



## DIOCESE OF BELLEVILLE

### RESPECT LIFE MINISTRY

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No Room for Violence...A response to a warning...

Dear Friends of Respect Life,

Below is a "Letter to the Editor" that I have submitted to the Belleville News Democrat in response to an article on December 2, 2009 ([Click Here](#)). I am sharing it because with the necessary brevity, and my own shortcomings, relevant thoughts have no doubt been left out, waiting for others to respond. The mere suggestion of violence, whether as a warning or a thinly veiled threat, has no place in the effort to protect and defend the dignity of every human life that is at the core of what it means to Respect Life. Life is a gift, a gift that we can only begin to fully appreciate by recognizing the incredible meaning of being created in the image of God. If those unaware that they have been so created (and thus have inherent dignity that remains no matter how it has been assaulted or buried) are unable to see that image reflected in our words and deeds among ourselves and others, where will they learn it and how can they ever be expected to recognize it in life that is hidden in the womb? Thank you for being a witness to life in all ages and stages!

Violence is not, nor will it ever be, the answer to ending the violence of abortion. The remarks of Randall Terry were in no way representative of the increasing number of people opposed to the passage of morally deficient health care. His tangling of the issue of an intrinsic evil with the broader issue of his prudential judgment of the current direction of the health care as "socialism," and his warnings of "ominous repercussions" of violence, added nothing constructive to the conversation either about abortion or health care. Passionately opposed to morally deficient health care, but having advocated for decades for accessible and affordable health care, especially for the poor and marginalized, the Catholic Church did not seek to use health care as an instrument to further restrict abortion, yet is committed to not allowing health care reform to further erode the already compromised value given human life, as it does in the direction it is currently going. This value of every human life, so ardently defended, extends far beyond the unborn and includes the abortionist in need of conversion, the mother in crisis needing support, the teenager seeking to make his passage through a violent neighborhood, the immigrant in the shadows being exploited, the family trying to grapple with mental illness, and so much more, including a letter to the editor reader wondering how his or her life can have meaning and make a difference, fully aware that in our country there are both faith-based and political avenues, without violence, to address injustice.

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