientific papers were presented. It is interesting to note that Dr. Vassily E. Ovsienko of the Soviet Union said, "Far better than spending millions on contraceptive devices and abortion clinics by governments is my government's recommendation that money now spent on both armaments and birth control be diverted to further economic development." In evaluating this World Conference, Rev. Francis C. Madigan, S.J., Director of the Research Institute for Mindanao Culture at Xavier University in the Philippines and a participant at the Conference made two noteworthy observations:² "Apart from the Catholics, there was general agreement that the means of solving them (i.e., population problems), is contraception or sterilization or both. There was less agreement on resort to abortion

2. *America*, November 6, 1965

to reduce population growth—but many of those present would accept this, too. Many of them say that an effective birth control program will very probably involve a certain amount of abortion, at least in its early stages."

With reference to the propriety and place of government in programs to curtail population growth, Father Madigan stated:

I am afraid that once a government commits itself to reducing population growth, it will not be willing to restrain itself from forcing people to have fewer children. In two Asian countries that I know of, the population experts who have urged government programs say that only coercion will be effective. Most of the coercion is psychological rather than physical: sneers, ridicule, and propaganda campaigns directed against those who have more than two or three children. Threats of losing one's job have been used and this has resulted not only in people using contraceptives, but in resorting to abortion when the contraceptives didn't work. Where there are publicly subsidized housing projects, the size of the apartments is kept small, so that people with "too large" families can't live in them—and rental costs increase enormously if a family has to leave one of these apartments and look for room in unsubsidized housing. In short, governments will and do twist people's arms to make a population policy work. That is why I prefer not to have governments themselves carry on the programs.

George M. Barmann, writing from Belgrade, Yugoslavia, in an N.C.W.C. news release concerning the World Population Conference³ pointed out that the Conference itself was dominated by participants and observers from the United States, that these made up one-fourth of the total membership and

3. N.C.W.C. report, *Boston Pilot*, October 2, 1965

that the leading proponents of population limitation, as a solution for achieving living standards, worthy of man's dignity, were Americans. He adds that: "speaker after speaker had stressed the population projections and control proposals distributed regularly to news media by the Population Reference Bureau, Inc. of Washington, D.C. The bureau's approach has been to stress curbing of the birth rate because world population is doubling at the present rate every 36 years, and that such rapid growth nullifies development efforts." Mr. Barmann continued by saying that: "most Catholic leaders at the conference acknowledged this growth and the necessity for lowering the birth rate in certain areas of the world. But they objected to proposals for broad programs of artificial contraception, abortion and sterilization."

This same news report points out that, at the World Conference, the International Planned Parenthood Federation sponsored a "medical seminar" which featured a color movie on the "suction method" of abortion. Colin Clark, the London population expert and a member of the Papal Commission on marriage and population, stated to a reporter: "The abortion film should not be ignored. I hope you will get the news about it in the American papers, so that people will know just what Planned Parenthood is up to."

It is, indeed, regrettable that, in such an important International Conference on such a vital subject, so many American observers and participants offered only a negative,

destructive and regressive program to emerging, developing, infant nations who, no doubt, were looking and hoping for programs that were positive, constructive, imaginative and dynamic.

On November 3-4, 1965, a White House Conference on Health was held in Washington, D.C., and was attended by some 600 leaders in health fields from throughout the United States. George Shuster, assistant to the president of the University of Notre Dame, and organizer of many Conferences on family and population at the University, was one of the four panelists chosen to discuss problems of family planning.

Russell B. Shaw, in writing about the Conference,⁴ said: "Shuster was not just the only Catholic on the family planning panel; he was the only representative of a Catholic Institution on the entire conference program. There was no one on the program from a Catholic hospital, Catholic medical school, or other Catholic agency. . . . During the discussion from the floor at the family planning session, only one identifiable Catholic spoke. She was Sister Anthony Marie, Administrator of St. Vincent's Hospital and Medical Center in New York, who referred to herself as 'a voice crying in the wilderness.'"

