

THE
ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS
FOR
LIFE

ProLife Handbook

Volume 1:



The Basics

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INTRODUCTION

The Orthodox Church and Abortion:

In its moral teachings, the Orthodox Church has had a long history of outspoken condemnation of abortion which dates back to Apostolic times. In fact the humanity of the unborn child and its possession of a soul from the moment of conception has been almost universally understood in the Eastern Church from the earliest times and is firmly grounded in Scripture.

The oldest Christian document of authority that condemns abortion is the “Didache” or “The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles”, a document of the primitive Church dating back to at least the late First Century. Other similar condemnations of the practice are found in Canon 63 of the Council of Elvira (306AD); Cannon 21 of the Council of Ankara (314AD); but it is in Canon 91 of the Quinsext Ecumenical Council (Trullo, 692AD) that the Church’s teaching on abortion took its final expression and was formally codified in the document The Photian Collection in 883AD, which remains unaltered to this day.

As clearly delineated in the canons, the Orthodox Church considers abortion as premeditated murder, and considers the abortionist, the one who procures the abortion, and the woman who terminates her pregnancy as murderers. Penances of excommunication for the penitent of up to ten years are prescribed, which is the same as that for a repentant common murderer. In practice, such penances are virtually non-existent today, with the emphasis placed on repentance, reconciliation, and the reintegration of the individual into the Church community. The only time that termination of a pregnancy has been tacitly condoned is where the life of the mother is at stake as in an ectopic pregnancy or a hysterectomy for a cancerous uterus. These are cases where the surgical procedure to save the life of the mother tragically results in the death of the unborn child; there is really no choice as both mother and the child will die unless medical intervention takes place.

The position of the Orthodox Church on abortion has not changed one iota since its foundation with Christ and the Apostles. For example at the Twenty Third Clergy-Lay Congress of the Greek Archdiocese of North and South America held in Philadelphia in 1976, the following statements on abortion were issued: “The Orthodox Church has a definite, formal, and intended attitude toward abortion. It condemns all procedures purporting to abort the embryo or fetus, whether by surgical or medical means. The Orthodox Church brand abortion as murder, that is the premeditated termination of life of the human being...Decisions of the Supreme Court and State Legislatures by which abortion, with or without restrictions, is allowed should be viewed by practicing Christians as an affront to their beliefs in the sanctity of life”.

Other statements are in the same vein: “The fact that this interruption (abortion) takes place at an initial stage in the human life process, makes of course, a psychological difference, but does not change the nature of the act of abortion being killing, and as such a very grave sin, because killing is evil...The hundreds of

thousands of legal abortion in New York hospitals are a case of mass killing.”- [(1973)Fr John Meyendorff, Dean St. Vladimir’s Orthodox Theological Seminary and Professor of Patristics and Church History], “...human life begins at the moment of conception and all who hold life sacred and worthy of preservation whenever possible are obliged at all costs to defend the lives of the unborn children regardless of the stage of their embryonic development” [May 1973, seminar at St. Vladimir’s Orthodox Seminary on Orthodox Approach to Contemporary Medical Ethics]. Metropolitan Ireny at the All American council of the Orthodox Church in America stated in 1973: “The very moral foundations of our society are being subjected to doubt, and there is no open objection...the whole meaning and context of life is being reduced to the seeking of material goals, external successes, and the gratification of the senses...As a horrible symbol of this moral decay I cite the legalization of abortion, this frightening transgression of the most sacred of all Divine commandments.”

The Orthodox Church and Euthanasia:

In its moral teachings, the Orthodox Church condemns euthanasia, either “passive” or “active.” The Church remains a witness to historical Christianity’s understanding of the sacredness of human life. This is reflected by the following resolutions adopted by the Sixth All-American council of the Orthodox Church in America (November 10-14, 1980): “...that human life in all its forms is sacred, and every means must be used for its preservation, protection and defense: political, economic, legal, moral, and religious...” and “...that while, in some cases, artificial prolongation of a person’s biological life may be inconsistent with the proper understanding of human life, it is to be clearly distinguished from euthanasia with horror as any other form of deliberate murder.”

The Orthodox Church considers such basic needs as nutrition and hydration as “ordinary care” and not “medical care.” The withholding of such basic bodily needs which would result in the death of an individual is considered to be a form of euthanasia.

Abortion: An Orthodox Christian Perspective on the Sanctity of Human Life

Rev. Deacon John Protopapas, Executive Director, Orthodox Christians for Life

Overview

The Orthodox Church regards abortion as premeditated murder. As such, She strongly opposes it because God demands the protection of all innocent human life, including that of the unborn child. The humanity (personhood) of that child exists from conception, a scientific fact that has always been recognized and unquestioned in Orthodox theology from the very beginning. Indeed, conception and not birth is the moment of the union of soul and body.

The Early Church - of which the Orthodox Church is a living witness - expressed a disgust and horror of abortion at any stage of pregnancy; it always regarded it as abhorrent and an abomination before God because it is the killing of a human being. The present-day Orthodox Church's teaching on abortion can be directly traced to the earliest written Christian document, the Didache (late 1st Century), constantly reiterated through the centuries in Patristic writings and canon law, and finally compiled in the Photian Collection which was adopted as the official ecclesiastical law book of the Church in 883 A.D. and is still in effect today.

