



## **Most Reverend Raymond J. Boland**

Bishop Emeritus  
Catholic Diocese of Kansas City ~ St. Joseph

### **Homily Mass and March for Life**

**Order of Malta Federal Association, USA**  
John Paul II Cultural Center ~ Washington, DC  
January 22, 2009

The Supreme Court decision in the case of “Roe v. Wade” handed down thirty-six years ago today is the reason thousands of Pro-Life advocates will march in protest here in our nation’s capital this afternoon. They uphold the memory of millions of children whose mothers sadly allowed the nurturing sanctity of their wombs to become chambers of death. They march in the name of those children whose lives were cut short at the very moment of birth by the particularly callous and barbaric procedure known as partial-birth-abortion. They march in mourning for all those potential citizens who will never vote in a presidential election or enjoy the benefits of a great democracy, which, because of this predilection to destroy the most vulnerable and defenseless among us, may be in the process of losing the soul of its nationhood. Constitutional lawyers may argue for as long as they feel inclined as to whether or not our Constitution includes a right to privacy but even if it does, where are its limits? Surely it should not extend to the deliberate destruction of human life in the womb or, for that matter, anywhere else!

The inauguration of our new President two days ago was an event of historical importance. Whether or not one voted for President Obama, all Americans, and indeed millions worldwide, were overjoyed that something once thought impossible had been achieved, a person of color a few generations removed from slavery had become the first citizen of the nation. This fact, coupled with the peaceful transition of power we have to come to expect, engendered hope in the hearts of many who are not so privileged.

But here, in the midst of all this national and international euphoria, I must inject a word of caution. There is a shadow which looms large and it portends a future far more devastating than the economic chaos which burdens our global community at the present time. I refer to FOCA, F.O.C.A. which stands for the somewhat attractive sounding title, FREEDOM OF CHOICE ACT. I urge you to study this proposal and its far-reaching implications which its proponents do not want us to understand. If you are, and I know you are, a champion of life and if you do not want the State to tell us what to believe or to coerce us into violating the most sacred obligations of conscience, then we must be

keenly aware that it is a “wolf in sheep’s clothing.” We were unprepared when the “Roe v. Wade” decision unexpectedly overwhelmed us in 1973; we must not be “asleep at the switch” when and if FOCA, potentially an even more dangerous piece of legislation, is reintroduced in the Senate and House for legislative approval. I submit that it would be the greatest act of political hypocrisy for our new President, who so eloquently pledged to defend the rights of so many of the oppressed, the disadvantaged and the victims of repressive regimes, to sign or support legislation designed to facilitate the abortionist and to destroy our freedom to practice our religion and follow its creed conscientiously. And let us not forget that during the campaign President Obama promised he would sign such a bill.

It is for this reason that I urge you to participate fully in the Bishops’ Postcard Campaign expressing your opposition to FOCA. But we must do more than this. The volume of postcards has an impact but it is limited by the somewhat impersonal nature of its stylized message. Besides the postcards perhaps the most effective way to gain the attention of those who represent you in the White House, the Senate and the House of Representatives is to write to them personally. For many years I have done this on February 3<sup>rd</sup>. Why February 3<sup>rd</sup>? Because it was my mother’s birthday and she was the one who gave me life.

I listened to and I have read and reread the President’s Inaugural Address. It was a good speech but, in my opinion, it was carefully crafted to avoid addressing our moral obligation to protect the dignity of all human life. Let me submit to you the possibility that it can be used to ask our new President some very logical and searching questions. Here are a few examples:

The President said:

*“The time has come to reaffirm our enduring spirit; to choose our better history; to carry forward that precious gift, that noble idea, passed on from generation to generation: the God-given promise that all are equal, all are free and all deserve a chance to pursue their full measure of happiness.”*

And I would add, “Mr. President, why don’t our unborn brothers and sisters also deserve a chance to pursue their full measure of happiness?”

Addressing the nations of the world, the President said:

*“Know that America is a friend of each nation and every man, woman and child (emphasis mine) who seeks a future of peace and dignity, and we are ready to lead once more.”*

And I would add, “Mr. President, what about the child in the womb – doesn’t he or she deserve a future of peace and dignity?”

The President said:

*“And for those who seek to advance their aims by inducing terror and slaughtering innocents, (emphasis mine) we say to you now that our spirit is stronger and cannot be broken. You cannot outlast us and we will defeat you.”*

And I would add, “Mr. President, *inducing terror and slaughtering innocents, sounds very much like abortion.*”

The President said:

*“We will restore science to its rightful place.....”*

And I would add, “Mr. President, we already have the science which convinces us that what is growing in the womb is a unique human being, completely distinct from its mother and its father. It has its own DNA structure. It needs nothing but nutrition and a safe place to grow. A separate individual has come into being. He or she will go through many stages and phases, none of which is as monumental as his or her conception. The science speaks for itself. You become a person at the moment of conception, the point of no return.”\*

And that, my dear friends, is why we march today!

AMEN

Let me acknowledge my debt to Father Brian Bransfield of our Bishops' Conference for his development of this concept.