

SCHULTHEIS: ABORTION IS ALSO A CRIMINAL ACT

Moral authority of abortionists open to question

The *Statesman's* political readership is badly in need of a rebuttal to Ms. Peggy Loonan's vindictive and opportunistic op-ed of two weeks ago condemning the

Catholic Church for opposing abortion at the same time that it covers up sexual abuses by priests. Ms. Loonan

abortionists on the side. If molesting born children is morally reprehensible, but killing unborn ones is an act of

virtue and heroism, we are in quite a pickle. Should we hide such a situation to avoid risk to the sacrosanct Roe v. Wade ruling? Should we ask for the priest's dismissal on grounds of molesting "born children," while lauding him for his courage in putting to death unborn ones, and encourage him to continue the latter practice after his dismissal, even while he seeks help for his problem with "born children?"

These scenarios expose the deadly logic of abortion, which Ms. Loonan relies upon heavily in impugning the Church. She says, "These male clergy, while not willing to demand zero-tolerance for adult male priests sexually abusing born children, demand zero-tolerance for women who legally terminate their unintended pregnancies after considerable contemplation of the quality of life their born child might not have because they aren't emotionally or financially prepared to parent..." In other words, not only is the status of the unborn child less human than that of the "born child" simply because the pregnancy was unintended or the parent isn't ready to parent, but the cure for a projected low quality of life, says Ms. Loonan, is death. If this be so, there are millions of poor, elderly, and handicapped "born" people, with a quality of life lower than Ms. Loonan might think meaningful, waiting to



become victims of her dreadful logic which, until now, has only been applied to the unborn. Moreover, Ms. Loonan

indicates on her website that recently-enacted state health care coverage for unborn children is a back-door attack on the sacred Roe v. Wade and should thus be prohibited. In other words, health coverage for real, pregnant women and their babies should be denied in the name of protecting the theoretical "women's rights" manufactured by Roe. Despite her rhetoric to the contrary, Ms. Loonan's position does not, in practice, elevate women; it degrades them.

Ms. Loonan is correct that "sexual molestation of born children isn't just morally wrong, it's a criminal act." So is abortion, if the entire history of Western civilization and the first 200 years of American history are any indication. Ms. Loonan's moral outrage seems to be selective in its application and deficient in its historical awareness. In fact, the more we consider her moral outrage at the Catholic Church, the less it looks like genuine concern for "born children," and the more it looks like merely an attack on the source of the most vocal and consistent opposition to abortion the world has ever known. Indeed, the Catholic Church has held its pro-life legal position for over 1500 years; Ms. Loonan's legal position will be a mere 30 years old next January. Yet because of the moral problems of a small minority of Catholic priests, Ms. Loonan asks us to hand her the

mantle of moral authority.

The truth is that the legal position Ms. Loonan holds is itself fraught with contradictions, duplicity, and dishonesty. Her website refers to all abortion opponents as "religious extremists" who "would like nothing better than for all women, most particularly white women, to go home and take care of hordes of babies." Thus, by her reckoning, the category of "religious extremists" includes Denver's Archbishop, Pope John Paul II, Queen Elizabeth I, the Greek philosopher Aristotle, St. Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther, Thomas Jefferson, John and Abigail Adams, and George Washington. The "religious extremists" Ms. Loonan opposes for a living are, in fact, quite reputable, don't have a general reputation outside Ms. Loonan's offices for desiring hordes of babies at home, and come from both inside and outside the Catholic Church.

Our friends in the Catholic Church, as they seek to punish sexual misbehavior by priests and protect "born children" everywhere, ought not fear the reproaches of those giving their lives to defend the execution of unborn children. These have been dark days for the Church, and her many critics have enjoyed them greatly. But she will weather this storm as she has weathered others over the last 1500 years, and her policy of life - life for all, at all ages and stages - will again, one day, reign supreme over the culture of death and destruction represented by abortion.

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claims the Church no longer possesses the moral authority to criticize abortion, and charges the Church with hypocrisy for continuing to do so.

Though she expresses herself in sensational and morally indignant language, it is not clear where Ms. Loonan bases her own moral authority. Ms. Loonan criticizes the Church for its lack of a zero-tolerance policy toward priests who molest "born children." Such priests, she says, should be removed from priestly service rather than extended a policy which shows forgiveness. There is obvious validity to this position, but after arousing our righteous emotions with regard to "born children," Ms. Loonan then exhorts the Church to stop criticizing those who murder unborn ones.

It has never happened in the Catholic Church and I don't expect it to happen, but one is left to wonder what Ms. Loonan's response would be to the hypothetical situation where a priest with medical experience is molesting "born children" while conducting