

## WITHOUT A DOUBT

### ***My R.S.V.P. to Rudy Giuliani***

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I probably would have written this article anyhow, so distressed was I. But then I received an invitation to attend a fundraising luncheon for presidential candidate Rudy Giuliani, and that absolutely confirmed my decision.

The fundraiser is scheduled for Providence next week. For \$500, I could attend a reception with the former New York City Mayor. For \$1,500 I could attend a reception with a photo-op.

The first thought that came to my mind is that I'm not charging enough for my Confirmation photos!

Nevertheless, and more to the point, I have no idea why I received an invitation to Giuliani's fundraiser. I don't know the mayor; I've never met him. I try to avoid partisan politics. Heck, I'm not even a Republican. But most of all, I would never support a candidate who supports legalized abortion.

Rudy's public proclamations on abortion are pathetic and confusing. Even worse, they're hypocritical.

Now, this is what we get from Rudy as he attempted to explain his ambiguous position on abortion in a speech at Houston Baptist College earlier this month: "Here are the two strong beliefs that I have, here are the two pillars of my thinking . . . One is, I believe abortion is wrong. I think it is morally wrong . . . The second pillar that guides my thinking . . . where [people of good faith] come to different conclusions about this, about something so very, very personal, I believe you have to respect their viewpoint. You give them a level of choice here . . . I've always believed both of these things."

What? This drivel from the man who received high marks, and properly so, for his clear vision and personal courage in healing New York City, and by extension the nation, after the horrific terrorist attacks of September 11?

Rudy mentions the two pillars of his position. But you know what happens if you sit on a stool with two legs? Yep, it collapses. And so does Rudy's position, and along with it his integrity and reputation.

Rudy's explanation is a classic expression of the position on abortion we've heard from weak-kneed politicians so frequently in recent years:

"I'm personally opposed to but don't want to impose my views on other people." The incongruity of that position has been exposed many times now. As I've asked previously, would we let any politician get away with the same pathetic cop-out on other issues: "I'm personally opposed to . . . racial discrimination, sexual abuse, prostitution, drug abuse, polygamy, incest . . . but don't want to impose my beliefs on others?"

Why is it that when I hear someone explaining this position, I think of the sad figure of Pontius Pilate in the Gospels, who personally found no guilt in Jesus, but for fear of the crowd, washed

his hands of the whole affair and handed Jesus over to be crucified. I can just hear Pilate saying, "You know, I'm personally opposed to crucifixion but I don't want to impose my belief on others."

Okay, let's ask Mayor Giuliani to think about his position for a minute.

Hey Rudy, you say that you believe abortion is morally wrong. Why do you say that, Rudy; why do you believe that abortion is wrong? Is abortion the killing of an innocent child? Is it an offense against human dignity? Is it a cruel and violent act? Does it harm the woman who has the abortion? And if your answer to any of these questions is yes, Rudy, why would you permit people to . . . kill an innocent child, offend human dignity, commit a cruel and violent act or do harm to the mother? This is in the name of choice? Huh?

Rudy's preposterous position is compounded by the fact that he professes to be a Catholic. As Catholics, we are called, indeed required, to be pro-life, to cherish and protect human life as a precious gift of God from the moment of conception until the time of natural death. As a leader, as a public official, Rudy Giuliani has a special obligation in that regard.

In The Gospel of Life, Pope John Paul made the obligation to defend human life very explicit:

"This task is the particular responsibility of civil leaders . . . No one can ever renounce this responsibility, especially when he or she has a legislative or decision-making mandate."

And more recently, the Bishops of the United States wrote: "If a Catholic in his or her personal or professional life were knowingly and obstinately to repudiate [the Church's] definitive teaching on moral issues, he or she would seriously diminish his or her communion with the Church." (Happy Are Those Who Are Called to His Supper, p. 11)

Rudy's defection from the Catholic Faith on this moral issue is not unique, of course. Catholic politicians of both parties, nationwide, have followed a similar path in abandoning the Faith for the sake of political expediency: Ted Kennedy, John Kerry, Pat Leahy, Nancy Pelosi, and Joe Biden come quickly to mind. And on a local level, of course, Congressman Patrick Kennedy and Senator Jack Reed. How these intelligent men and women will someday stand before the judgment seat of God and explain why they legitimized the death of countless innocent children in the sin of abortion is beyond me. (But God, really, I was personally opposed to it, but just couldn't do anything about it.)

Oh well, as you can see by now, I won't be attending the fundraiser for Rudy Giuliani. If Rudy wants to see me, he'll have to arrange an appointment at my office. We'll talk about his position on abortion. And if he wants a photo, it will cost him \$1,500 as a donation for the pro-life work of the Church.