

“They Don’t Know the Meaning of Cruel”

BY Rai Rojas

As director of Hispanic Outreach for the National Right to Life Committee I receive my fair share of media requests during any given year. When the media department at NRLC fills out the request and either faxes, e-mails, or hands it to me, the sheet always has a “topic” line which is used to designate what aspect of the life issues this program wants to focus on. The form also tells me what the format of the show is, if it is radio or television, and how long it will last.

Usually the topic line is filled with a very specific request. They range from talking about the Terri Schindler Schiavo case or a new survey of Hispanics, or discussing a recent election result, legislative outcome, or court decision. Rarely is it just to talk about abortion in general. Last month, I fulfilled one of those rarities—I participated in a show whose topic was “abortion in general.”

It was a broadcast on the Hispanic Communications Network (HCN), on a program called Epicentro (epicenter). The host was a gentleman named Jose Lopez Zamorano and the other person who would share the airwaves with me was Soraya Galeas from the National Organization for Women (NOW)—always a fun bunch.

The show airs out of Washington, D.C., and I went to the studios of Western Michigan University’s School of Broadcasting where they hooked me up to all the appropriate microphones and ear pieces and it was just as if I were there in the DC studio with them.

Unfortunately, there were some technical difficulties in the DC studio and the woman from NOW could not hear me—and not just metaphorically. She literally could not hear me. It took about 40 minutes to fix the problem, but after the young people at my end instructed the folks in DC what to do, it was a go.

Anyone who has done any number of these shows knows that details are hard to pinpoint after the fact, but there are always highlights that you can’t forget. The first question was innocuous enough and I answered in kind. The NOW representative threw out some questionable statistics. I politely interrupted her and asked her to back them up—she couldn’t. The host steered her out of trouble by asking her another fairly vague question and then she said something that set me off.

(An important digression: This interview, as are almost 99% of all the media I do, was in Spanish. It is also very noteworthy that Hispanic television, radio, and print are much less queasy about what they discuss or show. Where English language American television will warn viewers that an upcoming story may show the covered body of a murder victim, Latin media shows the picture close-up and without the benefit of the white sheet over the body.

(This is beneficial to our side of the argument because they are not squeamish at all about allowing descriptive language about what abortion truly is—a bloody mess. Now, back to the show.)

Ms. Galeas, the person representing NOW, finished her quick tirade by saying verbatim: "It is cruel to force a woman to carry an unwanted pregnancy to term." In that nanosecond the synapses in my brain reacted to that comment and the only thing that came to mind was that this woman hasn't a clue as to what cruel is.

No sooner had she stated those words when I said, "Madam, cruel is grabbing a 5-month-old baby by her legs, ripping her out of her mother's womb until just the head remains inside, then while this baby is often-time alive and kicking, she is stabbed in the back of the head and her brains are suctioned out." The host gasped, Ms. NOW was silent, and we immediately went to break.

The rest of the show went as most of them do: indefensible arguments and slogans from the NOW side, a constant emphasis on the humanity of the unborn from me.

We were beginning to wrap it up when she again used the word "cruel" and I think she almost caught herself, but only after she'd said it. She realized what was coming as a result of her word choice—a simple but devastatingly effective reminder of what cruel really is.

Thinking back on our debate I concluded yet again that's the thing—they just don't get it. There is such a disconnect in their brains that they don't realize that tearing a living child to pieces is cruel. They believe their own propaganda that relies on slogans and not the facts.

The National Right to Life Committee is a nonpartisan and ecumenical organization with active outreach to all faiths and none and to minorities. And the one thread that runs through all that we do is that we have the truth on our side. That is why I couldn't get angry, why I could argue against these silly, inane arguments without being caustic.

I wonder though, will this woman ever understand the real meaning of cruel? I pray she will, as Dr. Bernard Nathanson did, as even Norma McCorvey did, and as many thousands more have.

If not, the next time she's on my media request form, I'll be sure and remind her again.