This situation is hard to understand and comprehend and, in addition, is a shocking insult. The actions of the committee planning

4. N.C.W.C. report, *Boston Pilot*, November 13, 1965

5. N.C.W.C. report, *Boston Pilot*, November 13, 1965

the conference had us to ask some very pertinent questions: Did they wish to have an honest and objective inquiry and investigation into a very timely and thorny subject or did they merely wish to have a biased, prejudiced, closed-mind, one-sided presentation and discussion with conclusions already made before the beginning of the Conference and a desire merely to use the Conference as a sounding board, forum and platform from which they could advertise their propaganda and receive the national spotlight? Do they believe that hundreds of Catholic hospitals and many thousands of Catholic physicians in these United States had absolutely nothing of positive value to present to a national Conference on general health problems?

The image and reputation of Catholic hospitals and Catholics in medicine is very definitely at issue. The Bureau of Health and Hospitals and the National Federation of Catholic Physicians' Guilds must advertise themselves, not in a sectarian or divisive fashion as merely Catholic, but in the interest of truth and doctrine making it clear that Catholic hospitals and Catholics in medicine have excellence, have something of important value to offer and are a segment of the medical society to be respected and consulted and that their underlying moral philosophy is not something to be rejected or discarded lightly.

In referring to this aspect of the Conference, Monsignor John C. Knott, Director of the Family Life Bureau of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, said⁵: "The

absence at the session of a spokesman for the teaching of the Catholic Church involved censorship of the most dangerous kind." He continued by saying that he wished to protest "in the strongest terms possible the almost complete lack of official Catholic representation" at the Conference in general. He further stated: "In the panel discussions on family planning there was no one representing the official teaching authority of the Catholic Church. This session was dominated and controlled by the advocates of contraception and abortion and by the promoters of government interference into marital privacy. The programming was an insult to thousands of Catholic agencies and millions of American citizens. It was particularly demeaning that the White House, the symbol of everything good in our nation's history, should be used as a propaganda platform for an anti-life philosophy which is contradictory to our deepest traditions."⁶

George W. Beadle, the Conference chairman, replied that "the White House Conference on Health was planned by a distinguished group of Americans who were selected because of their leadership in health and public affairs. . . . Those who planned all the panels, including the panel on family planning, made an earnest attempt to bring in all points of view." It is clear that Mr. Beadle did not consider that there was even one Catholic leader in health and public affairs who, by reason of his train-

6. *Boston Globe*, November 13, 1965

7. *loc. cit.*

ing, competence and achievement, was worthy to help plan this conference and of the thousands of Catholic physicians, not one was invited to speak. It is obvious that the committee did not work very hard "to bring in all points of view," considering the almost total neglect of the Catholic position on health problems in general and on contraception and abortion in particular. It isn't as if our position is a mystery or a secret. We do not wish the Catholic position to be presented and represented merely because it is religious and sectarian but rather because it reflects objective truth, responsible thinking and orthodox philosophy. The fact that a large segment of the citizens of these United States firmly believe in and profess this Catholic position should have been reason enough for this doctrine to have been presented, if truth were really being sought and an objective study were intended.

Russell B. Shaw described it as⁷ "a national platform for outspoken advocates of government birth control." Dr. Leslie Corsa, Jr., director of the University of Michigan's Center for Population Planning, blamed "unavailability and inefficiency of contraception" in part for the high incidence of illegal abortion in the United States and he said this shows the need not only for improved contraceptive techniques but also for legislation to make abortion "rational and safe."

Dr. Alan F. Guttmacher, president of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America, in the discussion from the floor, estimated

that there were one million illegal abortions in the United States each year and he recommended that the United States examine the mass abortion programs of Japan and the Iron Curtain countries as models for making abortion easier here.

