

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH TEACHING ON ABORTION

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: SCIENCE AND THE BIBLE AGREE:

Science has proven that life and personhood begin at conception. As stated in the Knights of Columbus publication, "Columbia" (January 2019 issue): "Every human being has a unique DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid). **At intercourse, with the fertilization of an egg, a copy of the father's DNA combines with a copy of the mother's DNA to instantaneously produce a new person with his or her unique DNA, never to be modified. This is the moment of "conception", the beginning of life in a new human being, complete with everything needed to develop and grow until he or she is ready to leave the womb.**"



"The babe leaped in her womb" – Luke 1:41

The New Testament records that the good doctor Saint Luke knew that a pregnant woman is actually **"with child"** from the very beginning of her pregnancy. In his account of the Visitation (Luke 1:39-44), Saint Luke records Saint Elizabeth's acknowledgment that the baby Jesus was present in Mary's womb just a few days after conception, referring to Mary as already being *"the mother of my Lord"*. Saint Elizabeth then tells Mary, *"the babe in my womb leaped for joy"*, proof that John was a person (not a *"blob of cells"*) and that John was acutely aware that baby Jesus was there in Mary's womb. In brief, this meeting involved four people.

In the Old Testament, we read, *"you do not know how the spirit comes to the bones of a woman with child"* (Ecclesiastes 11:5), and David sings that God *"knit me together in my mother's womb"* (Psalm 139:13).

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH TEACHING ALSO AGREES:

The Catechism of the Catholic Church ("CCC") states:

- I. *"Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception. From the first moment of its existence, a human being must be recognized as having the rights of a person, among which is the inviolable right of every innocent being to life."* (CCC No. 2270)
- II. *"Since the first century the Church has affirmed the moral evil of every procured abortion. This teaching has not changed and remains unchangeable. Direct abortion, that is to say, abortion willed either as an end or a means, is gravely contrary to the moral law."* (CCC No. 2271)

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The Catechism of the Catholic Church contains dire warnings for legislators and government leaders who claim to be Catholic but are pro-abortion, which the Church identifies as “scandal”, misleading uninformed Catholics. Scandal is addressed in CCC No.’s 2284 to 2287. CCC No. 2284 states that scandal is “*an attitude or behavior which leads another to do evil*” and is “*a grave offense when by deed or omission it deliberately leads others to sin*”. This applies to government leaders who state that they are “*devout Catholics*” but are pro-abortion, thereby leading uninformed Catholics to sin. For further information on Catholic Church teaching on abortion, refer to CCC No.’s 2270 to 2275, No. 2319, and No.’s 2322 to 2324.

The **U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops** states the following on its website:¹

- I. “Abortion is the direct and intentional killing of a child in the womb.”
- II. “Abortion is never medically necessary. It does not treat or solve any pregnancy-related complication.”
- III. “Funding the destruction of innocent unborn human lives, and forcing people to kill in violation of their consciences, are grave abuses of human rights.”

Pope Francis has stated the following:

- i. “*Abortion is murder.*”
- ii. “*There is a human life there and it is not licit to eliminate a human life to resolve a problem.*”
- iii. “*Every child who, rather than being born, is condemned unjustly to being aborted, bears the face of Jesus Christ, bears the face of the Lord...*”

WHAT ACTION SHOULD CATHOLICS TAKE TO FAITHFULLY APPLY CHURCH TEACHING?

Prior to elections, learn which candidates are Pro-Life and which are Pro-Abortion and avoid voting for Pro-Abortion candidates. Whereas “*Knowingly voting for someone who is pro-abortion*” is identified as a mortal sin in the reconciliation guide, “*Examination of Conscience*”,² if there are only two candidates and one allows abortions until birth while the other prohibits abortions after 6 weeks after conception, voting for the latter is the lesser of the two evils, saving many babies from death.

Failing to vote is not an option: The Catechism of the Catholic Church states (No. 2240) that it is “*morally obligatory to pay taxes, exercise the right to vote, and to defend one’s country*”.



“*As you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me.*” – Matthew 25:45

Have you had an abortion? Our loving and merciful God forgives mothers (and fathers) whose babies were aborted when they later learn the facts outlined above and repent. There are wonderful ministries helping these mothers, such as www.RachelsVineyard.org, with healing retreats held at 375 locations. Here is one woman’s testimony about her Rachel’s Vineyard retreat: “*This retreat was completely filled with God’s love. It’s a place where I was understood and there was no judgment. I’ve never felt so loved and accepted as I did on this retreat. It’s a place where healing occurs, where God moves, and freedom happens.*” Ask your pastor about Rachel’s Vineyard and other wonderful, caring ministries and counselors helping women who have had abortions.

¹ Respect for Unborn Human Life: The Church’s Constant Teaching, Fact sheet by the USCCB Committee on Pro-Life Activities

² Author: Father Robert Altier, with the Imprimatur of Harry J. Flynn, D.D., Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis