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## Cardinals Law, O'Connor

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# A call for reason amidst clinic violence

by Linda C. Everett

Moments after learning of tragic attacks on two Brookline, Massachusetts abortion clinics, Cardinal Bernard Law, leader of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston, responded swiftly, and with sorrow, in condemning the fatal shootings as "reprehensible acts of violence." To those who favor abortion, the cardinal asked "that this tragic and criminal act of apparently one individual not become the occasion of universalizing blame. The unconscionable acts of violence of a few must not be confused with the millions who advocate a pro-life position in public debate, in social outreach, in non-violence and in peace."

Since then, the abortion lobby has made a furious attempt to malign abortion protesters as part of a violent conspiracy and to obliterate the basic free speech rights of those who seek to oppose abortion through education, protest, and prayer outside clinics. Most perfidious is their continuing effort to use the Boston tragedy to discredit the Catholic Church and the pro-life movement as a whole as violent. Were they listening when Cardinal Law reiterated that "violence is in total contradiction to all that the pro-life movement represents"?

At the center of the Dec. 30 attack, an extremely troubled young man, John Salvi III, stands charged with murder, armed assault with intent to kill, federal weapons charges, and life imprisonment if charged under the new federal Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act, or the death penalty, if he is charged under the federal anti-crime law passed last year. A massive investigation by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF), the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the U.S. Marshals Service, and the U.S. Attorney's Office, and state and local authorities is searching for links between Salvi and an alleged conspiracy to shut down clinics through intimidation of staff and violence.

Since 1982, the ATF has been tracking all arson and bombing incidents directed at abortion clinics with an increasing complement of (now eight) specially trained task forces and programs in conjunction with state and local law enforcement agencies. And since 1993, after a two years of allegations on Capitol Hill, fueled by blatant lies about nonexistent ATF "proof" of a clinic conspiracy, the abortion lobby saw passage of the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act and a federal task force to investigate clinic vio-

lence. Despite this voluminous crime-fighting effort, the lucrative abortion industry now wants federal marshals at every abortion clinic in the country, and the Justice Department has initiated a task force to coordinate federal and state security to protect them.

The Boston clinic deaths bring to five the number of abortionists or abortion clinic staff killed over the last 22 months. With each killing, the question of "Who benefits?" from this violence becomes louder. Who benefits when a "minister" bombs an abortion clinic or when a handful of alleged "anti-abortion militants" claims that the Bible gives them the right to hunt down and kill abortionists to save unborn children? That fallacious claim, called "justifiable homicide," was manufactured by Paul Hill, a former minister expelled from his church for his violent views, as was David Trosch, a Catholic priest who supported Hill and was suspended by the Mobile Archdiocese for his violent views.

The media have been quick to discredit organized religion, specifically the Catholic Church—long an energetic foe of Nazi-eugenics advocates like the International Planned Parenthood Federation, as seen at the 1994 Cairo depopulation conference. Last August, Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA) and earlier, the Anti-Defamation League-linked Center for Democratic Renewal circulated the line that there was a trend among pro-life Catholics and Protestants to align with neo-Nazis and the Ku Klux Klan against abortion. Also revealing is that the drug-legalization lobby's LaRouche slanderer, Chip Berlet, was working with Planned Parenthood to monitor "right-wing" opposition to "reproductive choice." PPFA charged that there are increasingly close ties between anti-abortion and right-wing groups in promoting the creation of armed militias—and that this raises the threat of more violence against abortion clinics.

Cardinal John O'Connor of New York's Catholic Archdiocese also unconditionally denounced the Boston killings. The cardinal again asked, "with every fiber of my being: 'If anyone has an urge to kill an abortionist, kill me instead'. . . I am prepared to die, if my death can save the life of another."

Nevertheless Planned Parenthood of New York City (PPNYC), freely used the killing to attack the Catholic Church as responsible for the clinic deaths. In a full-page *New York Times* ad, PPNYC displayed the same vitriolic hatred that its eugenicist founder Margaret Sanger had for the Catholic Church, and manifested by her grandson, Alexander C. Sanger, current PPNYC president. PPNYC smears Cardinals Law and O'Connor for inciting violence, lumping them together with the expelled priest Trosch, and demands a permanent ban on clinic protests.

Since 1984, Cardinal O'Connor has publicly offered that any woman, anywhere, who is pregnant and without funds can come to New York and the church will provide for her medical expenses, hospitalization, and other needs, for her to keep the baby or to place the child for adoption. Since that

offer, the archdiocese has helped about 50,000 women and expended over \$5 million. And, when no one would care for New York's 80 AIDS babies, the cardinal said, "We will take them all" (the archdiocese has the largest number of beds designated for persons with AIDS in the private sector in the United States).

As the Jan. 5 *New York Post* editorial asks, "Why the readiness to tie the Boston killings to the pro-life movement?" The *Post* answers its own question: "To marginalize the movement in the eyes of the general public." Then, it concludes: "Thus far, moreover, the effort seems to be working . . . which is a pity."

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## Documentation

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*Excerpts from Cardinal John O'Connor's homily on the Feast of the Epiphany in New York City, on Jan. 8:*

. . . The living Christ sweeps us up into His divinity, into His divine light. . . . And in the light from His face we can not only see *Him* as he is; we can see ourselves in Him. We can come to know what it means to be truly human, to be made in His image and likeness, whoever we are, whatever our religion, our color, our sex, our orientation, our sins. In Him, we see ourselves as He wants us to be. We see ourselves as sacred human beings. We see every individual in the world as equally sacred, of immeasurable worth and dignity.

Seeing ourselves and others this way is one of the reasons for treasuring every human life, the life of the hungry, the homeless, the drunk, the drug-ridden, the unborn, the elderly, those with cancer, those with AIDS, the rich, the poor, the famous, the unknown. . . .

It is this sense of the sacredness of every human life that promoted my very close friend, His Eminence Cardinal Law, Archbishop of Boston, to denounce unconditionally the recent killings and woundings that took place in two abortion clinics in his archdiocese. I joined in that unconditional denunciation and expressed my deep sorrow for the victims and their loved ones, as I have done on previous occasions. . . .

Cardinal Law, one of the strongest pro-life leaders in the United States, knows the situation in Boston as I and others do not, and has called for a moratorium on pro-life demonstrations outside abortion clinics. . . . I quote in part from his column in his archdiocesan newspaper, *The Pilot* (Jan. 6, 1995):

"I do not imply that such demonstrations are poorly motivated or that they are not peaceful or that they are illegal. It is, for me, a matter of prudential judgment. Prudence sometimes calls for one to refrain from something that is good in itself. That is the case here. I have in mind peaceful, prayerful, legal demonstrations. Any demonstration characterized by vio-

lence would, of its very nature, be out of order." . . .

. . . It is quite possible that were I the Archbishop of Boston, I would be inclined to call for such a moratorium in the Boston area, at least for a period of time, while trying to sort things out. . . . Indeed, I intend to borrow at least one page from Cardinal Law's book and ask that every week a different pastor in each of the 19 regions of the Archdiocese of New York schedule a period of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament in the cause of human life. I would ask, however, that this be in *addition* to any prayer vigils that responsible individuals or groups believe that they should conduct legally and non-violently within the Archdiocese of New York in the vicinity of abortion clinics. The rosary vigils led by my brother Bishop in Brooklyn, Bishop Thomas Daily, are wonderful examples of peaceful processions and prayers in the vicinity of abortion clinics. . . .

Here in the Archdiocese of New York, however, I too, would be prepared to call for a moratorium on these peaceful prayer vigils on condition that a moratorium be called on abortions. The first is within my power, to call a moratorium on prayer vigils, although I would respect those who might disagree with me, and carry out such vigils anyway. The second, a moratorium on abortions, is obviously not within my power, but only within the power of those who operate abortion clinics. Perhaps during a moratorium on both abortions and prayer vigils here in New York, both sides could meet to determine whether there is anything that can legitimately *be* the subject of dialogue.

I am convinced that fair-minded people do not want to permit an act of madness that has resulted in killing sacred human persons in abortion clinics, to "demonize" the hundreds of thousands of gentle, caring, non-violent individuals in the pro-life movement, or to end the movement itself. . . .

I conclude for the record: I categorically abhor and denounce violence. I categorically denounce the hypothesis that to kill an abortionist is justifiable in order to save babies. I have publicly denounced the violence of an abortion clinic bomber. I have signed every renunciation of the use of capital punishment published by the Roman Catholic Bishops in New York and the nation. I have publicly denounced even verbal violence in labor negotiations and strikes. I have consistently denounced violence against persons based on their sexual orientation. Such denunciations and many more have been heard by thousands of people in this Cathedral, millions throughout the world. That is a matter of record which can not be blotted out by any efforts to indict my pro-life efforts or those of the Church as inciting murder or other violence. Anyone who would make such charges would have to be desperate indeed, and has my sincere sympathy. . . .

I urge all of you to pray that His Eminence Cardinal Law will be successful in what he is trying so courageously to achieve. I do not pretend to have a monopoly on how best to save human life. Only Jesus is the expert, and He did it only by dying on a cross.