

Exploring God's Heart Toward Planned Parenthood President Cecile Richards

Lately, I've been thinking about how God sees the most hardened of people. He has a reputation for breaking into their lives and transforming them with His great love.

Lest I forget, the man through whom the Holy Spirit breathed most of the New Testament (Paul) used to give approval to the slaughter of innocent people—before he fell to the ground under the weight of God's power en route to Damascus. In the end, Paul joined up with those he once murderously opposed.

Hardened people still exist today. By now, most anyone who has been paying attention has seen the horrific videos of senior Planned Parenthood employees speaking in cavalier terms about harvesting fetal body parts from abortions to sell to biotech companies.

Caught red-handed, Planned Parenthood President Cecile Richards offered a grimacing apology for the “tone and statements” of one of the officials—without addressing the horrifying content in the videos. To do so would force her to admit wrongdoing; she had to save face, for no words suffice to describe this barbarism.

Then I saw this good reminder over at First Things from James Conley, Roman Catholic bishop of the diocese of Lincoln, Nebraska:

I have never really grasped the degree to which people in the abortion industry are enslaved, corrupted, and abused by the culture of death... Anyone who can casually discuss tearing children to shreds while having lunch and a good cabernet is a victim of the father of lies.

These videos remind me that anyone who traffics in abortion loses a vital and beautiful spark of humanity. Evil coarsens us and deadens us—robs us of the freedom life offers. In perpetrating evil deeds, the men and women who work for Planned Parenthood become hardened against human dignity. They lose their ethical sense.

Yet these men and women were made for eternal life, and for unity with Jesus Christ. Behind every depravity there is a soul, in danger of being lost forever. These discoveries might be the catalyst for our prayers. Only grace is capable of liberating hearts that have been ensnared by powerful evil.

Such discoveries should absolutely serve as catalysts for our prayers. Although I share the revulsion many experience in light of this expose, unfortunately I am seeing far too many expressions of acrimony.

When an article (not going to link to it) by a professing Christian speculates that Cecile Richards “exfoliates with the blood of murdered babies” while chanting Satanic Bible passages every night gets shared over 20,000 times on social media—then we have moved from legitimate outrage at the sight of injustice, to gratuitous contempt for a person.

Despite her career, she still bears the image of God. Hate does not incline us to pray, nor does it capture the heart of the Father—even as He is undoubtedly grieved by this scandal. Our Father is also grieving for his daughter, Cecile. And the Son who perfectly represented Him likened hate to murder (Matt. 5:21).

While I have a difficult time feeling any sympathy for Ms. Richards, it is truly devastating to observe her mechanically reciting canned talking points on television. There she sits: dressed to impress on a national broadcast, armed with Ivy league credentials and deep connections to the influential and powerful in Washington, D.C.—all the way up to the president

of the United States. She lives in the exclusive Upper West Side of Manhattan with her family, and rakes in hundreds of thousands of dollars in annual salary.

All appearances indicate that she has it made in the shade. But nothing could be further from the truth. She is terribly enslaved to a monstrous darkness; she makes her living presiding over an organization that, since its inception, has brutally destroyed many millions of lives.

Our heavenly Father's heart is most assuredly broken for her. In an *Elle* magazine article Richards wrote last October, she said that she herself had an abortion and it was not a difficult decision. Yet she quickly added that when politicians "argue and shout about abortion, they are talking about me."

Try as she might to dismiss her choice as easy, it is clear from her subsequent statement that it remains painful and personal. Our Abba Father not only has every hair on her head numbered, he knows every messy detail of her life story along with the experiences and circumstances that have shaped her worldview—which has become such a severe delusion that she actually thinks she is doing good in her profession.

Abba Father still loves her. He still passionately loves her. That same father of lies about which Bishop Conley wrote has taken captive one of Abba's daughters. The demonic rulers, authorities and spiritual wickedness in high places (Eph. 6:12), not Cecile Richards, are the real enemies.

Yet that father of lies also has one gigantic Achilles' heel. He is utterly powerless against the most powerful force in the universe: love. Love should fuel our prayers, for that is who Abba Father is (1 John 4:8).

So I fervently intercede for the end of the grotesque evils of abortion, including these recently revealed horrors Planned Parenthood has committed. And I also hope and pray

that—whether or not we have any warm, fuzzy feelings for the president of the nation's largest abortion provider—we remember that such were some of us. We did not deserve the mercy and grace God showed us.

While we were yet sinners, a blood even more precious than all of the innocent blood the abortion industry has spilled was shed in the most radical act of love ever known to mankind.

Like the apostle who was once a persecutor, Cecile Richards and the rest of her colleagues on those videotapes are only one encounter with Him away from reversing course and becoming the most ardent defenders of human life the world has ever seen.

Our Father has done this before. Will we have faith and believe He might do it again? It will not happen unless we get our own hearts clean so that we can love and pray from that place.

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