



President Ronald Reagan at Notre Dame  
1988 with Notre Dame President  
Edward Malloy.



George Bush, Laura Bush, Cardinal  
McCarrick, Archbishop Sambhi and Wuerl

**DEAD RIGHT AND DEAD WRONG:**  
Bishop John D’Arcy and Notre Dame  
—Part II of IV—

*The greatest sin and crime against the biblical prohibition, “Thou shall not kill,” is killing in an unjust war. And all those who have disseminated the hatred, the imperialism or the ideological fanaticism that leads to war are participating in this sin. Rulers...are the first who will have to answer to God for all the killing and hatred they have unleashed.*

*MORAL THEOLOGY FOR PRIEST AND LAITY, VOLUME 3, REV. BERNARD HÄRING,  
THE LEADING CATHOLIC MORAL THEOLOGIAN OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY*

*I have in mind also the statement of the U.S. Catholic Bishops in 2004. “The Catholic community and Catholic institutions should not honor those who act in defiance of our fundamental moral principles. They should not be given awards, honors or platforms which would suggest support for their actions.”*

BISHOP JOHN D’ARCY, DIOCESE OF FORT WAYNE-SOUTH BEND

This is a battle between Constantinian Christian all-stars—Catholic division. In one corner sits the “Fighting Irish,” the University of Notre Dame. Its history of embracing, with full Catholic fervor, the United States military and its money, as well as the American power elite and its money, is legendary. That history began in earnest with World War I and has run non-stop until today—Notre Dame being the envy of every Catholic college in the U.S. for having, proportionately, the largest ROTC operation of any Catholic institution of higher education. In the other corner sits Bishop John D’Arcy, representing the position of the U.S. Catholic Bishops, whose history of pandering to the military and the power-players of this society for their money, matches—at least—that of the University of Notre Dame. Yet at this hour these kindred spirits and operations are at swords’ points over the questions, “Whose killing of whom is the killing that faithfully follows Jesus, the Word of God Incarnate?”—and “Whose unjust killing of whom can be ignored, or at least

considered not so bad as to warrant denying him or her Catholic *awards, honors or platforms*, and the presence of a Catholic Bishop?”

First, a further note about the spiritual and moral commonalities between the contending parties is apropos. Neither party is saying that President Obama should not be given an *award, honor or a platform* because of the unjust killing of human beings—by either the standards of the Gospel or the standards of Catholic Just War Theory—attributed to the wars he is prosecuting in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Neither sees a significant moral problem for himself there, just as when President Reagan came to Notre Dame in 1988, neither Bishop D’Arcy nor the University saw any significant moral problem with him or his policies that would bar him from being *given a platform at a Catholic institution*. Ronald Reagan’s murdering of innocent human beings *in utero* and *extra-utero* in unjust wars—again, unjust by Catholic moral standards—in Grenada and Panama of no importance to either. Nor, did either see any problem offering him *a platform at a Catholic institution* because of his, well-known and documented by that time, eight years of financing death-squad murders throughout Latin America in which hundreds of thousands human beings, *extra-utero*, mostly Baptized Catholics, were unjustly destroyed. Ronald Reagan and Barack Obama are by no means the only ones, who have previously engaged in the unjust destruction of innocent human beings who have been *honored* by Notre Dame within the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend without complaint or comment by the local Catholic Bishop. The list is long. And both parties signature of approval can be found on every page—except for the time Bishop D’Arcy publicly objected to Notre Dame honoring Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan. (President Bush was also honored at the same graduation sans any episcopal objection.)

Notre Dame, Bishop D’Arcy and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops are on the same page. This current public-image-preserving dust-up is only about one form of the unjust destruction of human life, and that is intentional and legal, medically-supervised abortion, and it is not even about whether it is right or wrong. Both sides accept the Catholic teaching that it is wrong. The dispute is over whether a person, who is a government official, who implements a policy and programs not in accord with Catholic teaching on the matter should *be given an award, honor or a platform* at a Catholic institution. All other forms of the unjust destruction of human life, that is of murder, are still being given their traditional Catholic episcopal and Catholic university pass, wink, or ho-hum silent treatment: They seem to pose no grave moral problem for the University or for the Bishop and the team the Bishop plays on (USCCB).