The canons of the Orthodox Church consider abortion as premeditated murder and all those who participate in the procedure - that is, those who perform, promote, prescribe, advocate, support and undergo abortion - as murderers. For the penitent, excommunication of periods up to ten years are still prescribed - the same as for any repentant murderer.

The Source of Christian Teaching

The teaching of the Orthodox Church on abortion is not arbitrary or the result of a monastic "anti-feminine attitude." The preciousness of pre-natal human life can be traced throughout both the Old and New Testaments and Jewish Talmudic tradition. It is even expressed in our modern worship services on the feast days. The principle theme in the Church's understanding of the sanctity of human life is the fact that we are made in the image and likeness of God as illustrated in the Genesis account - "**. . . then the Lord formed man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the *breath of life* (*ruah*), and became a living being. . .**" [Gen 2:7(RSV)]. The **breath of life (*ruah*)** is a special gift that God gave to Adam directly and is **not** given to the animals (Gen. 1:24-30). Very clearly, man is not just a superior animal, but a very special creation of God.

Throughout the Old Testament man is revealed not only as a special creature, but as coming into being for a purpose:

Jeremiah 1:5 the prophet was set aside: "**Before I was formed in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you and appointed you to be a prophet to the nations.**"

The messianic passage of Isaiah (49:1,5ff) which prefigures Christ: "**The Lord called Me from the womb, from the body of my mother He named Me by**

name . . . and now the Lord says who formed Me from the womb to be His servant. . .”

In Psalm 139:13,16, the Psalmist details an intimate relationship between God and man: **“For thou didst form my inward parts, thou didst knit me together in my mothers womb...Thy eyes behold my unformed substance; in thy book were written every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them. . .”** A similar theme can also be seen in Job 10:8, 9, and 11.

Reflection:

Each human being is unique creation of God. Each one of us has never been before and will never be again - throughout all eternity each human being who is, has, and will be conceived is unique.

The basic ethical/moral principle on the sanctity of human life which forbids the taking of innocent human life appears in the commandment of Exodus 20:13 which is usually translated, **“Thou shall not kill.”** However, the Hebrew word for here is **“ratasch”** which means an intentional and unjustified killing of a human being; the words for accidental deaths and killing in self defense are **“katal’** and **“harag.”** Thus, the commandment should be more correctly translated as, **“Thou shall not murder.”**

Abortion was common in many cultures of antiquity but not with the Jews. Though there is no specific condemnation of abortion in the Old Testament, biblical researchers have found no reference to non-therapeutic abortion in any of the texts through 500 AD. In Jewish tradition, deliberate abortion - like the pagan practices of exposure and human sacrifice - was unthinkable. In fact, when the Jews did revert to these pagan practices - as in the time of Jeremiah - they were severely punished by an angry God.

The first direct reference to the death of an unborn child is in Exodus 21:22-**“When men strive together, and hurt a woman with child so that there is a miscarriage, and yet no harm follows, the one who hurt her shall be fined, according as a woman’s husband shall lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine.”** The two theological “schools” in ancient Judaism were the majority Alexandrian - which required punishment for damage to the fetus depending upon its state of development - and the Palestinian - which only required punishment for any harm to the mother. Both schools addressed the personhood of the unborn from a legal rather than a moral aspect and their discussions centered on either accidental or therapeutic (necessary) abortions. No moral implications can be drawn from these legal debates, but it is important to note that both condemned deliberate abortion as disrespect for life and the shedding of innocent blood. The real distinction between the two concerned the severity of the penalty for an accidental or therapeutic abortion

The fact that human life is a precious in the sight of God is illustrated in Genesis 9:5-6: **“For your lifeblood I will surely require a reckoning; of every beast**

I will require it and of man; of every man's brother I will require the life of man. Whoever sheds the blood of man by man shall his blood be shed; for God made man in his own image." Even if an animal killed a man, it was put to death. However, this is a profoundly interesting passage for another reason: the second sentence is rendered by many Orthodox Jewish rabbis as: **Whoever sheds the blood of *man within man* shall his blood be shed; for God made man in his own image.**" The phrase "**man within man**" is understood to refer to the unborn child. Consider this passage in context with the rest of the verse: **Whoever sheds the blood of "man within man" (man by man) shall his blood be shed; for God made man in his own image. And you be fruitful and multiply, bring forth abundantly on the earth and multiply in it.**" Taken in its totality, it is easy to discern why modern Orthodox Jews prohibit abortion with very few exceptions. The Jewish abhorrence of the shedding of innocent blood and their respect for human life - including that of the unborn - was the foundation for the Christian doctrine on abortion.

