

A few years ago, there were some items that were rather successfully marketed bearing the letters “WWJD.” They stood for “What Would Jesus Do?” Well, if He were here today, there is one thing I know Jesus would not do: He would not be a politician. Jesus’ main problem would be his inability to “flip flop.” You see, politicians today change their message to please the crowd they are addressing. Jesus was always consistent in his message.

I have a friend, let’s call him Bubba, and Bubba had had it up to here with W. He could not wait Bush to leave office. Now, Bubba knew that Obama was a “pro choice” candidate, but given Bubba’s position on the Just War Theory and torture and so many other issues, he still thought supporting Obama was the right thing to do. So he did.

It was not until after Obama won that Bubba discovered what is being called the Freedom Of Choice Act, or FOCA. FOCA is a federal law, proposed by Obama, not even before Congress yet, which would prevent states from passing state laws which in any way inhibit a woman’s “right” to an abortion. Now, Bubba and I both know a woman who had an abortion. Her decision, made with her husband, was a painful, tearful one which came after much deliberation and much reflection. The tears and pain continued, and this woman and her husband reached reconciliation through Project Rachel. I believe this woman and her husband are still in the favor of God. But FOCA would do nothing to either inhibit or to help this woman. What FOCA would do is make it impossible for states to pass laws which require parental notification of minors receiving an abortion. It would prevent states from enacting state laws which prohibit late term abortions or partial birth abortions.

Bubba felt torn. He wanted to faithfully support his president, but he could not abide by FOCA. Finally, after much prayer and deliberation, Bubba decided to oppose FOCA. He reasoned that supporting his president did not include blindly following everything the man proposes. He decided he could support Obama, but that there was room for dissent. And you know what? The bishops on the United States Council of Catholic Bishops agree with Bubba.

One of the things we hear in today’s gospel in the consistency of Jesus’ teachings. Jesus always taught about the love of God, the healing power of God. In today’s gospel, when Jesus drives out the unclean spirit, He heals the man.

In the narthex of the church, there are flyers with information about the Freedom Of Choice Act, some post cards, and some mailing labels for our senators. Please, take a flyer and read it. If you do not agree with what it says or what I am saying, feel free to throw it away. That won’t hurt my feelings a bit. But if you read it and you agree that the passage of FOCA would be a terrible thing, and sit on your hands and do nothing, that would also be a terrible thing.