And, yet. In Catholic theology there is no moral doubt that intentional abortion is murder. As Pope John Paul II writes in his Encyclical, *Evangelium Vitae*, *The moral gravity of procured abortion is apparent in all its truth if we recognize we are dealing with murder*. However, in Catholic theology there is equally no moral doubt that the unjust killing of the child *in utero* is no more, nor less, murder than is the unjust killing of a child or any human being *extra-utero*. All are the intrinsically grave evil of murder. The intentional, unjust killing of a human being in the womb in Baltimore, MD, is no more, nor less, murder than the intentional unjust killing of a human being, outside or inside the womb, in Iraq, or El Salvador, or Honduras, or Guatemala, or Nicaragua, or Panama, or Afghanistan, or Grenada, or Vietnam, or Nagasaki. To borrow from Gertrude Stein in order to make the theological point—all intentional unjust homicides are murder, that is: *A*

*murder is a murder is a murder.* Or, to negatively recast Shakespeare: *A murder by any other name reeks to high heaven.* Better still, perhaps, a direct quotation from John Paul II is most appropriate here:

*Nothing and no one can in any way permit the killing of an innocent human being, whether a fetus or an embryo, an infant or an adult, an old person or one suffering from an incurable disease, or a person who is dying. Furthermore, no one is permitted to ask for this act, either for himself or herself or for another person entrusted to his or her care, nor can he or she consent to it, either explicitly or implicitly. Nor can any authority legitimately recommend or permit such an action... We now need more than ever to have the courage to look truth in the eye and to call things by their proper name without yielding to convenient compromises or to the temptation of self-deception. In this regard the reproach of the Prophets is extremely straightforward: "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil."*

To be as clear here, as John Paul II is being clear: His statement is not exclusively about abortion. It is about all unjust intentional *killing of innocent human beings*. So, unless his "nothing" means "nothing except"; unless his "no one" means "no one but"; unless his "nor can any authority legitimately recommend or permit such an action" means "nor can any authority, save for such-and-such an authority, legitimately recommend or permit such an action"—then **all** intentional, unjust killing of human beings is no more, nor less, an intrinsically grave evil than is abortion. *As far as the right to life is concerned, every innocent human being is absolutely equal to all others*—so affirms John Paul II. It is not a numbers game. Murder does not become anything other than murder because it is instantaneous mass murder done with high-tech weaponry rather than one-on-one murder in a dirty, dark alley or in a clean, well-lighted abortion clinic. The intentional, unjust killing of any human being is the intrinsically grave evil of murder, period—and murder is murder whether done alone or with others, whether it be organized or disorganized, romantic or sordid, legal or illegal, whether it be supported or censured by secular and/or religious mass media. To again refer to Rev. Bernard Häring's magisterial work, *Moral Theology for Priests and Laity, Volume 1*, (Imprimatur, January 16, 1960) in order to clarify what has become quite unclear—perhaps by the intentional sowing of confusion and of half-truth—in Catholicism in the United States: *The unjustified attack on the life of one's neighbor is always evil.*

So, what form of unjust killing—that is, murder—of human beings is "not so bad" for Catholics and Christians? What type of unjust killing of human beings deserves the deference of Catholic and Christian silence and toleration? What kind deserves Catholic and Christian public denunciation? And who, engaged in the unjust killing of human beings, deserves to *be given award, honor or a platform by a Catholic institution* and be publicly honored by being invited into the felicitous public presence of a high-visibility Catholic or Christian person or institution? Who should receive Catholic or Christian opprobrium and be intentionally "un-invited" to specifically Catholic or Christian public events? Those who unjustly kill—murder—human beings in Iraq? Those who unjustly kill—murder—human beings in El Salvador? Those who unjustly kill—murder—human beings *in utero*?

Should a Pope attend a public birthday party given for him by someone who, according to the traditional, non-pacifist moral theology of the Catholic Church, *acts in defiance of our (Catholic) fundamental moral principles*, has been and continues to be engaged in mass murder, and who is known throughout the secular world—which has moral standards far less strict than those of Catholic moral theology—as being so engaged?



The fruit does not fall far from the tree.

EMMANUEL CHARLES MCCARTHY

**PART III TO FOLLOW**