Another dimension of the reverence for human life can be seen as St. Paul declares that the body is the dwelling place of God, likening it to a temple: **"Do you know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If any one destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and that temple you are."** [1 Cor 3:16-17 (RSV)]; **". . .for we are the temple of the living God; as God said, 'I will live in them, and move among them, and I will be their God. . .'"** [2 Cor. 6:16, RSV] **"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body."** [1 Cor. 6:19-20, RSV]

Within Man's being is a place of residence for God's *Spirit*, something again unique in Creation. Thus Man exists at the intersection of the spiritual and physical worlds - between heaven and earth - and, as a creation of God, is worthy (*axios*) to worship, adore, and be in communion with Him. Man is much, much more than merely a rational animal. He a worshipping creature - "*Homo Adorans*," as Fr. Alexander Schmemmann has described him in "*For the Life of the World*." Man, then, is a unity of the material and the spiritual. Scripturally, the *whole man* prays to, adores, and worships God and, so, Man is a creature uniquely created to love, worship and be in communion with God as is no other part of Creation.

Orthodox Worship

If we turn to the Festal cycle, the consciousness of the personhood of the unborn is strikingly manifest especially in three important Feasts: The first is the Feast of the Conception of John the Baptist (September 23) in which we sing: **"Rejoice, O barren one, who had not given birth; for behold you have clearly conceived the one who was about to illuminate the whole universe, blighted by blindness. Shout in joy, O Zacharias, crying in favor; truly the one to be born is a prophet of the High!"** John the Baptist existed as a human being and a part of God's plan of salvation from the moment of his conception.

The second is the Conception of the Theotokos (December 9). Here the vesperal hymn proclaims: **"Behold the promises of the Prophets are realized for the**

Holy Mountain is planted in the womb, the Divine Ladder is set up, the great Throne of the King is ready, the place for the passage of the Lord is prepared . . .” It is notable that both Elizabeth and Anna were advanced in years and barren. Thus they were considered “cursed” in the Jewish tradition where children were a sign of God’s blessing. (Consider that mind-set with our own of today and how God’s Plan is being affected by the hundreds of millions who will never participate in it.)

The quintessential Feast illustrating the Church’s belief of the importance of human beings from the moment of conception is the Annunciation (March 25) which is so important that a Divine Liturgy must be served even when it falls on Great and Holy Friday! The Annunciation Troparion makes a most profound statement: **“Today is the beginning of our salvation, the revelation of the eternal mystery! The Son of God becomes the Son of the Virgin as Gabriel announces the coming of grace...”** This is a far cry from the “pro-choice” rhetoric of “Who knows when life begins?” or the degradation of the unborn by calling him a “blob of tissue” and a “product of conception.” *Can any Christian seriously propose that Jesus Christ was ever a “blob” or an appendage of the Theotokos’s body?*

At the Great Compline the hymnography makes this astonishing claim: **“...O marvel! God has come among men; He who cannot be contained in a womb; the timeless One enters time...For God empties Himself, takes flesh, and is fashioned as a creature, when the angel tells the pure Virgin of her conception...”** *This is not sung at the feast of our Lord’s Nativity but at His conception!!!* Such concepts as “viability” and “quickenings” are utterly without meaning and irrelevant.

Scripture and the Unborn

In the New Testament, consciousness of the personhood of the unborn is clearly manifested. The same word - *brephos* - is used for the child in the womb as out of the womb unlike modern medical and scientific distinctions of “zygote,” “embryo,” “fetus” etc. used to differentiate among the stages of pre-natal life. The Latin word “fetus” simply means “little one” and was never intended as a means of denying humanity to the child dwelling in his mother’s womb. A similar pattern of language occurs in the Old Testament as in the book of Job 3:16 in which he refers to: **“Infants [gohlal] which never saw the light.”** In Luke 1:41 we find another astonishing image of the scriptural consciousness of the personhood of the unborn: **“And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb”** Here, the unborn John the Baptist recognizes and rejoices at the unborn Messiah - a “fetus” greeting a “fetus.” This is not just a “literary device” as some would insist. It illustrates the narrator’s consciousness of the already existing personality - and Divine calling - of an unborn human being. We do celebrate the birth of John the Baptist, the Theotokos, and the Lord Jesus Himself, but we also celebrate their conception - their entry into time and the physical world - the “fulness of time” as it is called by St. Paul.

A more profound point to this all is that these feasts, especially the Annuncia-

tion, point to the Incarnation. By Jesus Christ taking on our humanity from the moment of conception, existing in the pre-natal condition in the womb of the Theotokos, experiencing birth, living through infancy to adulthood, and finally physical death, God sanctified every moment of human existence - from conception to death. There is more to this - God also completely identifies with us in our fallen suffering nature, and by dying for us on the cross, He expresses His solidarity with us: whether we are a zygote, embryo, fetus, infant, child, adolescent, adult, or elderly: human existence is a continuum from conception, and - yes - beyond death to life eternal in the Lord!

The Orthodox Church has had a long history of outspoken condemnation of abortion which dates from Apostolic times. Although the aforementioned feasts did not exist in Apostolic times, they illustrate the living Tradition from which Church teaching on the uniqueness and sanctity of human life, born and unborn sprang from - it was no vacuum!!!

What The Early Church Said:

The Didache - First Century

“Do not murder; do not commit adultery; do not corrupt boys; do not fornicate; do not steal; do not practice magic; do not go in for sorcery; do not murder a child by abortion or kill a newborn infant.”

The Epistle of Barnabas - First Century:

“You shall love your neighbor more than your own life. You shall not slay the child by abortion. You shall not kill that which has been generated.