During this Conference, no one opposed government intervention in birth-control and almost everyone urged the government to get involved in birth-control in a big way. Reference was made to the legislation which was introduced in the first session of the current Congress, which would provide for an increased government role in birth-control on both the domestic and international fronts and also to the hearings which were conducted by the Senate subcommittee, with Senator Ernest Gruening of Alaska as chairman.

Russell Shaw summarizes the Conference in this manner:⁸ "The floor discussion was dominated by representatives of national and local Planned Parenthood groups who apparently took for granted that government should be pushing birth-control with every means at its disposal. The tone of the session was pretty well summed up by one doctor who said the shibboleths in this area have vanished and the time is now at hand for large-scale government 'implementation' of birth control programs. The impression was strong that at least in the minds of many of those who spoke, the battle for government birth-control is already 'all but won.'" It is clear that Planned

8. *loc. cit.*

9. *Boston Globe*, November 29, 1965

Parenthood was well represented at this Conference and its agents took full advantage of the forum and the publicity which was provided and were very active in selling their propaganda.

At a meeting of the American Medical Association in Philadelphia in November, 1965,⁹ the Committee on Human Reproduction asked the House of Delegates to take the following position on abortion:

1. A licensed physician can terminate a pregnancy if he can reasonably establish that:
 - a) there is substantial risk that continuation of the pregnancy would gravely impact the physical or mental health of the mother or
 - b) there is substantial risk that the child would be born with grave physical or mental defects, or
 - c) the pregnancy resulted from a legally established statutory or forcible rape or incest.
2. Abortions shall be performed only in licensed hospitals.
3. An abortion shall not be performed unless two licensed physicians, neither of whom may be performing the abortion, shall have certified in writing the circumstances which justify the abortion.

The same Committee on Human Reproduction urged the House of Delegates to adopt the following statement on sterilization:

The American Medical Association endorses the enactment of legislation which would make it lawful

for a physician, acting in collaboration or consultation with at least one or more other physicians, to perform a sterilizing procedure upon either sex for therapeutic or non-therapeutic reasons providing the following considerations are met:

1. An adult requesting the procedure must request it within a reasonable time prior to the performance of the procedure;
2. If married, his or her spouse must join in co-signing the written request;
3. Prior to or at the time the written request is made, the physician must make a full and reasonable medical explanation to the patient and the spouse of the meaning and the consequences of the procedure.

The Trustees of the American Medical Association suggested that the recommendations of the Committee on Human Reproduction be adopted by the House of Delegates as a first step prior to urging the states to bring their varying laws on these subjects into conformity.

While the House of Delegates urged that "appropriate legislation be enacted, where necessary, so that all physicians may legally give contraceptive information to their patients," they failed to urge similar legalization of abortion and sterilization but stated that these problems should be resolved by action of the legislature of each state.

It is gratifying and consoling to note that full and complete endorsement of liberalization of laws on abortion and sterilization was not given by the House of Delegates. More than likely these topics

will be on the agenda for a future meeting and sentiment may change by that time. However, what is disturbing is the fact that a medical society would even propose for serious discussion that murder be legalized through laws allowing abortion, and that a particular committee would advocate it and the Board of Trustees would recommend it.

As stated previously, medicine and physicians should be imbued with a deep understanding of the sanctity of life, an appreciation for the origin of life, consideration for the sole and complete dominion of God over life, the right of the individual to be born and his right to continuance of life and a dedication, by research and practice, to the prolongation of life. This must be the fact and this must be the image which modern medicine and the modern physician must give. Anything less is unworthy of the great profession. If the general public is to have confidence in medical science and in the current practitioner, there must be assurance that *life is respected*.

Recently, two teen-age girls were brought into the emergency room of a hospital. As pedestrians, they had just been hit by a sports car, driven by a teen-age boy. They were unconscious at the time of admission. A team of four specialists worked feverishly all through the night removing a spleen, controlling massive abdominal hemorrhage, doing tracheotomies, providing for oxygen through tubes, performing brain wave studies etc. Both girls had sustained severe brain damage and had very little

time left to live. Yet, the team of physicians respected the life that was in them and their right to live. No doubt, these doctors recognized that the girls were just in the budding of life and, normally speaking, should have many years ahead of them and that they should be given every chance to fulfill their hopes and dreams. The work of the medical team was professionally competent and in every way measured up to the best traditions of what dedicated physicians should provide.

