

REMARKS OF SUPREME KNIGHT CARL A. ANDERSON  
UPON RECEIVING THE  
2021 PRO-LIFE LEGACY AWARD

MARCH FOR LIFE  
VIRTUAL ROSE DINNER GALA  
JANUARY 29, 2021

I am very honored to receive the March for Life lifetime achievement award and to have the opportunity to speak to you about this great cause.

My pro-life commitment began over 50 years ago when I was a college student. Back then, the abortion lobby was already well advanced. It was supported by the American Law Institute, the American Medical Association, the American Public Health Association, the Rockefeller Commission on Population and the American Future and, of course, *The New York Times* to just give a few examples.

When *Roe v. Wade* was decided, I was in law school and I thought Yale professor John Hart Ely had it just right: the decision wasn't just bad. As he wrote, "it is not constitutional law and gives almost no sense of an obligation to try to be."

In 1976, I came to Washington, D.C. The abortion lobby's strategy during those early years was simple: having won a sweeping victory in the Supreme Court — a decision supported by the elite institutions and media influencers of the day, it was to engage Congress in lengthy committee hearings to show the impossibility of passing a constitutional amendment and then wait for public opposition to fade away.

But two brilliant decisions denied that strategy success.

The first, was made by an obscure government attorney named Nellie Gray. She bravely launched an annual March for Life in Washington and then she devoted the rest of her life to its success.

The second decision was by a freshman congressman from Illinois who introduced an amendment to stop the use of federal tax dollars to pay for abortions. Like Nellie Gray, Henry Hyde would devote the rest of his public life to the pro-life cause.

I was privileged to work closely with both of those giants.

The annual March for Life in Washington and the annual Hyde Amendment debate in Congress assured that the pro-life cause would not fade away, but instead would grow in national importance.

Then our efforts reached new heights with the election of President Ronald Reagan.

At the Department of Health and Human Services, where I was counselor to the Under Secretary, we were able to establish legal protections for handicapped new-born infants who at that time were being left to die.

When I joined his White House staff, I helped prepare the annual meeting between the president and pro-life leaders held every year during the March for Life. As a result of one of those meetings we were able to advance Nellie's great hope to bring the protections of the Hyde Amendment to the District of Columbia.

We also developed and implemented President Reagan's Mexico City Policy. That policy stopped American foreign aid dollars from being used to promote abortion overseas. And it also changed our government's diplomacy with the United Nations, which had sponsored the Mexico City meeting to promote population control.

And throughout these years, President Reagan provided a clear and consistent presidential voice defending the rights of the unborn — often in his State of the Union addresses as well as in his remarks to the March for Life.

We have accomplished much since that time. These are just a few examples of how far we've come through the dedicated action of so many — many of whom are no longer with us. But I am always aware of their presence and the power of their prayers.

All of us have our own reason why we are part of this great pro-life cause. For me, it's best summed up by the saying: 'whoever saves one life, saves the world.'

Now, I would like to speak about four principles which are foundational to our success.

The first is our commitment to justice. Since the day Moses returned from Mount Sinai, we've known that it is always wrong to intentionally kill an innocent human being.

As Americans, we understand that this idea is at the heart of justice and our entire justice system. Because a government that will sanction the killing of the innocent is capable of sanctioning anything. And it matters little that this sanction is camouflaged in the language of freedom. As the Russian novelist Dostoyevsky reminds us, "If one begins with unlimited freedom, one will end up with unlimited despotism."

Justice is both the process and the principle by which we give to each person that to which he is entitled. What is due to a person may differ based on his age or condition of dependency.

A twelve-year-old child may not have the right to vote or to sign contracts or to obtain a driver's license. But that does not mean he may be tortured or killed or sold into slavery.

But the Supreme Court reached precisely this result in *Roe v. Wade*.

Saying that the unborn child has never been recognized in law as a person in the whole sense, the Court then went on to act as though the unborn child has no rights at all. This approach is essentially incoherent. The fact that a human being's age does not entitle him to all rights does not mean that he has no rights.

Instead, it should lead us to ask a more fundamental question: What are the rights every human being is entitled to simply by the fact he is a human being with a human nature?

The answer to that question is clear: we must all have the basic right to life — a right enumerated in the language of both the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments to our Constitution.

Instead, the Supreme Court fashioned a right of privacy relying on its earlier decision in *Griswold v. Connecticut*. In that case, the Court held that the guarantees of the Bill of Rights have “penumbras, formed by emanations from those guarantees.” And the right to abortion is to be found not in the text of the Constitution itself, but in a penumbra.

But a “penumbra” is not a legal principle. It is simply another word for “shadow.” So, we are asked to believe that what had for years been regarded as simply a legal *metaphor* suddenly has its own legal *reality*. And that within these shadows can be found new constitutional rights.

Ironically, this is put forward as a method of interpreting a constitution of enumerated rights.