Apologia of Athenagoras of Athens- 177 AD.:

“What reason would we have to commit murder when we say that women who induce abortions are murderers, and will have to give account of it to God? For the same person would not regard a fetus in the womb as a living thing and therefore, an object of God’s care, and at the same time slay it, once it had come to life.”

Tertulian (Western Church) - Third Century:

Abortion is a precipitation of murder, nor does it matter whether or not one takes a life when formed, or drives it away when forming, for he is also a man who is about to be one.”

Clement of Alexandria - Third century:

“Universal life would proceed according to nature if we would practice

contenance from the beginning instead of destroying, through immoral and pernicious acts, human beings who are given birth by Divine Providence.”

The Regional Council Of Elvira, Spain - 303A.D.:

Prescribes life-long excommunication for penitent persons involved in abortion. Eucharist denied even on the death bed.

The Council of Ancyra, Canon 21-314/315A.D

“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.”

St. Basil The Great (330-379 A. D.):

“A woman who deliberately destroys a fetus is answerable for murder.”

“Those who give potions for the destruction of the child conceived in the womb are murderers, as are those who take potions which kill the child.”

“. . . we do not have a precise distinction between a fetus which has been formed and one which has not yet been formed.”

“. . . any hairsplitting distinction as to its being formed or unformed is inadmissible with us.”

St. Gregory of Nyssa (335-394):

“There is no question about that which is bred in the uterus, both growing, and moving from place to place. It remains, therefore that we must think that the point of commencement of existence is one and the same for body and soul.”

St. John Chrysostom (345-407):

Speaking about those who force a woman to have an abortion to hide immorality: “You do not let a harlot remain a harlot, but make her a murderer as well.”

Regarding the abortionist, St. John considered him/her: “. . . worse than a murderer.”

Quinsex Ecumenical Council, Canon 91-691 A. D.

Decreed that people “. . . who furnish drugs for the purpose of procuring abortion, and those who take fetus-killing poisons, they are made subject to the penalty prescribed for murderers.”

All these various writings and canons were codified by St. Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople in the Ninth Century, into the “Photian Collection” and are still in effect today. In fact these teachings were universal in the whole Christian Church, East and West. Even the Protestant reformers such as Luther and Calvin were outspoken in their opposition to abortion.

What the Modern Church Says:

Archpriest John Meyendorff, Theologian - 1972:

“The fact that this interruption (abortion) takes place at an initial stage in the human life process makes, of course, a psychological difference, but does not change the nature of the act of abortion being killing, and as such a very grave sin, because killing is evil...The hundreds of thousands of legal abortions performed in New York hospitals are a case of mass killing.”

Metropolitan IRENEY, Orthodox Church in America - 1973

“The very moral foundations of society are being subjected to doubt, and there is no open objection . . . the whole meaning and context of life is being reduced to the seeking of material goals, external success, and the gratification of the senses . . . As a horrible symbol of this moral decay, I cite the legalization of abortion, the frightening transgression of the most sacred of all Divine Commandments.”

(In a telegraph to President Nixon in 1973) **“Together we, the Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America, wish to convey to you, Mr. President, our feelings of shock and indignation at the recent ruling of the Supreme Court on the issue of abortion. We urge you to initiate all constitutional procedures necessary to reverse this tragic decision.”**

“An abortion for convenience at any stage of gestation, is a violent termination of life and therefore is contrary to the teaching of the Orthodox Church.”

V. Rev. Vladimir Boreshevsky, Theologian - 1973:

“. . . human life begins at the moment of conception and all who hold life sacred and worthy of preservation whenever possible are obliged at all costs to defend the lives of the unborn children regardless of the stage of

their embryonic development.”

23rd Clergy-Laity Congress - Greek Orthodox Archdiocese - 1976:

“The Orthodox Church has a definite, formal and intended attitude toward abortion. It condemns all procedures purporting to abort the embryo or fetus, whether by surgical or chemical means. The Orthodox Church brands abortion as murder; that is, as a premeditated termination of the life of a human being..The only time the Orthodox Church will reluctantly acquiesce to abortion is when the preponderance of medical opinion determines that unless the embryo or fetus is aborted, the mother will die. *Decisions of the Supreme Court and State legislatures by which abortion, with our without restrictions, is allowed should be viewed by practicing Christians as an affront to their beliefs in the sanctity of life.*”

Metropolitan THEODOSIUS, Orthodox Church in America - 1980:

“. . . the willful abortion of children is an act of murder and the sinful character of that act always remains, even when conception has taken place in the most tragic circumstances.”

Theologian FR. STANLEY HARAOKAS - 1982:

“Human life is not an unconditional gift from God, but carries with it certain responsibilities. That God considers the taking of an innocent life to be a particularly heinous crime is evident, not only from the Sixth Commandment, but also from the story of Cain and Abel, recounted in Genesis 4:1-6. Further, the Incarnation of the Logos has, for all eternity, sanctified all human life, in both its physical and spiritual aspects.”

“. . . since God is perfect beyond our human comprehension, the process of growing more like God, of “developing our personhood” is a never ending one for every human being. It begins at conception and continues to the very moment of our physical death. Thus, no human being is a “person” or entirely “human” in the fullest sense, since none of us are exactly like God. Yet, all human beings share the same potential developing into “persons” whether they be in the womb, at the prime of life, or on their deathbed. The potential for “personhood” of the human fetus is evident not only from the Orthodox concept of psychosomatic unity, but from Scripture.”

