



# Good News

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*Bringing the Light of Christ to Missouri*

## DELIVER US FROM VIOLENCE



By Mike Hoey

**T**he terrorist attacks in Paris and San Bernardino California demonstrate how violence is an evil contagion that can spread across oceans. No country is immune. Even Americans succumb to this evil and join the Islamic State (ISIS). Terrorist attacks can take place at any time, in any place. Lent is a good time to pray for an end to violence and a new era of peace.

The horrific genocide of the 20th century continues today. The Islamic State beheads Christians and Shia Muslims as it seeks to establish a modern day caliphate. In the Darfur region of Sudan, almost 500,000 people have been killed, and the Republic of Sudan continues to bomb and kill its own Nuba ethnic group.

When a State targets a group of its own people it is genocide, defined by international law as “acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group...” The Catholic Church considers this a mortal sin and one is morally bound to resist orders that command genocide.

According to the Church, the international community also has a moral obligation to try to protect a group when it

is threatened by genocide. This can include disarming the aggressor if all other means of stopping the slaughter prove ineffective. However, military interventions can be tricky business, and at times may further destabilize the political situation and escalate the level of violence.

Tragically, while the international community tries to decide how to respond, genocidal campaigns continue. In 1994, the Rwandan government killed 800,000 of its people in 100 days, primarily targeting members of the Tutsi ethnic group.

Mass killings, however, may not be the first act in the genocidal tragedy. Long before Jews were sent to concentration camps, the German Reich had abridged most of their rights, often with only weak opposition. This was done legally with the full backing of lawyers, judges, and courts of law. In fact, this legal machinery convinced many to follow orders, even if what was ordered was the killing of their fellow human beings.

In addition to genocide, States can partake in other forms of violence, again with the full force of law. Until last year in communist China, forced abortions were a part of its

one child policy. In one 2012 case, the “family planning” people went ahead with the abortion even after the bewildered couple refused to sign the consent form.

A State that does not directly partake in or legally require killings can still allow them to happen. This is the pattern in modern Western societies; individual autonomy is protected to such a degree that in some places assisted suicide is legal, along with abortion for women who do not want to carry their unborn children to term.

Hence, abortion is legal in the U.S. and upwards of a million unborn babies are destroyed each year, including some cruelly dismembered in the second trimester, when an unborn baby can hear and move around and even swallow.

The justifications for violence are legion, but nearly all of them offer some variation of how the end justifies the means. In the 20th century and on into the 21st century, state sanctioned violence has been justified in many ways.

Christians must be beheaded because they are the enemies of Islam and Shia Muslims must be killed because they are heretics.

The Jews must be gassed because they are an inferior race that undermines the purity of the German people.

Ukrainians must be starved to death because they refuse to give up their farms and join new collectives that will create a just and equal society.

The Tutsi tribe must be eliminated because they once cruelly ruled Rwanda and it is only just to take revenge.

Death row inmates must be executed because their crimes were heinous and justice demands retribution.

Civil laws can condone individual violence as in legalized abortion or assisted suicide.

The baby must be aborted because the family cannot afford another child, or because the child will never be normal and healthy.

I should be allowed to end my life because it no longer has real meaning.

Finally, some believe they can take the law into their own hands to wrongfully administer justice. After he killed several people at an abortion clinic in Colorado, Robert Lewis Dear declared, “I am a warrior for the babies.”

In the midst of all this violence, during Lent Catholics follow Jesus on his bloody path to Cavalry. We are with Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, the scourging at the

**BY THE NUMBERS: Genocide in the 20-21st centuries**

**6-10 million**

**1932-1933**

Soviet Union inflicts famine on Ukrainians refusing to join collective farms.

**6 million**

**1938-1945**

Nazi regime implements “Final Solution” to destroy the Jewish population

**2 million**

**1975-1979**

Khmer Rouge leader Pol Pot attempts to create a peasant farming society through starvation, forced labor, and executions.

**100,000**

**1992-1995**

Yugoslavia targets Bosnians for executions of men and mass rapes of women

**800,000**

**1994 in 100 days**

Rwanda targets Tutsi group for elimination.

**200,000-500,000**

**2003-present**

Republic of Sudan targets and kills members of minority groups.

pillar, and when He is crowned with thorns at the foot of the Cross. From that Cross, Jesus looks down on our violent world and prays, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.”

