

# IRISH AMERICA

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When I read the story of Margaret Higgins Sanger, ([Wonder Woman, August/September](#)) and her pioneering efforts in the early 20th century to make contraception legal and available to all women, I was reminded of my mother's views on this topic. Mary Carmelita Donohoe Lyons, mother of seven children, a granddaughter of Irish immigrants from Co West Meath, would climb over snow banks to get to daily mass at her parish church up until two weeks before she died at age 93 in Yankton, South Dakota. Mother visited our home in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1984 shortly after Bernard Law had been installed as Archbishop of Boston. In his inaugural address, Law decried pro-choice women as "the greatest evil of our time."

I asked my mother what she thought about the archbishop's charge against women. She snapped her fingers and instantly replied: "Well, they can't have it both ways. You can't deny a woman the right to decide whether or not to conceive and then expect her to live with the consequences." And then, my mother, who not only knew her mind well, but could speak it well added: "I think it's time for those Bishops to get off their high horses." That was very strong language from a devout Catholic mother. I told her that I thought she was a better theologian than any bishop.

If my good mother were alive today, I am quite certain she would repeat the same charge to the Bishops.

Thanks for presenting the story of the wonder woman at the beginning of the 20th century and for reminding me of another wonder woman, toward the end of that century, my mother.

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