“In opposition (to the idea that the unborn child is not a person), we profess that no human being is ever fully a “person” but that all persons have the potential to become “fully human”, to achieve union with God. Therefore, we cannot declare on the basis of “personhood”, that the fetus in the womb has no value in the eyes of both God and man than a person born.”

Regarding a woman’s “right” to her own body: “Orthodoxy rejects such

notions due to the great value attached to life by God, and the fact that life is a gift which no person has the right to take. If we do not have the right to take our own lives, how much more so must it be that we have no right to take the innocent life of the embryo or fetus in the womb? . . . That the developing person inside the mother's womb has a life separate from its mother is evident from the fact that its chromosomal makeup is different from the mother's since it is a combination drawn from both mother and father. Further, it is genetically unique; its particular combination of traits and characteristics shall never be repeated."

General Assembly of the Antiochian Archdiocese - 1989:

WHEREAS a recent decision by the Supreme Court of the United States of America has modified the 1973 decision of *Roe vs. Wade* relating to the abortion issue; and

WHEREAS the Supreme Court of Canada has struck down as unconstitutional all laws protecting the unborn, and therefore no legislation currently exists regulating abortion in Canada; and

WHEREAS all prolife organizations, especially *Orthodox Christians for Life*, need our support, moral and financial, in defense of the thousands of "innocents" who are deprived of the possibility of life; and

WHEREAS the Orthodox Church, from its inception on the day of Pentecost, has condemned abortion as a grievous sin:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America, meeting in General Assembly in Anaheim, California on 28 July 1989, reiterates its previous resolutions against abortion and asks Orthodox Christians throughout the United States and Canada to support those organizations which strive to protect the rights of the unborn.

All American Council, Orthodox Church in America - 1989:

WHEREAS the Orthodox Church in America has consistently spoken out in defense of the sanctity of life, and has done so in connection with contemporary threats to the life of the unborn, the handicapped, the infirm, and the elderly; and

WHEREAS abortion in all cases has been condemned by the Orthodox Church in America unequivocally on the basis of Orthodox theology, which faithfully reflects for today nearly two thousand years of Christian doctrine and ethical teaching; and

WHEREAS, before the end of this century, “do-it-yourself” abortion will more than likely be commonplace (the RU 486 pill), and legislation will have little effect on whether or not a woman brings her child to term;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT the Ninth All-American Council of the Orthodox Church in America strongly reaffirms the Orthodox Church’s opposition to abortion in all cases, and that it does so on theological and moral grounds; commends the efforts of Orthodox bishops, clergy, and laity to bear witness to the sanctity of life in the public arena, especially noting in this connection the work and witness of *Orthodox Christians for Life*; and commits the Orthodox Church in America to continued witness on behalf of the God-given sanctity of life;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Orthodox Church in America recognizes that opposition to and condemnation of abortion in all cases, except to save the life of the mother, is not enough, and that the Orthodox Church and Orthodox Christians have a moral obligation to work for the creation and maintenance of Orthodox adoption agencies and for the facilitation of adoption procedures for families to consider adopting a homeless or unwanted or disabled infant, regardless of the child’s racial or ethnic background in the realization that the Church as a whole and the parish community in particular is called to give active material and spiritual support to those who accept the responsibility of adoption;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT this Council affirms and supports the work of the *Orthodox Christian Adoption Referral Service* and encourages parishes and members of the Orthodox Church in America to give their material and moral support to this organization;

FINALLY, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT this Council recognizes and affirms spiritual, pastoral and educational efforts towards moral persuasion, directed to the father as much as to the mother, to help stem the present hemorrhaging of unborn and unwanted human persons and lives.

Resolution on Sanctity of Life Sunday:

WHEREAS the Orthodox Church in America has always respected the right to life of all men and women from conception to the time of natural death, and

WHEREAS the Supreme Court of the United States of America has allowed legalized abortion since January 22, 1973, leading to the deaths of 1,500,000 unborn children each year,

WE HEREBY PROCLAIM the Sunday in January falling on or before January 22 each year to be called Sanctity of Life Sunday in all churches of the Orthodox Church in America, and that on this Sunday a letter from our primate be read in all churches, and special petitions be taken at Liturgy, proclaiming our respect as a Church, for all human life.

Conclusion:

There is little more that can be said - the deliberate destruction and/or desecration of a human being is unthinkable for a true-believing Orthodox Christian. God created Man in his own likeness and image, man is a living icon of flesh and blood, in which God gave the breath of life (**ruah**). Killing an innocent human being can be seen is an act of blasphemy against God - it is the ultimate act of iconoclasm

***Abortion is not a political issue,
but a moral issue that has become politicized!***

WHAT ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS CAN DO ABOUT ABORTION: AN ACTION PLAN

Valerie Protopapas, Educational Director, Orthodox Christians for Life

Below is a list of suggestions to help Orthodox Christians fight the spiritual and physical holocaust of abortion:

I: **PRAYER**: No one can deny the efficacy of prayer. Without the support and guidance of Almighty God, we are powerless, whereas with it we cannot be defeated.