It is not that the Lord believes people should not be held accountable, but conversion of the heart is ultimately what He desires.

In this Year of Mercy, let us find ways to make our world less violent and more compassionate. If the violence cannot be totally stopped, we can be lifesavers by offering women alternatives to abortion, granting safe havens for refugees, and supporting policies that may bring peace to war-torn regions.



*“Let these columns stand.  
Let them stand for a thousand years.”*

## Let Them Stand For Life

By Mike Hoey

Do you know what the dates 1839 and 1986 have in common? Let’s start with the most recent date. In 1986, the Missouri Catholic Conference joined with Missouri Citizens for Life (now Missouri Right to Life) to obtain passage of major pro-life bill HB 1596. Among its provisions, the bill prohibited the use of public funds, facilities or employees for performing or assisting in abortions.

The law was largely upheld several years later by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Webster v. Reproductive Health*. The Court declared, “Nothing in the Constitution requires states to enter or remain in the business of performing abortions.”

Now, let’s backtrack to 1839. That year the Missouri General Assembly established the state’s first public university. Later, a state commission awarded the honor to Boone Country, and the school became the first public university west of the Mississippi. Today it remains the state of Missouri’s most visible institution.

Fast forward to August 2015, when members of the General Assembly learned that the University’s hospital had granted “refer and follow” privileges to abortionist Colleen McNicholas. Using these privileges, McNicholas was administering medical abortions at Columbia Planned Parenthood.

The MCC joined with others in objecting and insisting

that Missouri’s flagship university should not be aiding the abortion industry. The University withdrew the privileges in September. That decision came after the Board of Curators was inundated with emails from concerned citizens.

As this Good News goes to print, the University is out of the abortion business, but that could change; abortion advocates are working behind the scenes to overturn the decision. Meanwhile, racial unrest continues on campus while officials scramble to restore trust in the University.

In troubled times it is good to recall the courage and steadfastness of generations who protected the proud legacy of the University of Missouri. In 1893, Academic Hall stood in ruins after a fire. Only the stone columns remained standing. Some wanted them demolished.

The President of the Board of Curators, Gideon Rothwell, took a different view. “Let these columns stand. Let them stand for a thousand years,” he said. And so they still stand.

Today, the University is at another defining moment. Leaders need to stand up for the protection of all human life, including unborn children. In making this stand for life, the University can preserve its legacy and reclaim its place in the hearts of citizens from all corners of the state of Missouri.

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## MO Senate Debates Death Penalty Repeal

By Rita Linhardt, MCC Senior Staff Associate

After years of silence on the issue, the Missouri Senate recently spent several hours debating whether to repeal the death penalty in Missouri. The debate brought out strong emotions on both sides, while helping shed some light on this complex issue.

Sponsored by Sen. Paul Wieland (R- Emperial), SB 816 would eliminate a death sentence as an option for first degree murder. Anyone who had previously received a death sentence would have their sentence changed to life without parole.

In bringing SB 816 up for discussion, Sen. Wieland said he was moved to sponsor the bill because he was a devout Catholic who felt he needed to be consistent in his pro-life beliefs to protect all human life, even those guilty of murder. Wieland also said that as a fiscal conservative, he was concerned about the cost of the death penalty. He also raised concern about executing an innocent person.

“All it would take is one mistake,” Wieland told the Senators. “ We’re not operating at a zero percent margin of error”.

Sen. Gina Walsh (D-St. Louis) agreed.

“Mistakes are made,” she said. She admitted that this is a very emotional issue. Even though a family friend was murdered, Walsh still opposes the death penalty because she too is guided by her Catholic faith on the issue. “I don’t think I could sit on a jury and give a death sentence,” she said.

In defending the death penalty, Sen. Mike Parson (R-Boliver) noted that after being in law enforcement for over 20 years, he has seen brutal crimes and the devastation it brings to families. “What we are really talking about is killers and there’s a part of it that is premeditated,” he said.

Several senators also expressed torn feelings about the death penalty.

In the end Sen. Wieland laid his bill over without a vote. But the debate, as one Senator noted, was “refreshing”. Unless people on both sides of the issue can begin a conversation, no progress will be made. Senator Wieland was grateful for the Senate discussion and is convinced that the issue is moving in the right direction.