

# ARCHDIOCESE OF GLASGOW

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SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF UNBORN CHILDREN  
ADDRESS BY CARDINAL THOMAS J. WINNING  
AT CALEDONIAN UNIVERSITY



Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all I'd like to thank you for the invitation to speak to you about the pro-life issue in these weeks leading up to the General Election campaign.

As you may have noticed, it is an issue which I've once or twice (!) highlighted in recent months, not necessarily to the liking of politicians of varying persuasions.

What I want to do today is share with you some of my thoughts on this issue and encourage you in your work of highlighting the slaughter of the innocents which takes place day in and day out in hospitals and clinics all round Britain.

Before I do that I want to tell you a story.

In many ways it's not an uncommon story, but it's a tragic one nevertheless.

There was once a man named Bernard. Bernard was a married man, but was compulsively promiscuous. One day Bernard was told by a woman with whom he was having a relationship that she was pregnant with his child. Bernard, being what most of the media would term a practical sort of chap, decided there was only one thing for it. He demanded that she terminate the pregnancy as a condition of the relationship continuing.

The woman in question accepted his condition and the baby was aborted.

A tragic story? Yes few people would disagree with that.

But there's more to it than that. Something more sinister.

Bernard was a doctor by profession.

He was an expert in obstetrics and gynaecology.

Bernard was an accomplished abortionist in his own right.

***Bernard killed his own child.***

But there's more. In a book published recently Bernard went on to explain the procedure, and then said, in words that remind one of the famous Goya painting of Saturn devouring her children:

"You pursue me. You ask if perhaps for a fleeting moment or so I experienced a flicker of regret, a microgram of remorse?"

"No and No."

That's a harrowing story, that just happens to be true. And it reveals clearly the mentality of the abortionist - another job well done, another demonstration of the moral neutrality of advanced technology in the hands of the amoral.

That, my friends, is the mentality we are up against in our struggle for life.

For a long time I've been searching for a satisfactory reason for society's general refusal to recognise abortion for what it really is, namely, directly depriving an unborn baby of life.

Of course there can be more than one explanation for this failure to analyse the problem correctly.

For some the explanation will be a purely selfish one - "I believe that the unborn baby is a human being, but it is unwanted for personal and social reasons, so I'm quite prepared to ask for its removal."

The fact that this removal involves the death of the unborn baby is usually cushioned by the sanitised way the operation is carried out.

***But what it means is that motives of personal convenience are now sufficient to sign a child's death warrant.***

Other people may fail to see the reality of what they are doing because the pro-abortion lobby have succeeded very well in creating a vocabulary of their own which cushions the impact.

Last week in the Scotsman newspaper, one of our most eminent moral theologians, Fr George Donaldson had a letter published which exposed the powerful way language is used to distract people from the reality of abortion - namely killing.

In it he quoted Jane Roe of the Abortion Law Reform Association, who appeared on the BBC's Woman's Hour last year. She was asked why her group calls itself "pro-choice". She was honest enough to answer frankly.

"It's partly a campaigning tactic," she said. "We know people support choice. They are happy. If you ask them if they support a woman's right to choose, almost 100 % say yes.

"If you say abortion on request" it's slightly fewer.

"And if you say abortion on demand" it's fewer still, when ALL THREE MEAN EXACTLY THE SAME THING."

These words, remember, are not mine. These are the words of those who want - let's be blunt about it - abortion on demand.

When you analyse the subtleties of our opponents on this issue, it's perhaps easier to understand why some people almost sleepwalk into the abortionist's clinic.

I feel increasingly convinced that the most satisfactory explanation for society's failure to call a spade a spade is that society itself has a flawed judgement. And that flaw is due to the fact that people are no longer anchored in a stable set of values and principles by which to live their lives.

That means that the over-riding touchstone of morality becomes "does it suit me?"

When that mentality takes over - and already it is making dangerous inroads - then all of us are at risk. First the unborn, then the frail elderly, then the disabled, then the sick and before you know it we have a society where people are no longer valued for ***who they are*** but ***what they are worth***.

