

What If Angry Activists Disrupt Your Church?

I'm not the kind of guy who sees Satan behind every bush. But it doesn't take much discernment to see who's manipulating events in our country these days. This was never more obvious than this past weekend, when outraged pro-abortion protesters set a pro-life ministry's building on fire in Wisconsin, vandalized a pregnancy clinic in Texas and barged into Catholic churches on Mother's Day to disrupt worship services.

The person who threw a Molotov cocktail into the offices of Wisconsin Family Action in Madison, Wisconsin, also scribbled graffiti on the pro-life organization's building. The message said: "If abortions aren't safe, you aren't either." On May 8, a pro-abortion activist who agreed with the arson attempt in Madison tweeted that she hoped pro-lifers would "never know a moment of peace or safety until they rot in the ground."

Why so much hate? Pro-abortion organizations are reacting to the unprecedented leak of a legal opinion from the U.S. Supreme Court, which states that the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* opinion legalizing abortion should be overturned. The ruling isn't official yet, but furious activists hit the streets on May 3, immediately after the leak went public.

Many activists, including groups known as Rise Up 4 Abortion Rights, Pro Choice with Heart, and Strike for Choice, announced plans to disrupt Catholic churches May 8-15 because six of the nine judges on the high court are Catholic. In Los Angeles, a group of pro-choice protesters dressed in red capes – representing characters in the TV show *The Handmaid's Tale* – barged into Our Lady of the Angels Church on Mother's Day and shouted pro-abortion slogans.

At the Basilica of Saint Patrick's Old Cathedral in New York

City, activists danced outside the church while a woman writhed in a bathing suit with multiple plastic dolls attached to her body. She declared: “God killed his kid. Why can’t I kill mine? Help me abort my babies.”

Angry mobs also gathered in front of the homes of Justices Brett Kavanaugh and John Roberts in Washington, D.C., and a group called Shut Down DC said they planned to gather in front of the home of Justice Samuel Alito as well. After those protests began, a pro-abortion agitator named Steve Cox tweeted that if Justice Kavanaugh moved his family to a hotel to find safety, protesters should “empty his house” and burn his property in front of the hotel.

And in an unprecedented move, Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot encouraged more violence when she tweeted on May 9: “To my friends in the LGBTQ+ community – the Supreme Court is coming for us next. This moment has to be a call to arms.”

America has seen violence in years past. But I have never witnessed the level of hostility we see today from people who defend the killing of unborn babies in the name of “a woman’s right to choose.” And I don’t expect activists will calm down over the next several months. How should churches handle the very real threat of violence?

1. Pray like never before for our fractured nation. There are invisible forces behind this conflict. Ephesians 6:12 reminds us: “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but ... against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places” (NASB). We must pray in agreement and bind the murderous spirit behind the wholesale slaughter of the unborn.

2. Don’t allow yourself to be triggered. We can’t allow anger from protesters to spark more anger in us. We must respond in the opposite spirit – showing love to those who hate us and blessing those who curse us.

3. Bolster your church security plan. People don’t have a

legal right to disrupt a private religious meeting, but we must be prepared in case people show up with guns, bombs or gas canisters – or just tirades of profanity. If your church has never had a trained security team in the past, now is the time to organize one.

4. Ask local police to help you on Sundays. At my church in Georgia, there is always a police officer present to manage traffic and to provide additional safety. Many police officers are more than willing to help protect worshippers. Reach out to your local precinct for assistance.

5. Make sure your congregation is fully pro-life, not just anti-abortion. Pro-abortion activists often accuse Christians of hypocrisy because we denounce abortion yet we don't strongly support adoption, foster care or financial aid to poor women who struggle because of unwanted pregnancies. Let's own up to that criticism.

We, of all people, should be modeling the love of Jesus by caring for the unwanted, feeding the hungry, defending the abused, fighting human trafficking and restoring dignity to all broken lives. Being pro-life requires us to engage in compassionate outreach to our communities after babies are born, not just while they are in the womb. {eoa}

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