



Making abortion unthinkable

“I am writing to encourage those of you who feel as strongly as I do about protecting women’s right to control their own bodies to take whatever action you may deem appropriate or necessary to respond to this lecture, whatever that may look like to you...”

–E-mail sent out by abortion advocate before my talk at St. Mary’s University in Halifax

Dear friends,

When slavery was legal in the British Empire, it was extremely unpopular. Very few people wanted to acknowledge that the slave trade was even happening. But a friend who researched the trade has suggested there was one thing *more* unpopular than slavery at that time: the abolitionists. He said that British citizens didn’t want to be reminded that, every time they put sugar in their tea or wore cotton, they were benefitting from slave labour.

I couldn’t help think of that fact as I stood in front of about 70 people at St. Mary’s University last month. It was the first time I was to give CCBR’s “Echoes of the Holocaust” presentation, and I already knew it was going to be controversial.



Saint Mary’s University, Halifax, NS

Earlier in the day, I met with the pro-life students who were sponsoring my talk and learned that some people in the community were not happy that I was there. The students told me about an e-mail that

they had received from the local feminist group. In that e-mail, abortion advocates indicated that they would **“take whatever action [they] deem[ed] appropriate or necessary to respond to this lecture.”**

These abortion advocates were responding to the fact that my talk involved comparing aspects of genocides, like the Holocaust, the Cambodian genocide, and slavery with abortion. In their minds, I was saying women who have abortions are like Nazis.

Of course, if that group had actually listened to my talk, they would have heard that what I was comparing were the *societies* that allowed those injustices. In the “Echoes of the Holocaust”, I list four important similarities between societies that committed genocide in the past and a society like ours that has legalized abortion:

1. These societies valued people, not for what they were, but for what they looked like or could do.
2. These societies dehumanized their victims.
3. These societies created a system that allowed for the mass destruction of the target group.
4. These societies killed a massive number of people.

Throughout the presentation, I point out that if the unborn are not human beings, the comparison is *insensitive*. But if the unborn are human beings, then the comparisons are *inevitable*; people have reacted to modern genocides by comparing them to prior atrocities like the Holocaust. Even the title of my talk, “Echoes of the Holocaust,” comes from journalists who covered the Bosnian genocide as they described what the concentration camps looked like there. And really that’s why I was at St. Mary’s University: to discuss what the unborn are.

I began my talk there by thanking everyone who had come, even if they disagreed with me, and invited everyone to participate in the discussion period afterwards. I then managed to get out a couple of sentences of my presentation before I was interrupted. About a dozen protesters, not all of whom were students, burst into the room and started chanting for me to get off the campus. They accused me of hate speech and wouldn’t stop yelling for at least 40 minutes. They were especially loud when I showed graphic pictures of past genocides and graphic pictures of abortion.



I tried to restart the presentation several times only to be interrupted again and again. I tried calling everyone who wanted to hear my talk closer to me, but that only encouraged the protesters to protest right in front of me.

Though campus security was present, they did nothing to stop the protesters. Instead, they waited for the police, who came about half an hour into the presentation. The police gave the protesters several warnings to let the presentation continue. The protesters repeatedly disregarded these warnings or “complied” with one request by simply changing their tactics to disrupt the talk in another manner. When the police saw that

their warnings were having little effect and that the protesters were blocking the projector from showing our abortion video, they gave their final warning, saying anyone who continued to interrupt would be taken away. At this point, Saint Mary’s conflict resolution officer, fearing that the university would look bad if their own students were arrested, kicked, not the protesters, but the *presentation* off campus.

Thanks to experience and to CCBR’s protocol, I stayed calm as the protesters chanted. I also made sure that we videotaped everything and uploaded it to YouTube. Over 9500 people have now seen that video and have debated abortion back and forth. Because of the video, I was interviewed by local media, including the CTV station in Halifax, Calgary media, including the Calgary Herald and AM770 CHQR radio, and even U.S. media, including American Family Radio which broadcasts in most states.

And because of the publicity, more people came to my presentations on the remainder of my tour of the Atlantic provinces—more on that in my next newsletters! Thanks for standing with me.

Sincerely,

Upcoming Schedule:

April: Local talks in Calgary
May 1–2: Alberta Pro-Life Conference

Link of the month: You can view the Saint Mary’s protesters (and other videos) at CCBR’s new YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/user/CanadianCBR

Please make cheques payable to CCBR, write Jose Ruba on the note, and mail them to
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