A] Prayer for those who have been or are in danger of being, aborted:

- 1] In this case, individual prayer during those times devoted to such prayer by the Faithful should contain petitions for all those children who have already died and who will die in the future.
- 2] Serious consideration should be given to including prayers for these holy innocents into our liturgical services. Mention of these martyred millions will go a long way toward raising the consciousness of all Orthodox Christians to the ongoing slaughter.
- 3] Inclusion of special liturgical “days” (such as the Feast of the Holy Innocents, the Holy Theotokos, the Conception of John the Baptist, and the Annunciation) to commemorate those aborted in our nation and around the world. Pastors should be encouraged to give special homilies on abortion and other “sanctity of life” issues on these days.

B] Prayer for those who are working to end this abomination:

- 1] As above, those people whom God calls to perform this act desperately need the individual and corporate prayers of the Church in order to have the strength to continue in the performance of that calling.

C] Prayer for those women who have had or are considering abortions:

- 1] Often the woman who has an abortion is as much a victim as the child whom she aborts. She is deceived by Satan working through our fallen culture to consider abortion as something innocuous, but so often she suffers the terrible aftereffects of physical, mental, emotional and spiritual damage or even death, itself. In our individual prayers we must pray for these women to seek the consolation of Christ through repentance and reconciliation. *In both our individual and corporate prayers we must pray for women to be delivered from the commission of such a sin.* We must also, through the Church, promote life and openly attack the abortion mentality, offering to women who are suffering with a “crisis pregnancy” such help as is necessary to enable them to choose life for their child whether that help be financial, emotional, spiritual or all three. Most women who have abortions, when asked why, responded that they “had no

choice". The Orthodox Faith must provide a choice.

D] Prayer for those who support, promote, provide and/or perform abortions:

1] These most difficult of prayer subjects are the most necessary. If we are able to bring to Christ those who champion abortion, we will have defeated the whole terrible thing. Therefore, we must pray constantly in our hearts for those who sincerely believe that, in supporting, counselling, promoting or providing abortions they are doing a humane act. We must ask God to enlighten these sincere souls as to the terrible wrong they are doing both mother and child along with the damage they are doing to society as a whole. *We must also pray for those whose support of abortion is the result of greed or a pathological ideology. They, especially, are in need of prayer as they are so far along the road to damnation.*

2] However, along with prayer, it is essential that the Church make clear to those people who have been involved in abortion including the woman, those who have given her counsel, those who have actually performed the abortion and even those whose support of abortion is limited to intellectual acceptance, that *to continue to be considered part of the Orthodox Church, they must repent, turn away from their sinful ways and undergo a reconciliation into the Body of Christ.*

[a] The Standing Conference of Orthodox Bishops in America (SCOBA) once considered excommunicating several pro-abortion Greek Orthodox legislators because of their unrepentant support of abortion. They should have done so, but, for some reason, they did not. *This was a missed opportunity to bring home to these erring brothers and sisters the seriousness of their sin.*

[b] Statistics indicate that people who call themselves "Orthodox Christians" are probably involved in abortion in about the same ratio as they occur in the general population so we cannot say that we Orthodox are not involved in abortion.

[c] During the 1988 Presidential Election, various Orthodox bishops spoke out against a claim by one of the candidates to "membership in good standing" in the Greek Orthodox Church because of his support of abortion and other moral outrages.

[d] Though the Canons of the Church are most strict regarding those who perform or have abortions, and the numbers of abortions in this country number over one and one-half million per annum, yet one seldom hears the Church reminding the Faithful of the consequences of being involved, even indirectly, in abortion. For instance, how many "Orthodox Christians" work for Planned Parenthood which is the largest and richest abortion promoter and provider in the world? How many "Orthodox" physicians refer patients for abortion or even perform them personally? How many "Orthodox" work in abortuaries whether as medical, secretarial or custodial help? How many "Orthodox" knowingly vote for pro-abortion politicians or support pro-abortion legislation? How many "Orthodox" even care to discover whether an organization to which they belong is pro-abortion or pro-life? How many "Orthodox"

belong to groups and organizations which champion abortion such as the National Organization for Women (NOW) and many environmental groups? How many Orthodox Christians who are registered in one of our two national political parties which has embraced abortion as its standard have bothered to register their disapproval by leaving that party or even by writing to party officials to tell of their disapproval? How can the Church seriously begin to fight abortion until the Faithful feel that even such indirect support of this terrible sin is condemned wholeheartedly and that there are very real measures available to the Church to prevent the Faithful from participating in both Orthodoxy and abortion?

II: ACTION:- St. James says, in his Epistle, “Faith without good works is dead.” *So too, prayer without any kind of overt action may become simply an excuse for inaction.* There are many types of action against abortion available to the Orthodox Faithful which range from a lifelong commitment to the struggle to those small but important activities which may be accomplished by the house-bound, the elderly, the teenager or the mother with young children at home.

A] Action within the parish:

1] Parish action should begin with the establishment of a pro-life or family life committee which would be responsible for obtaining and disseminating pro-life and family life information from the Diocese and/or other sources. This committee would also be responsible for pro-life activities within the parish and also for involving the parish with outside organizations (demonstrating, rescues etc.).

