



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on December 12, 2013

U.S. Catholic Bishop Notes Mandela's Deadly Dedication to Abortion

While the world lauded the memory of South Africa's late president Nelson Mandela, at least one Catholic bishop was pointing out the controversial African leader's embrace and promotion of abortion in his country and among his people.

Rhode Island Bishop Thomas Tobin issued a [statement](#) December 5 echoing the [unwarranted](#) pro-Mandela chorus that there is "much to admire in Mandela's long life and public service, particularly his personal courage and his stalwart defense of human rights." But Tobin tempered his praise by pointing out that a big part of Mandela's legacy "is not at all praiseworthy, namely his shameful promotion of abortion in South Africa." The bishop recalled that in 1996 President Mandela "promoted and signed into law the 'Choice on Termination of Pregnancy Bill' that, according to the *New York Times*, 'replaced one of the world's toughest abortion laws with one of the most liberal.'"



Tobin's criticism of Mandela's abortion stance was in sharp contrast to the words of Pope Francis, who, like most other world leaders, offered fawning praise for Mandela. The Catholic website [AmericaMagazine.org](#) noted that in a message to South Africa President Jacob Zuma, "Pope Francis said he offered a prayer to assure that Mandela's efforts to forge a new nation based on nonviolence, reconciliation and truth after the apartheid era 'will inspire generations of South Africans to put justice and the common good at the forefront of their political aspirations.'"

In their own [statement](#) on Mandela's death, South Africa's Catholic bishops may have hinted at the darker parts of their late president's legacy when they noted that "as with all people he made mistakes and had shortcomings — we all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (cf. Romans 3:23). Thus, we commend him to the Lord and pray that he will rest in peace."

John Smeaton of the British pro-life group [Society for the Protection of Unborn Children](#) (SPUC) warned that "it is absolutely vital that Catholic leaders do not allow themselves to become respecters of persons, swept away by personality cults. Catholic leaders have a duty to stand up to public figures with anti-life and anti-family records, however praiseworthy their record may be on other issues. The sanctity of human life and the dignity of the family are the foundation and guarantee of all other human rights."



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Smeaton noted that in addition to signing the pro-abortion Choice on Termination of Pregnancy Bill, in 1996 President Mandela affixed his signature to South Africa's re-worked constitution, which "made the legalization of abortion on demand a mere formality. Mr Mandela's African National Congress (ANC) has a strong ideological commitment to abortion, with the ANC Women's League strongly behind the legalization of abortion on demand."

Smeaton added that the ANC "has for decades been in a close political and electoral alliance with the South African Communist Party (SACP) which also has a strong ideological commitment to abortion."

While the majority of America's black leaders were predictably effusive in their praise for Mandela, Dr. Day Gardner, president of the [National Black Pro-Life Union](#), told [LifeSiteNews.com](#) that "it is really very sad that Nelson Mandela was blind to the suffering of the smallest of his own people. He had such a triumphant life fighting for civil rights, yet he failed to see unborn children as significant."

Similarly, black pro-life leader Ryan Bomberger told LifeSiteNews that he has often witnessed "how people move from being oppressed to becoming the oppressor. How can you condemn the evil of apartheid and turn around and deem another group to be less than human?" LifeSite noted that Bomberger "has targeted African American civil rights leaders, and other liberal black leaders with the [stark message](#) that they should 'Wake up! Your future is dying.' Like Mandela, many of these black leaders 'partner with the most racist, eugenicist, killing organizations in the world,' he said."



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