Pope John Paul has a name for that kind of sick society.

He calls it "The Culture of Death".

It's against that culture of death that we are called to fight. And today I want to announce a bold new initiative which I hope will begin to turn the tide in some way.

Today I issue an open invitation to any woman, any family, any couple who may be facing the possibility of an unwanted pregnancy.

I strenuously urge any person in that situation, of any ethnic background, of any faith, from anywhere, to come to the Archdiocese of Glasgow for assistance.

Today I can announce a new set of provisions which have been put in place to help you.

- *Whatever worries or cares you may have ... we will help you.*
- *If you need pregnancy testing or counselling ... we will help you.*
- *If you want help to cope with raising the baby on your own ... we will help you.*
- *If you want to discuss adoption of your unborn child ... we will help you.*
- *If you need financial assistance, or help with equipment for your baby and feel financial pressures will force you to have an abortion ... we will help you.*
- *If you cannot face your family, or if pressure in your local area is making you consider abortion, come to us, we will help find you somewhere to have your baby surrounded by support and encouragement. We will help you.*
- *And finally, if you have had an abortion. If you are torn apart with guilt, if your relationship has split up because of abortion, if you are suffering from post abortion stress - come to us, we will help you.*

This invitation, I repeat, is open to all. Irrespective of age, creed or colour.

Today I urge anyone in that situation ... Let us help you to avoid making one of the biggest mistakes of your life.

Call us at our archdiocesan headquarters from tomorrow onwards. We will help you in whatever way you need.

I make this pledge today as a genuine and practical response from the Archdiocese of Glasgow to this fundamental problem facing society.

I feel our efforts to offer every practical help, and provide every alternative to abortion complements your work to raise political awareness of the issue.

Your role as campaigners for political change is different from ours. What I've just spelled out is the Church's practical response to the problem of abortion. Your role is to change minds and hearts among those who have the power to shape our society for good or for evil.

We co-operate very well and we share the same ultimate goal. I want to congratulate you today for all you have achieved in the last 30 years. From small beginnings when barely a couple of dozen MPs voted against the 1967 abortion bill we now have several hundred members of parliament who can be relied upon to vote to uphold the right to life of the unborn child.

Much of that success is due to the work of the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child.

But even away from the parliamentary lobby, in your daily work, in your quiet apostolate with your friends and colleagues your efforts do have an effect.

Let me read you a passage written by someone who was no friend of the pro-life movement, yet was moved by the integrity of the people who campaigned ceaselessly against abortion.

He writes: "They prayed, they supported each other, they sang hymns of joy and they constantly reminded each other of the absolute prohibition against violence. They prayed for unborn babies, for the confused and pregnant women, and for the doctors and nurses in the clinic. They even prayed for the police and the media who were covering the event.

"And I wondered: how can these people give of themselves for a constituency that is (and always will be) mute, invisible and unable to thank them?"

The man who wrote these words is someone you already know.

His name is Bernard.

He is the father who aborted his own child.

Over time Bernard Nathanson - that's his full name - did see the light. He saw more than that. With the aid of new technology he saw the child in the womb.

He saw that what he had been aborting by the thousand was in fact a human being. By the time he realised that, he had killed 75,000 babies.

In recent years Bernard Nathanson has stopped performing abortions and become one of the best known advocates of the pro-life cause in the United States.

What changed his mind, was the witness of people like you.

That's why I want to end this contribution with an appeal to you, not to lose heart.

Your efforts may sometimes seem to go unrewarded, but you can be sure that slowly and surely you are having an effect.

For evidence of that you only need look at the recent outrage at the abortion of the healthy twin; of the pressure to abort the octuplets last year or the recent furore over calls by a nobel prize winner to abort children who would not turn out to be good at music.

Public opinion is turning. It may be slow, but it's turning.

And I think that we have good grounds for hope that in the new millennium we will see the culture of death with which we are currently grappling, give way to something new.

Pope John Paul has a name for that something new too. He calls it a "civilisation of life."

Thanks to you and people like you, that civilisation of love is beginning to take shape.

Thank you.