Another example concerns a young Jewish intern at St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Brighton, Massachusetts. He was in a deep coma and close to death from fulminating hepatitis with very extensive and severe liver damage. His chances of survival were very slight and almost negligible if merely traditional therapy were administered. If he were to live and realize his dreams of ministering to others as a licensed physician, a new technique, never previously attempted on adults, would have to be tried. The tireless physicians, who were caring for him, decided to try a complete and total blood exchange. Once the decision was made, the entire medical family rallied to help — doctors, residents, interns, nurses, both graduate and student, and hospital volunteers. The first total exchange had temporary beneficial results; a second one has achieved permanent success. The patient has recovered consciousness, the liver has begun the process of regeneration and the prognosis for full recovery and life is excellent.

These are but two examples

which could be multiplied many hundreds and thousands of times in hospitals and clinics across the country and could be found in the daily practice of conscientious physicians. Examples such as these give glory to the medical profession and inspire confidence and respect in people. However, this image can easily be tarnished and lost completely by unfavorable publicity concerning national and local medical societies endorsing the liberalization of abortion and sterilization laws.

The examples given above show the positive, constructive, life-giving and life-prolonging work which should engage the attention of the medical profession. Endorsement of laws, permitting abortion and sterilization, reflects a negative, destructive and death-inflicting routine, which is contrary and contradictory to the goals and purpose of medical practice and research. A doctor who aborts or sterilizes is a "living" contradiction, an anomaly, a misfit, a disgrace to his profession and his oath, a scandal to his patients, a source of disturbance and irritation to his colleagues, a destroyer of confidence and an iconoclast, in that he ruins the image and reputation of his profession.

A fetus just conceived and just beginning its growth, development and maturation has the same right to life and to live as the teen-age girls and the intern. It is hoped that all physicians, without exception, would dedicate themselves in such heroic manner to keep a fetus alive as the physicians, mentioned above, who, in the regular practice

of their profession, wrote such a glorious page in the annals of medicine.

On November 29, 1965, a White House Conference on International Cooperation was held in Washington, D.C.¹⁰ The same thing happened as had occurred in the Conference on Health — no attempt was made to present the position which is held by Catholics and by many other God-fearing peoples. Rev. William Gibbons, S.J., a demographer from Fordham University charged that the traditional Catholic viewpoint was not adequately consulted in preparing a report that formed the basis for the panel's discussion. Because of this fact, seven Catholics who participated in the recent conference have filed a supplementary statement for the minutes of the panel discussion on population. One of these, Donald N. Barrett¹¹ of Notre Dame University, said: "As a U.S. citizen and as a Catholic, I object strenuously to the informal implications of a population policy without concern and effective work with dominant moral values and forces, e.g., the report speaks of planning programs and institutions in Peru and Colombia — but they are U.S. in origin, support and finance. I strongly support responsible family planning but like many others in the U.S. and in Latin America I object to what appears a circuitous, apparently scheming approach to promote birth-control."

10. N.C.W.C. report, *Boston Pilot*, December 4, 1965

11. N.C.W.C. report, *Boston Pilot*, December 11, 1965

During the Conference, several officials of the U.S. Agency for International Development rapped the Church for its stand and Father Gibbons had to remind them that the Pope and the Church are fully able to decide matters of Catholic doctrine without advice from A.I.D.

Senator Joseph Clark of Pennsylvania, an outspoken advocate of government birth-control, referred to reports that Pope Paul VI had asked for a stiffening of the section on population questions in the eumenical Council's schema on the Church in the modern world and said this would inhibit congressional action in this area by reason of its impact on Catholic legislators.