[a] Such a committee would relieve the priest of the job of collecting, collating and disseminating large amounts of information although, of course, he would remain in charge of the overall operation and oversee the committee’s efforts.

[b] Pro-life activities might include fund raising for local crisis pregnancy centers or other worthy pro-life organizations. In a larger parish it might include the establishment of such a crisis pregnancy center or, at least, direct involvement with one already established. There is also the MARCH FOR LIFE which takes place on January 22nd each year. Each parish may wish to send a busload of parishioners to participate or, if the Church is small, join with other local Orthodox (or even Roman Catholic) Churches to fill one bus or several.

2] Special times should be set aside for liturgical services directed at the abortion crisis such as all-night vigils, Panahida’s for the aborted children or akafists to the Blessed Theotokos, Patroness of mothers and children.

3] Participation by the whole parish in large pro-life rallies, demonstrations and educational presentations.

[a] Parishes should be encouraged to hold pro-life educational conferences with community participation. This serves the double purpose of educating the parish on pro-life issues and introducing the surrounding community to the local Orthodox Church.

[b] A liaison person should be chosen to deal with the Pro-Life Diocesan representative. This person, working together with the priest, would furnish the Diocese with information regarding the activities of that particular parish, thus helping coordinate activities at the deanery and diocesan levels.

[c] Calendars of pro-life activities should be circulated within the Diocese, especially to neighboring churches, to coordinate efforts in certain spheres (ie: demonstrations, lobbying trips, mass mailings etc.)

B] Action which may be taken either individually or in the parish setting:

1] Demonstrations: (Walks for Life, picketing etc.): Contrary to popular opinion, *Orthodox Christians do picket*. You will recall the thousands of Orthodox who rallied outside the UN for those suffering oppression in the Soviet Union. Surely, innocent unborn babies deserve at least this much of an effort!

[a] Locate your local abortuaries. (never call them “*clinics*”! How can anything be a “clinic” when two people go in and only one leaves? Furthermore, the vast majority of abortuaries are not licensed clinics, but operate as “doctors’ offices” and do not have the necessary supervision by state and local health officials demanded of licensed clinics.)

[1] This may be done through the Yellow Pages or through a check of county health agencies, your local hospital or checking with your local Planned Parenthood facility which, itself may be but is not always, an abortuary.

[2] Your local hospital may also be an abortuary, but it is necessary to remember that, *in picketing any health care facility which offers more than just abortions, it is critical that no one can claim that you denied them access to the building!* As picketing is not a “rescue” (sit in) there is usually no question of denial of access, but in hospitals or other multi-service health facilities, some people have claimed that pro-life pickets prevented them from obtaining non-related medical care. Therefore, when picketing a doctors’ group, hospital or even a building where non-medical offices and/or businesses are located, be sure to leave open all access ways and *stay only on public property*. If this is done, no one can demand that you leave, for you are only exercising your First Amendment rights of free speech and assembly.

[b] Once your target is located, choose a day (usually a Saturday) and an hour (as busy as possible, or, if known, the hour that the “patients” are going in for the procedure) and assemble on the public sidewalk in front of the abortuary *with signs and pictures telling the public just what is happening in the building*.

[1] In the near future, a pamphlet will be made available on how to effectively demonstrate for life. If you need assistance before then, local pro-life groups may already be demonstrating and, if you join them once or twice, you will learn many excellent techniques. At present there are visuals which have only just become available and are very effective, if gruesome.

[2] You should also make available to the public, pamphlets on abortion, many of which are available through various national pro-life organizations and whose titles and places of purchase will also be made available through our pamphlet.

2] Lobbying: Communities of pro-lifers hire buses and go to their state capitol or

Washington, D.C. to lobby for or against various legislation. These trips often bear fruit. In politics, it's the "squeaky wheel which gets the oil"! Local, state and national pro-life groups will keep you informed about upcoming legislation, which is why it is so necessary to belong to at least one of each kind! Such trips may also be used to join larger, regional or even national demonstrations such as the January 22nd MARCH FOR LIFE in Washington, D.C..

3] Mass mailings: directed at the media and in response to all pro-abortion propaganda, whether in news programs, commentaries or "entertainment" program contents (such as the mendacious "docu-drama", Roe vs. Wade which was a series of half-truths and outright lies and a total pro-abortion propaganda vehicle). Letters to sponsors of offending programs are also useful, especially where the threat of a boycott is used. *After all, in the media, money is the bottom line and they will abandon even their most cherished positions if their profits are threatened!*

[a] Keep a list of all addresses of newspapers, radio and TV stations, in fact, any publication or media center which may require a pro-life response to a pro-abortion comment. Be sure, however, when responding:

1] Get the name of the individual making the comment and the time and program involved.

2]- Be accurate! Do not "fudge" your facts! Make sure what you're saying is correct or you will lose your audience and damage your case.

3]-Get to the point quickly; don't be long-winded. People today think in "bumper stickers" and there is no room in "letters to the editor" or radio/TV responses for loquaciousness.

4] Answer only one point, even if the comment/column made several. Pick the most offensive and address it.

5]-*Be polite at all times!* Not only will this win you sympathy with the audience, but, as a representative of Orthodoxy, it is an essential.

