

# Senate move 'a miracle'

There is no such thing as coincidence, but there are miracles in which God wishes to remain anonymous. This is the kind of miracle that happened when, after three years of stalling, the Senate finally agreed to take up the Unborn Victims of Violence Act - on the Solemnity of the Annunciation. That day, when Catholics contemplate the moment when the Son of God became man in the womb of the Virgin Mary, the U.S. Senate debated whether a child who is in the womb of his mother when she is violently attacked might also be seen as a victim to the assault.

The bill addresses federal crimes of violence wherein the death of an unborn child is not currently recognized or charged. It is also known as "Laci and Conner's Law," in memory of Laci Peterson and her unborn child. Laci's mother, Sharon Rocha, fought for passage of this law, saying that "when a criminal attacks a woman who carries a child, he claims two victims. I lost my daughter, and I also lost my grandson."

The bill exempts abortion, but the abortion lobby fought it anyway. Their grievance? The bill commits the unpardonable pro-choice sin: In the words of Sen. Dianne Feinstein, it recognizes that a child in utero is "a human being."

Abortion activists recoil



Cathy Cleaver Ruse

USCCB Commentary

from any acknowledgment of a child's existence before birth, whatever the context, and however bizarre the argument, in order to protect the "logic" of *Roe v. Wade*. Sen. Feinstein pushed for a substitute bill that would add penalties for interrupting a woman's "pregnancy" but erases any mention of the child as a victim, because of this fear about undermining *Roe*. But the child was the whole point. A woman who has lost an unborn child in a violent attack deserves the law's recognition that both she and her child were victims of the crime. Anything less is an affront to women and their children.

Abortion advocates hold up *Roe* as if it were the standard by which all other laws should be judged, forgetting that legal abortion is the uncomfortable exception, not the rule, when it comes to the way the law treats unborn children. Outside the context of abortion, unborn children are often recognized by the law. Most states allow legal recourse for prenatal injuries and

recognize fetal homicide as a crime. Unborn children can inherit property, be represented by a guardian, sue for a wrongful death if their father is killed. They are considered human subjects protected from harmful research, and can qualify as recipients of state-funded health insurance.

Abortion is the glaring exception here. An exception that simply cannot be reconciled within this framework of rights for the unborn child. It defies logic that on Monday a child can inherit property or file claims in court and on Tuesday he disappears in the eyes of the law if an abortion choice is made. The "logic" of *Roe v. Wade* is like the emperor's new clothes, and the abortion lobby stands in fear of the day when this logic is revealed to be just as insubstantial.

That day is bound to come. Sen. Feinstein herself got so carried away with explaining how the bill threatened abortion that she said too much: "If it's murder here, is it not murder there?" That is the tricky thing with logic, Senator. It has a conclusion.

Cathy Cleaver Ruse is the director of planning and information for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities.

## Film waives tensions of active faith

To the editor:

Bread and circuses! Bread and circuses! Citizens, when did Hollywood become our spiritual guide and Mel Gibson our spiritual adviser?

Mercy! How did the saints and sinners before us ever keep the faith without being treated to spectacular visuals to satisfy their morbid curiosity?

The media violence we and our children are now exposed to makes the debacle in Iraq, the violence to the unborn, elderly, and urban youth look paltry in comparison. But thankfully, reading between the lines promoting "The Passion of the Christ," Gibson's fundamentalist reasoning is evident: that salvation hinges only on accepting Christ as Savior. Thinking Catholics don't have a problem with this?

The major Western philosophies intertwined in our faith, i.e., original sin, predestination and free will, cannot possibly be addressed by a movie. Neither can issues of social justice, moral theology, or personal spirituality. Fear not, Mel Gibson would absolve us of all the tension that an active faith requires.

The hype surrounding this gruesome, R-rated film-

convines me that we are willfully being escorted into a dark, post-literate era. Wake up, fellow citizens! Rome is burning while we are being sedated with ever more fantastic "entertainments" — now, sadly, even in the name of Christ. What is next. Public executions?

Mary Ann Cole

Jersey Street, Rochester

## Red carpet was absent

To the editor:

Thank you Mel Gibson for having the courage and love for Jesus to make a movie depicting the true agony and suffering that Jesus went through to save us from our sins and give us eternal life in heaven. Thank you for not sugarcoating the brutality and pain that he endured for all mankind. To all those who say the movie is too violent, how do you know?

It was a violent day for Jesus. They did not drive him to the crucifixion spot in a limousine and roll out the red carpet. They hated him and brutally beat him. None of us was there, but we know they crowned him with thorns that pierced his head, they whipped him, drove nails into his wrists and feet and jabbed him with spears. There was blood and lots of it. It is amazing to me that people are saying that this movie is too violent for their children to view. Yet we allow our children to watch movies and play video games that are much more violent and have no meaning compared to the dying and crucifixion of our Savior.

To the leaders of the Catholic Church and other Christian churches, I would think you would be happy that a movie was finally produced that showed the story of what Jesus endured for the world. I pray that all ages, young and old see this movie, fall on their knees and give their life to Jesus. Jesus showed love, pure unconditional love by dying and shedding his blood for all sinners. I say

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