Dr. Edgar Berman, an official of A.I.D., remarked that the Catholic Church is the only real remaining obstacle to population programs in Latin America and spoke sharply of the "conservatism" of the U.S. Bishops and their spokesmen on the population issue.

This Conference offers an excellent example of a group not interested in truth and morality, that discriminates and dismisses those who oppose or differ with their tenets, who become very irritated with a Church and a religion, which is conscientiously trying to live God's Will and to bring the world to the knowledge and love of the Divine Will and thus refuses to be coerced into agreeing with their convenient and expedient views, which attempt to solve the problem of life and living by destroying and annihilating. In this way, the problem is never solved; the problem

is just destroyed. Such negativism! Such cowardice!

General William H. Draper, Jr. was recently appointed chairman of the Population Crisis Committee and, on assuming his position, warned that if the world's birth rate continues to increase faster than food production "hundreds of millions will actually starve in the next decade," and maintained that "only birth control on a massive scale, coupled with rapidly increased food production in the developing countries, can prevent the greatest world-wide catastrophe of modern times."¹² As a solution, Draper suggested, as part of a three point program, "massive application of birth control methods" and added that "it would help if the American Medical Association and the Vatican took a more liberal stand on birth control." He further proposed a world-wide educational drive on birth control and the establishment of national planning associations, which would operate locally with financial aid and counsel by the U.S. He stated that many Catholic prelates in Latin America have assumed a liberal attitude towards the birth control issue because "they realize contraception is far less an evil than abortion." General Draper concluded his remarks by saying that he hoped the situation in the United States would not deteriorate to the point where there is a demand for the legalization of widespread abortion as in Japan and some European countries.

In critically evaluating General Draper's report, we shall prescind

¹². *Boston Globe*, December 3, 1965

from his numerical estimates of population growth with far exceeding food production, which would cause widespread starvation in the decade ahead, because these estimates and conclusions have been reached in the past. The predictions have been wrong. These dire situations have never materialized. The General does not believe that, unlike many institutional groups, societies and individuals, the Church or the Holy Father does not and cannot adopt and promote merely an expedient and convenient moral program, which is always subject to change in accordance with the problem or circumstances at hand. On reading his remarks, one would gather that he is irritated because he thinks the Holy Father has the right or the power to sanction birth control but, for some strange reason, stubbornly and adamantly refuses to do so and insists on retaining what the General would consider a worn-out, traditional position, which is out of step with the times and incapable of solving the pressing problems of an expanding world.

As to his statement that many Catholic prelates in Latin America have assumed a liberal attitude towards the birth control issue, this is so patently false and misleading as not to warrant an extended answer other than a categorical denial. There is no evidence that any Bishop or Prelate in Latin America — to say nothing of many Catholic prelates in Latin America — believes that birth control techniques or contraceptive procedures are morally acceptable. There is no evidence that any one has advor-

ated or taught this position. It is so absurd as to be ridiculous. Yet, General Draper peddles this as truth and fact and just adds to the confusion that is so widespread. He cannot possibly even begin to find solutions for the great problems of population until first he searches and finds the true facts without distortion.

On June 25, 1965, an interesting and possibly far-reaching decision was handed down by Judge Sidney Squire of the New York State Court of Claims.¹³ The facts are these: A female child was born in December of 1962 of a psychotic unmarried mother, who had been institutionalized at the Manhattan State Hospital in New York City, and during her hospitalization and confinement, she had been raped by another patient, thus causing her to become pregnant. The child, through her grandfather, was petitioning the courts for the right to sue the State for damages because of having been born with the stigma of illegitimate birth. Up to the time of this decision, a child could sue only for physical damages incurred during the pre-natal period. No court had ever previously held that the injury of illegitimate birth was sufficiently concrete and definable to warrant an action for damages. Judge Squire ruled that the child could file suit for damages for being born with the stigma of illegitimacy provided she proves the rape, which caused the pregnancy, resulted from the hospital's negligence in not properly supervising

¹³. *Boston Globe*, June 26, 1965

¹⁴. *America*, July 10, 1965

her mother. This preliminary decision is still subject to the review of the New York Court of Appeals.

