**SPIRITUAL RENEWAL**

***What our country needs above all***

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*People can be fully aware of the fact that the unborn child is a living human being, and*still *think that abortion is perfectly OK. It is the spiritual side of things – the reality of*sin –*that explains why they think that way.*

It would be naïve to think that if only we showed people the truth about abortion – that it kills a living human being – that they would turn against it. Many would not. Because, sadly, they are overcome by a spiritual blindness.

Think only of the late-term abortionist Leroy Carhart, who recently stunned a BBC reporter by admitting that he is “killing a baby,” and that he has absolutely no problem with that. Indeed, the power of spiritual conversion cannot be overstated. One sees this illustrated powerfully in the lives of some prominent converts to the pro-life cause.

Think, for instance, of former abortionist Dr. Bernard Nathanson. When Nathanson became pro-life he was an atheist. It was only a decade later that he converted to Catholicism. Even as an atheist, he was able to see that abortion was wrong. But it was thanks only to his spiritual awakening that he ultimately came to see the truth: that abortion was merely just one, small part of the Culture of Death. As Nathanson’s spiritual director [put it](http://www.ncregister.com/daily-news/bernard-nathanson-dead-at-84), Nathanson, “was a pro-life prophet. He saw the whole Culture of Death coming and knew that abortion was just the tip of the iceberg.”

This is the great wonder of authentic spiritual conversion – that it re-orients the whole person and completely changes his or her way of thinking. By encountering the generosity of God’s love, we come to understand the true nature of love and the wisdom of God’s commandments. Someone who has an authentic encounter with God doesn’t just see that killing babies is wrong. Such a person also understands how the only way the killing will stop is if couples honour their marriage vows, if we protect children from sexual immorality, if we value the lives of the disabled and elderly, and on and on.

In the absence of faith, the pro-life and family movement is left fighting the Culture of Death piece by piece, skirmish by skirmish. In this way, we can certainly win battles here and there, but can we win the war?

Family, and country and religion: What unites these three things is that they are all transcendent. They are bigger than, more important than, the individual. They call the individual outside of himself and turn his vision upwards.

Without the transcendent, people are left worshipping themselves. And that, in the end is what the Culture of Death feeds upon: pride. So, as we go about our pro-life work, let us never forget that the Gospel of Life is co-extensive with the Gospel itself: the answer to the Culture of Death is nothing and no one other than Jesus Christ.

So, the most important part of our pro-life work is its evangelical side. This need may not always be explicit, but in every place where we proclaim the pro-life and family message, we ought to strive to be the embodiment of Jesus Christ and to help people experience the transformative power of his love. This is the most sure-fire way I know to topple the infernal towers of the Culture of Death.