

HON. RON PAUL OF TEXAS BEFORE THE US HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES April 6, 2005

Honoring Pope John Paul II- A Consistent Pro-life Figure Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join my colleagues in paying tribute to the life and legacy of Pope John Paul II. Pope John Paul II was one of the great religious leaders of modern times, and an eloquent champion of human freedom and dignity. Unlike all-too-many misguided religious leaders, the Pope understood that liberty, both personal and economic, is a necessary condition for the flourishing of human virtue.

The Pope's commitment to human dignity, grounded in the teachings of Christ, led him to become one of the most eloquent spokesmen for the consistent ethic of life, exemplified by his struggles against abortion, war, euthanasia, and the death penalty.

Unfortunately, few in American politics today adhere to the consistent ethic of life, thus we see some who cheered the Pope's stand against the war and the death penalty while downplaying or even openly defying his teachings against abortion and euthanasia.

Others who cheered the Pope's opposition to abortion and euthanasia were puzzled or hostile to his opposition to war. Many of these "pro-life supporters of war" tried to avoid facing the inherent contradictions in their position by distorting the Just War doctrine, which the Pope properly interpreted as denying sanction to the Iraq war. One prominent conservative commentator even suggested that the pope was the "enemy" of the United States.

In conclusion, I am pleased to pay tribute to Pope John Paul II. I would encourage those who wish to honor his memory to reflect on his teachings regarding war and the sanctity of life, and consider the inconsistencies in claiming to be pro-life but supporting the senseless killing of innocent people that inevitably accompanies militarism, or in claiming to be pro-peace and pro-compassion but supporting the legal killing of the unborn.