

Charlie Gard, Pope Francis and the Pontifical Academy for Life

I was listening last week to Glenn Beck discussing the Charlie Gard situation with Bill O'Reilly. During the conversation, Glenn asked Bill if he had read the "official statement" from the Pope. Neither Bill nor I had read the actual statement. The Pope apparently said this was a "complicated matter" and the wishes of the parents must be heard and respected, **but** that we shouldn't reject the state being involved. The sanctity of all life was never mentioned.

(It's interesting to note that I only recently found out that the Courts in England are involved in Charlie's case because of the U.N.'s "Convention on the Rights of the Child" which inhibits the rights of parents to make decisions on behalf of their children. Fortunately, the United States has not ratified this Convention.)

Although I was raised Catholic, I don't identify as a "Catholic" because I'm a staunch believer in birth control, which the Catholic Church rejects. I do identify as "Christian." That being said, I was still quite disturbed by this ambiguous statement coming from the Pope about Baby Charlie and decided to delve deeper into the matter.

Well, it turns out Glenn Beck was correct but the statement came from the Vatican – not from the Pope.

The following statement to which Glenn Beck referred, came from the "Pontifical Academy for Life,"

"... the wishes of parents must heard and respected, but they too must be helped to understand the unique difficulty of their situation and not be left to face their painful

decisions alone. If the relationship between doctor and patient (or parents as in Charlie's case) is interfered with, everything becomes more difficult and legal action becomes a last resort...."

After I read this, I said to myself, "Are they kidding?" When should the courts ever second-guess the parents regarding the medical decisions about their own baby? (Maybe, and only maybe, if the parents' actions hastened the death of a child but that's another discussion.)

I guess Catholics weren't too thrilled with this statement because the Pope disavowed it and issued his own statement, which finally upheld the Church's stance on the sanctity of life:

"The Pope's message is aligned with his frequent denunciation of what he calls a 'throw-away culture,' a term he uses to describe ways in which those society deems to lack value are discarded, such as unborn children, the disabled and the elderly."

Phew. As liberal as Pope Francis is, I could not believe he would have been so equivocal on the "sanctity of life" as the Academy's statement seemed to be.

What I don't get, however, is this Pontifical Academy for Life. Pope Francis recently made some very strange and confusing new appointments to the Academy including non-Catholics, non-Christians, and an Anglican professor who has supported abortion and has expressed qualified support for euthanasia.

Why would he do such a thing? The Church's position should be quite clear. It is against abortion and against euthanasia. Why the Church has persons on this panel who are not Catholic, support abortion and support euthanasia is beyond me? For me, it's as ludicrous as the U.N. appointing Iran to the Commission on Women's Rights.

It makes absolutely no sense to me to have members in the Academy who do not hold the same steadfast beliefs. Is it just another bureaucracy that sits around and gets nothing done or is it the Church's attempt to bend to political correctness and appear "inclusive" (I hate that word) or have "diversity" (I hate that word even more) in its membership?

Are we to expect a change in the Church's position that life begins at conception and ends at natural death? I doubt it. So, what's the point of having members of this panel who favor abortion or euthanasia or are of different faiths who believe something else?

I don't get it, but if you do, God bless you.