Under ordinary circumstances, this decision would probably be of interest only to judges, lawyers and administrators of mental hospitals but remarks of the child's attorney, Norman Roy Grutman, widens the interest. He said that very definitely involved in this particular case, as a germane issue, is the injury of not having been put to death by abortion. He claims that the child's grandfather had requested the State to perform an abortion and that the request had been refused. "It was this failure to abort and therefore to mitigate damages that lies at the heart of the case," he is quoted by the *New York Times* as saying.

With reference to these remarks, *America*,¹⁴ in an editorial, says very forthrightly "according to her attorney, then, a child is suing the State for having refused to kill her and thus spare her the disgrace of illegitimate birth. It takes a sick mind to put a child in this situation, a sick press to exploit it in order to further a campaign to revise the abortion laws, and a sick society to listen with equanimity to this kind of propaganda. In the name of elementary human decency, the New York Court of Appeals, which has still to rule on the case, should scornfully reject the argument that life—even from illegitimate parents—is a curse from which helpless children have a 'right' to be relieved by the State or by anyone else."

It is clear from the above presentation that the campaign for the

liberalization of abortion laws is complex and organized: it is international, national and local; it has access to all forms of publicity and exposure—international and national conferences, nation-wide television programs, extensive newspaper coverage, regular articles in the popular magazines; it has the involvement of professional societies, government-sponsored conferences and agency officials; it carefully omits from consideration and proper exposure the position of the Catholic Church; it openly uses, in its propaganda, untruths, half-truths and distortions.

This is our adversary in all of its complexities. It is this campaign we must counteract. We must be organized; we must have a planned campaign; we must have exposure and publicity; we must have an opportunity to present our doctrine; we must be dedicated.

In conclusion, it would be profitable to include here a letter, which was submitted to the *Boston Pilot* and appeared in the issue of October 16, 1965 because it was written by a layman who is much interested and much disturbed by the present campaign to liberalize abortion laws and the matter is set forth very eloquently and masterfully:

The American public is being barraged with propaganda from the mass media exhorting us to support more and more legalized abortions. Almost all the women's magazines, news publications, and some television shows have "examined" the abortion problem. Their conclusions, stated or implied, are unanimous, that our current abortion laws need to be liberalized. These presentations usually contain a

few token arguments against more abortions, but these are quantitatively and psychologically overwhelmed by many, many more statements from the "responsible" doctors, gynecymen, and legislators who are leading this campaign. Words like "harsh", "inhumane", "hypocritical", "irresponsible", "unbelievable", and "barbaric" abound in the descriptions of our present strict abortion laws. Very often they use only political epithets like "preventing the birth of a baby", or "avoiding giving birth" in speaking of an abortion, rather than a more realistic, but perhaps disturbing phrase such as "killing the unborn baby".

It is hardly believable that this monstrous evil of abortion is so widely accepted as more valuable than any human life, however tiny, which could be considered as less important than some earthly good—reputation, financial security, emotional stability, physical perfection. The main argument of the abortionists is that mothers should not be forced to bear and raise babies under very difficult circumstances. But surely this belief, that mothers (or doctors or legislators) should have the right to decide whether their babies should live or die, is alien to all traditional American ideals. If this principle—that human lives may be "eliminated" to prevent their families from great suffering—is accepted, then what about the sickly or senile aged who can also cause their families tremendous hardships? Then who would be next? When a price is put on human life, none of us is safe.

If we Catholics are practically the only ones preventing more legalized murders of the unborn, as the abortion enthusiasts like to claim, then we have a grave responsibility and must act quickly. However slight we may believe our talents of leadership and eloquence to be, all of us should bombard such magazines, television shows, congressmen etc. with protests against these disgraceful proposed laws.

What a wonderful and inspiring "call to arms" by a dedicated and committed Christian!