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Letters to the Editor ...

Catholic Physicians' Guild

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Letters to the Editor . . .

Last Letter of the Late Bart Heffernan to Right to Life

Dear Sir:

Recent events in the Pro-Life movement require your immediate attention. Governor Andrus of Idaho is being portrayed as a bad man, duplicitous, and the Great Satan of the West. It is ironic that this man who is certainly no friend of the Right to Life movement may well be the one who has saved it from itself.

The Idaho Compromise fashioned by the National Right to Life Committee is not unlike the Missouri Compromise on slavery in the last century. The unborn are the slaves of the 20th century. Louis Lehrman put it well when he said that "abortion and slavery are not analogous issues, but in a critical sense the same issue. Both are but particular cases of the recurring challenge to the first principles of the American Revolution which forbid the violation of the God-given rights of any person, no matter how convenient such a violation might be for some powerful individual or faction or even a majority."

If the abolitionists had said they were against slavery, but would accept it for a small percentage of our population, i.e., the blacks, their cause would have died, because they would have given up on a matter of principle. It is the same for us today. We will die if we compromise and abandon the unborn who are sick, the unborn who live because of a rapist's crime, or as a result of incest. Each is an innocent human being and innocence is a boundary that cannot be legitimately breached or our Constitution and its protection of all of us is put in jeopardy.

We are told that we can save 93% of the aborted children by placing on the altar these exceptions. This is an extremely naive assumption and is irrelevant to the basic moral problem of abortion just as persuasive arguments, e.g., the economy of the South, were to the moral problem of slavery. Think of the soldiers' lives that would have been saved had President Lincoln given up the principles that undergirded his Emancipation Proclamation!

Compromise on a matter of principle does not reflect wisdom, but weakness, and our enemies know the odor of weakness and will exploit it to the full.

We have already seen our fair-weather friends in the political arena wilt before the onslaught of the abortionist "deputies" in the media after the Webster decision.

It would be an unmitigated tragedy if the Right to Life movement followed them in a rush to compromise, just when our strength based on principle was beginning to bear fruit.

There will be those in the political arena who will say that they must accept the exceptions for the hard cases. To them we say — walk with us a little longer. If they cannot, they do not become our enemy, but our target. We must work to help them see the justice of our position and let them know without rancor or bitterness we also have the option of electing someone in their place.

I call upon the National Right to Life Committee to publicly renounce the model bills they are alleged to have sponsored and admit they were mistaken. The Idaho Compromise was an error just as the Missouri Compromise was. I call upon everyone in the Right to Life movement to ask for this renunciation by National Right to Life.

Sincerely,

Bart T. Heffernan, M.D.

Re: Noonan Letter

In (selectively) quoting from John Noonan's book, "Contraception: a History of its Treatment by Catholic Theologians and Canonists," William E. May conveniently ignores many of Noonan's comments later and elsewhere on this topic, and also on the subject of usury, which he would find difficult or impossible to reconcile with the stance taken in his article "Humanae Vitae: Natural Law and Catholic Moral Thought" (*Linacre* - Nov. 1989) [ref. note #12]. (See Noonan's "The Church and Contraception — the issues at stake," and authority, usury and contraception" [article - *Catholic Mind* - June, 1967]).

**Joseph Stables
Toronto, Ontario**