



DIOCESE OF COLORADO SPRINGS

A STATEMENT BY THE MOST REVEREND MICHAEL J. SHERIDAN REGARDING THE EVIL OF PROCURED ABORTION:

Colorado Springs, CO – Tuesday, August 26, 2008

In light of recent confusing statements by Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi suggesting that Catholic teaching allows for procured abortion in certain circumstances, it is important for all Catholics to understand the teaching of the Church regarding abortion.

From the first century the Church has taught that abortion is gravely immoral. “You shall not kill the embryo by abortion and shall not cause the newborn to perish” (Catechism of the Catholic Church 2271, quoting *Didache* 2, 2). The procuring of an abortion is always and in all circumstances intrinsically evil. (cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church 2271). It is murder of the most vulnerable and innocent human beings. Speaker Pelosi’s outrageous attempt to present what she considers the teaching of the Catholic Church regarding abortion is simply wrong and should be disregarded by every faithful Catholic.

All other rights are useless if one is denied the right to live. Our founding fathers recognized this when they enumerated life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness as unalienable human rights. They also recognized that these three rights are not equal in importance. Pursuing happiness means little if one is a slave. And freedom means nothing to someone who has been denied the right to life.

Pope John Paul II echoed these sentiments when he wrote “The inalienable rights of the person must be recognized and respected by civil society and the political authority. These human rights . . . belong to human nature and are inherent in the person . . . from the moment of conception until death.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church 2273, quoting CDF, *Donum vitae* III).

The teachings of the Church on abortion are consistent and unambiguous, and it is very disturbing to hear someone who claims to be a Catholic distort these teachings and sow seeds of confusion among the faithful by attempting to relativize the right to life.

There can be no compromise on this issue. “Formal cooperation in an abortion constitutes a grave offense. The Church attaches the canonical penalty of excommunication to this crime against human life.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church 2272). “Those who are excommunicated . . . and others who obstinately persist in manifest grave sin are not to be admitted to Holy Communion.” (Code of Canon Law 915).

Those Catholics who take a public stance in opposition to this most fundamental moral teaching of the Church place themselves outside full communion with the Church, and they should not present themselves for the reception of Holy Communion.

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