

ABORTION IS WILLFUL MURDER!

by

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The Sixth Commandment: Thou Shalt Not Kill: Q: What is the Orthodox position on abortion? A: The Sixth Commandment prohibits the taking of *life* (emphasis supplied). This commandment, therefore, applies equally to the taking of one's own life (suicide), the taking of another's life (murder) and the taking of the life of the unborn (abortion).¹

The One Holy Catholic & Apostolic Church has never had a doubt about what abortion is. It is murder, not only just murder, but *willful* murder:

THE 85 CANONS OF THE HOLY AND RENOWNED APOSTLES

Concord

Among *willful* (emphasis supplied) murders are those committed by women who give herbs to pregnant women in order to kill the embryos; and *likewise* (emphasis supplied) those who accept such herbs as is decreed by the Sixth Council in its c. XVI and by the Council of Ancyra in its c. XXI and by St. Basil according to his cc. II and VIII.²

So both the abortionist and abortionist 'helper,' 'facilitator,' are guilty of willful murder in the eyes of the Church. A woman has no "right" to kill the human life within her. All life is created by God. He gives life to us for preservation and nurturing:

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have *everlasting* (emphasis supplied) life. (St. John 3:16)

Killing another person, even whilst in the womb, is a crime against that person and the Holy Spirit!

In *The Didache (The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles)*, the Apostles state

2. A further commandment of the Teaching: *Do not murder; do not commit adultery...* do not kill a fetus *by abortion* (emphasis supplied) or commit infanticide.³

The Didache is very authoritative and probably written before the end of the first century.⁴

In 258 A.D. at The Third Regional Council in Carthage, the assembled bishops passed the following canon regarding this matter:

Canon XXI

Regarding women who become prostitutes and kill their babies, and who make it their business to concoct abortives, the former rule barred them for life from communion, and they are left without recourse. But, having found a more philanthropic alternative, we have fixed the penalty at ten years, in accordance with the fixed degrees.⁵

In St. Basil the Great's Canons, he puts it this way:

A woman who aborts *deliberately* (emphasis supplied) is liable to trial as a murderess. This is not a precise assertion of some figurative and inexpressible conception that passes current among us. For here there is involved the question of providing for the infants to be born, but also for the woman who has plotted against her own self. For in most cases the women die in the course of such operations. But besides this there is to be noted the fact that the destruction of the embryo constitutes *another* (emphasis supplied) murder.... It behooves us, however, not to extend their confessions to the extreme limit of death, but to admit them at the end of the moderate period of ten years, without specifying a definite time, but adjusting the cure to the manner of *penitence* (emphasis supplied).⁶

The Sixth Ecumenical Council's Canon XCI reads:

As for women who furnish drugs for the purpose of procuring abortion, and those who take foetus-killing poisons, they are made subject to the penalty prescribed for murderers.⁷

There is no doubt about the Church's position. Abortion is pure and simple willful murder in God's eyes. Consider the wonderful miraculous communication going on between fetuses in wombs by reading the Gospel of St. Luke in relation to the yet unborn St. John the Baptist's leaping in his mother Elizabeth's womb when the Saviour approaches within the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary the Theotokos:

And Mary arose in those days, and went into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elizabeth.

And it came to pass, that, when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost:

And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.

And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

*For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears,
the babe leaped in my womb for joy.*

*And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of
those things which were told her from the Lord. (St. Luke 1: 39-45)*

Blessed Theophylact in his *Explanation of the Holy Gospel According to Luke* relays the Church's position that when Mary saluted Elizabeth,

The voice of the Virgin is here the voice of God Who is taking on flesh within her. This is why the voice of salutation also gladdens the Forerunner in the womb, and causes him to prophesy. The words which Elizabeth speaks prophetically to Mary are *not* (emphasis supplied) her own words, but are the words of the babe within her who speaks through the mouth of Elizabeth, just as the Son of God in the womb speaks through the mouth of Mary. For the babe leaped within the womb, and then Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. If the babe had not leaped, then Elizabeth would not have prophesied. In the same way it is said that prophets first undergo ecstasy and divine rapture, and then begin to prophesy, so too John first leaped, moved by this same excitation, and then prophesied through the mouth of his mother. What did he prophesy? *Blessed art thou among women... and blessed is the fruit of thy womb...*⁸

How can any spiritual person deny that there is a separate person within their respective wombs; one, the greatest of the prophets; the other, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ? Mary's voice is God's "Who is taking on flesh within her"; Elizabeth's is actually John the Forerunner prophesying through her. Had Elizabeth killed John the Baptist whilst he was in her womb, she would have committed willful murder! Naturally, she would never have dreamt of such a hideous thing. The child within her was precious to her and to God as are all such children. They are not just "embryos" to be callously dealt with according to our selfish aims. All those with child are precious in God's sight, woman and child.

Children have always been precious to Christians. The woman should spiritually prepare herself for the birth of her son or daughter, indeed, the offspring of her husband and herself. The pregnant mother is a sight held in the highest esteem by the Lord. There is no way that Christ would countenance the slaughter of even one child, much less millions, as a matter of secular convenience for selfish people who want to opt for an 'easy way out' of a 'situation'. What about the child? What about its right to live? I am not talking about legal rights. I am speaking about its spiritual rights, its right to come into the world through God's grace and its opportunity to take up the Cross and follow Him toward the goal of salvation through repentance and good works from faith in Him..

If you have aborted a child, repent now. Come to the Lord praying ceaselessly and ask forgiveness for your sin of abortion. If you are perhaps even contemplating taking this sinful secular option (for it is absolutely spiritually clear that the Fathers of the true Orthodox Church are one in confirming that it is not only a sin, but a terrible one, meriting double spiritual penance, and that women committing it are guilty of *willful* murder), drop the idea now! It is not too late. Then go down on your knees and ask forgiveness of the Father, which He will give to you. Then go forward in the world and face your responsibilities as a true Orthodox Christian with Christ as your shield against evil.

Remember the joy of motherhood! As Father Demetrios Serfes so tenderly puts it:

“Every woman who bears a child always exults in the joy of the birth, as well as in the joy of having a living mind, heart and soul within their womb.... Let us pray, pray, and pray again for the newly-born precious children, and those *waiting to be born* (emphasis supplied)!⁹

Do not for a second doubt that what is in your womb is holy. You have a clear spiritual duty. Now, do it Protect that baby with your life!

+ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

¹ Fr. Victor Potapov, *The Orthodox View On Abortion*, at <http://www.stmichaelsgeneva.org/MoralTeachings-Abortion.htm>.

² *The Rudder (Pedalion)*, The 85 Canons, Concord, p. 115.

³ *Ancient Christian Writers, The Didache*, Paulist Press, New York, p. 16.

⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

⁵ *The Rudder (Pedalion), op. cit.*, p. 501.

⁶ *ibid.*, p. 789.

⁷ *id.*, p. 395.

⁸ *The Explanation by Blessed Theophylact Archbishop of Ochrid and Bulgaria of The Holy Gospel According to St. Luke*, Volume III in the series (tr. from the original Greek by Fr. Christopher Stade), Chrysostom Press, House Springs, MO, 1997, p. 19.

⁹ Father Demetrios Serfes' Homily, *The Massacre Of 14,000 Holy Innocent Infants In Bethlehem And Its Borders*, December 18, 2000, at <http://www.serfes.org/orthodox/themassacre.htm>.