Read these opinions for yourself and see if you do not come to the conclusion that this type of manipulation is precisely what the framers of our Constitution sought to protect us against in giving us a constitution of enumerated rights. Then, see if you don't agree with Justice Byron White when he described the decision in *Roe v. Wade* as “an exercise in raw judicial power.”

This leads to what I believe to be the second great principle of the pro-life cause: the insistence that our governmental institutions must tell us the truth.

*Roe v. Wade* fails this test as well.

The Supreme Court *said* it did not need to resolve the question of when human life begins. Then it went on to *act* as though human life only begins at birth. Falsehoods and misstatements of history riddle the Court's opinion. But this one is the worst.

If courts refuse to recognize and respect the reality of the objects in the case before them, then justice becomes impossible, since it is impossible to know that to which the parties in the case are entitled.

We are told that *Roe v. Wade* is a decision that respects women.

But respect for women means telling them the truth and not lying to them.

Consider the photographs that the Swedish photographer Lennart Nilsson published in 1965.

I had the opportunity to place his photographs on the desk of every Senator in the Senate Chamber during an early vote on the Hyde Amendment.

Modern ultrasound technology confirms in an extraordinary way what we knew in 1973 — and even long before. Ultrasounds allow every mother to experience the living reality of her child. And every time a mother chooses to save the life of her child, she saves not one world but two.

By denying what everyone knows to be true — that the unborn child is a living human being, *Roe v. Wade* rests upon the greatest legal falsehood since the Court's terrible decision upholding the fiction of "separate but equal" racial segregation in *Plessy v. Ferguson*.

Having fought a great Civil War, our nation adopted the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment to provide for "the equal protection of the laws."

Then a sizable part of the nation, having agreed to this principle, subverted it by a sleight of hand insisting it would enforce this guarantee by the policy of "*separate* but equal protection of the laws" — a policy that everyone *knew* to be false.

But it was upheld by the Supreme Court.

That decision stood as settled law for more than half a century. Its supporters could claim that the country actually had relied upon it.

After all, a segregated American army had won two world wars and its commanders-in-chief had been chosen by a political party that was racially segregated. Yet, at what might have seemed to be the height of its political power, the tide began to turn against it.

There is an important lesson here and it is this: No matter how entrenched, no matter its claim to stability, in America no *unjust* law is sustainable.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was right: the arc of history may be long, but it bends towards justice.

This brings me to the third great principle and that is our commitment to democracy.

The progress we have made — and it has been substantial — has been achieved through the exercise of our constitutional rights to peaceably assemble and to petition our elected officials.

We have confidence in our democratic institutions and that the executive, legislative and judicial branches will ultimately do what is right.

Political tides ebb and flow. It is a mistake to judge the strength or direction of the current by one moment in time.

There is a consistent, strong consensus in America to significantly restrict abortion. To recognize this reality does not mean we advocate a majority may decide what is morally right or just.

But it does mean that after nearly 50 years, *Roe v. Wade* and its supporters have failed to convince the American people that the decision is something other than “an exercise of raw judicial power.” And it shows that *Roe v. Wade* is *not* settled law.

This brings me to our fourth principle — the hallmark of the pro-life cause is compassion and generosity. We see every day how pro-life Americans reach out to help others.

There is something distinctly American about this care for a neighbor. In an earlier time, we might have described it as a special sense of family. Today, we are more likely to use a word like solidarity or accompaniment. But whatever term we may use, it is a commitment to regard a stranger more like a neighbor and a neighbor more like a sister or brother.

I have seen this so often in pro-life pregnancy counseling centers and in programs helping women suffering from post-abortion trauma.

The strength to offer a helping hand and the courage to love another especially when that person is in need is often hidden from public view, but it is nonetheless very real. A culture of compassion and love quietly permeates the pro-life cause. It is the wellspring from which all else flows.

The great 19<sup>th</sup> century American Catholic intellectual Orestes Brownson once observed, every great nation has its “special work, mission or destiny.” Writing several years later, the Russian Orthodox theologian Vladimir Solovyov put it differently. He observed, “the idea of a nation is not what it thinks of itself in time, but instead what God thinks of it in eternity.”

I think both are guideposts for us in the days ahead.

What is that special work for each of us and for our nation? And how will that both stand the test of time and eternity?

The steadfast protection of a weak, defenseless and innocent child surely meets those tests. So does the commitment to justice, truth, democracy and compassion.

President Ronald Reagan once encouraged us not to tire on what he called the “long March for Life.”

From the first March for Life to this one, every one of us has understood what Rev. King meant by the arc of history.

We understand that it bends when people like you and me bend it.

Bend it toward justice. Toward compassion. Toward Life.

And what is more, each of us, way back from the beginning of the pro-life movement, has known we are on a lifetime’s journey.

The direction of that journey does not bend. It does not waver, though sometimes, it may slow down.

But in the end, our pro-life journey has a destination.

And that, my friends, is victory.