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Kudos to Douthat

by Michael Sean Winters

Distinctly Catholic

Ross Douthat, in yesterday's *Times*, has a soul-searching article about the convoluted ways, all of which are designed to deny the reality of pre-natal life, our culture treats pregnancy and abortion.

It called to mind something that was written at the time *Roe v. Wade* became the law of the land, an article to which I called attention just last month. Writing in *Commonweal*, Daniel Callahan wrote: "I am willing - no, well prepared - to grant her that right [to an abortion] under law," Callahan wrote. "I only ask that the society that grants this right be prepared to look with unblinking eye at just what it is doing, not deceiving itself for one moment about even one aspect of what a granting of that right does...[I predict] in the best 1984 tradition, a reconstruction of history. This is done by creating a highly charged mythology of male repression, or religious persecution, or puritanical fanaticism (i.e., whichever cue serves best at the moment to induce popular frenzy)...and, not incidentally, values are reconstructed by making the value of a potential human life being dependent upon being wanted by its mother."

Douthat's article shines a bright line on an opportunity for the pro-life movement, one that should animate those who come to D.C. later this month to protest *Roe*. In the culture, in the movies and plays and books and television that shapes that culture, the pro-choice groups are unable to delve into the reality of abortion because that reality will repel many people. They must rely on euphemisms, but euphemisms make for bad literature and bad movies and bad television. On the other hand, we in the pro-life community have a story to tell, a horrific story, a gripping story, and to point the way towards a redemptive future. No court decision, no piece of legislation, is going to create a culture where young women learn that abortion is a bad choice. We must teach them, and we can teach them, and the other side can't. For all the talk about "Catholic identity" at our Catholics colleges and universities, here is an area where those colleges can truly witness to their Catholic identity. Give us writers and playwrights and actors and directors and musicians who wish to use their art to proclaim the truth, the beautiful truth, that all human life is sacred. Wouldn't it be nice to see the ranters at the Cardinal Newman Society turn their attention to the cultivation of the culture rather than fighting culture wars with the blunt instruments of

censure and condemnation.

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