

ROE v. WADE ANNIVERSARY: A REFLECTION ON ABORTIONISTS & VIOLENCE-FR. JIM HEWES

There use to be at least two places of reverence and safety. One was the womb of a pregnant women and the other was a church. Since Roe v. Wade in 1973, the unborn child within the womb is no longer respected or safe. Now churches are no longer a place of reverence or safety either. This was demonstrated not only in the killing of the abortionist, Dr. George Tiller, but in other acts of violence within churches in the recent past.

It is important to remember that those who have killed abortionists did not commit this act of violence as the abortionist was performing an abortion. Many abortion providers (like Dr. Bernard Nathanson) walked into their abortion clinic one day for the last time in order to clear out their belongings because they had quit, never to return. Think what would have been lost, if Dr. Nathanson (now one of the greatest pro-life advocates) had been killed before he had a change of heart. No one can know for certain what is in the mind and heart of an abortionist on any given day. Those that have left their practice of abortion have sometimes become the best supporters for the pro-life cause. In an act of killing (including on someone that does abortions), a human being arrogantly takes the place of God. That killer is making a decision for God and assuming that this person is unredeemable. The act of killing usurps God's grace to someday bring about conversion in this person, even at the last moment of their life like the thief on the cross with Jesus. Their chance to some day find for forgiveness is forever taken away by another human being's act of violence against them.

Those who have killed abortionists have justified their actions because those particular doctors would never again kill any more pre-born children. But even this so called "justification" has problems because it is the woman, with all the pressures on her, who hires the abortionist. She merely has to find another abortionist to do what the one abortionist would have done any way.

These acts of violence on a few abortionists have set the pro-life cause back by giving the pro-abortion lobby and media an excuse to continue to overlook the violence done **daily** to thousands of innocent pre-born children. Instead most media focuses on these few isolated acts of violence to abortionists rather than the tragic deaths of over a million innocent unborn children every year in our country. More and more journalists have made sure that the media has shown the reality of violence in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, or the Sudan but has not shown the violence done to pre-born children inside legally protected abortion mills (see this reality at priestsforlife.org). The killing of abortionists only continues to distort the true magnitude and horror of the abortion issue.

The Supreme Court established private right to use violence - through abortion - for any personal reason without the need for any public justification or any concern for how those individual acts will harm the common good. Disregard for the value behind the law (respecting life) by the Supreme Court decision in 1973 has paved the way for the continuing use of violent solutions for complex situations. Those who kill abortionists are like those who kill the pre-born, in that they set themselves up as prosecutor, judge, jury, and executioner with no due process whatsoever. They perpetuate the value of individualism, which abortions are based on. It is just another form of violence that damages the common good.

These actions of killing abortionists demonstrate visibly and clearly how it is possible to be anti-abortion but not pro-life. This is not new, for many politicians have voted against laws allowing abortion, but have turned right around and voted against policies or programs that assist the poor, including women that need support after their child is born. One person has summed this up by saying **that we need to treat pregnant women the way we want them to treat their pre-born children.** We need to treat everyone with respect, support, and compassion (as the wonderful people involved in Angel Care and Birthright have done for years).

James Kopp killed Dr. Bernard Slepian (who practiced abortions near Buffalo) in 1999. I heard at a conference (what is often left unreported) that James Kopp's girlfriend had an abortion. The violence that was brought into his life by an abortion ends up being perpetuated by his act of killing Dr. Slepian. It points out what Fr. Mike Mannion has written: **"Pain that is not transformed is transmitted."** In other words, violence is cyclic. Violence will never solve a problem (a crisis pregnancy) by more violence (abortion). Evil will never be overcome by another act of evil. In the end only God's love can transform evil and violence. As Gustave Thibon has written so powerfully; **"The true God transforms violence into suffering, while the false god transforms suffering into violence."**

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