

Knights of Saint Columba

Accrington Council 188

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Source Christian Institute

Scotland's Lord Advocate has claimed silent prayer outside abortion clinics may be 'psychologically damaging' to women, it has emerged.

Dorothy Bain KC made the astonishing remarks, likening prayer vigils outside clinics to abusive behaviour, during an ongoing case heard by the UK Supreme Court in July.

The case centres on whether criminalising pro-life supporters who peacefully protest outside clinics in Northern Ireland is "proportionate interference" or Stormont overreach.

'Alarming'

Bain, who had granted leave to intervene in the Court proceedings, questioned whether any distinction should be made between silent protest and 'overt violent conduct' in any ban.

She said "it may very well be" that "silent prayer, almost standing in judgement, is far more damaging to the young woman than hurling names and abuse at her".

Peter Kearney, spokesman for the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland, called Bain's suggestion "absurd and alarming".

He called on her to "withdraw entirely the preposterous claim that a woman about to have her child aborted could be 'psychologically damaged' by seeing someone engaged in silent prayer beforehand".

Scotland

Earlier this year, Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon backed proposals to censor free speech around abortion clinics, despite acknowledging that such a law in Scotland could be subject to legal challenge.

Sturgeon said "we live in a democracy and people are free to have different views on abortion", but added that women should not be able to be informed of these views near abortion clinics.

City Councils in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen are now seeking to implement test bans on people handing out pro-life literature, offering prayer, and speaking to women about abortion near hospitals and clinics.

Bernard Holden MBE JP

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