

# MEDIA RELEASE



**From the Office of John Sullivan**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
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## **Sullivan Calls on Pelosi to Apologize for Misrepresenting Catholic Doctrine**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – Yesterday, Congressman John Sullivan joined several of his Catholic colleagues in sending a letter to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi calling on her to apologize for misrepresenting Catholic Church doctrine regarding abortion. The text of the letter is below.

August 25, 2008  
The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House of Representatives  
H-232, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi,

On the Sunday, August 24<sup>th</sup>, broadcast of NBC's *Meet the Press*, you stated "as an ardent, practicing Catholic, [abortion] is an issue that I have studied for a long time." As fellow Catholics and legislators, we wish you would have made a more honest effort to lay out the authentic position of the Church on this core moral issue before attempting to address it with authority.

Your subsequent remarks mangle the Catholic Church doctrine regarding the inherent sanctity and dignity of human life; therefore, we are compelled to refute your error.

In the interview, Tom Brokaw reminded you that the Church professes the sanctity of human life from conception to natural death. As stated in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: "Since it must be treated from conception as a person, the embryo must be defended in its integrity, cared for, and healed, as far as possible, like any other human being" (2274).

To this, you responded, "I understand. And this is like maybe 50 years or something like that. So again, over the history of the Church, this is an issue of controversy." Unfortunately, your statement demonstrates a lack of understanding of Catholic teaching and belief regarding abortion.

From the Apostles of the first century to Pope John Paul the Great "the Church has affirmed the moral evil of every procured abortion. This teaching has not changed and remains unchangeable. Direct abortion, this is to say, abortion willed either as an end or a means, is gravely contrary to the moral law" (*Catechism* 2271).

Thus, your erroneous claim about the history of the Church's opposition to abortion is false and denigrates our common Faith. For example, during the reign of Pope Innocent XI in 1679, the Church unequivocally stated it is an error for Catholics to believe fetuses do not have a soul; and confirmed the teaching that abortion constitutes homicide.

To reduce the scandal and consternation caused amongst the faithful by your remarks, we necessarily write you to correct the public record and affirm the Church's actual and historical teaching that defends the sanctity of human life. We hope that you will rectify your errant claims and apologize for misrepresenting the Church's doctrine and misleading fellow Catholics.

Respectfully,

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