6] Almsgiving: support with your gifts such pro-life activities as crisis pregnancy centers, local, state and national pro-life organizations (without whom your own effectiveness would be considerably lessened), pro-life publications (take out a subscription to the Human Life Review, the Shakespeare Quarterly of the pro-life movement) etc. *Even if you cannot give time or talent to the movement, you can help support life with your monetary gifts.*

C] Education:

1] Support educational programs given by the Diocese by having it at your Church and making sure it is well attended (especially by teenagers). *If your Diocese does not have a program, help get one started!*

2] Have a pro-life curriculum in your Church school, starting with the youngest children; teach them the humanity of the unborn through Scripture, Tradition and science. *Life begins at conception, as all three reveal. When our children know and accept this, they will never accept the abortion lie.*

3] *Do not allow any fallacious statement about abortion to pass unchallenged!*

Most people “don’t want to cause trouble” and so say nothing when the abortion lies are presented. In this way, Christians have been silent while millions of women were deluded and millions of children have died. You may not be popular for the moment, but you may save a life in the future.

There have been many questions about pro-life activity from those whose only knowledge of that activity has been from a hostile media. Let’s look at some questions regarding:

1- “Clinic bombings”: There have been a *very* few instances where unbalanced people professing pro-life sympathies have destroyed property in hopes of preventing abortion. These people have never been connected to the recognized pro-life movement despite all efforts from both a hostile judiciary and media to make that connection. Legitimate pro-life organizations have spoken out strongly at all times against any violence, whether against persons or property! The bottom line in the “war” of abortion is the “body count”:

2- Civil Disobedience or “Operation Rescue”(Rescue Movement): The story of Operation Rescue is too long to tell here and we do have a separate pamphlet dealing with this particular type of pro-life activity. We will only say that civil disobedience leading to arrest and prosecution and/or even brutal torture, should be undertaken only after the most serious and deliberate spiritual consideration. Furthermore, pro-abortion forces are now utilizing civil law suits in order to discourage resuers including use of the RICO statues which provide for triple damages if the suit is successful. RICO was designed to combat organized crime (the Mafia) but some courts have seen fit to describe the tactic of sit-in rescues as a “criminal conspiracy”. Until the Supreme Court rules that RICO may not be used in this manner or the Congress tightens the law to prevent it being used to stifle legitimate dissent, rescuers remain liable to suit under this damaging law. Therefore, it is evident that rescue is not a casual activity and there must be a very real “calling” to pursue it. There remains the very real possibility of the loss of all a person’s assets as the law now stands.

In the past, there was nothing stopping those who are unsure about actual participation in rescue from becoming “prayer supporters”; that is, going to the scene of a “rescue” to pray and demonstrate support for those who have put their bodies on the line for the unborn. That was an act which appeared to bear no legal consequences as long as the prayer supporter remained on public property and did not block access to anyone. Unfortunately, however, it seems that such innocent supporters have also been named in lawsuits (not RICO) and have even been brutalized and arrested by the police at various rescue sites. This tactic (rescue) is becoming more and more difficult as the abortion movement and the American “justice” system band together to insure the supremacy of abortion. However, the presence of prayer supporters often insures that the police will not “overreact” in a rescue situation and, if care is taken, such prayer support can still be of great service to the brave rescuers and of relatively slight danger to the supporter. Again, participation must be a decision arrived at by prayer, fasting and common sense.

PRO-ABORTION PROPAGANDA:
Common Pro-abortion Slogans and the Pro-life Response

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It has been said that those who define an issue, *own* that issue. Nowhere is this more evident than in critical issue of abortion. Abortion propaganda has been presented as fact by, among others, the media and the medical and legal professions, for so many years that the public, including many of those who support life, have come to believe this rhetoric and consider these premises as fundamental realities in the abortion situation. Let us examine the most important and prevalent of these premises.

A woman has the right to control her own body.

This is *the* primary feminist premise for abortion rights. It presents the contention by radical feminists that abortion is an essential part of their struggle for power; that power being equated as the ability to control in the most basic way, a woman's reproductive functions. Feminists recognize that *the* most obvious and telling difference between men and women is a woman's ability to bear life. In order to efface that difference, they believe that women should have the political and legal power to decide whether or not they want to be pregnant at any given time. However, a critical analysis of their argument reveals several inconsistencies:

To begin with, the very fact that a woman has a "crisis pregnancy" demonstrates that she, for whatever reason, lost "control" over her body. There are those who have said that, had she exercised "control" in the first place, she would not be pregnant. However, those in the pro-life movement make no moral judgements in this matter since there always exists the possibility that the pregnancy was due to an external force over which she had no control. The supporters of life believe that a woman's "right to control her body" exists *before* she becomes pregnant. In other words, she has the admitted Constitutional right *not* to become pregnant by whatever means she chooses whether it be abstinence, the through the use of contraception or sterilization. However, once a woman *is* pregnant, the undeniable fact is that she is going to have a baby. The abortion movement has only provided her with the option of having a dead rather than a live baby and this cannot and must not be equated with providing her an "alternative" to pregnancy. Once a woman is pregnant, *another human being is involved* and "her body" can no longer be the primary consideration. The unborn child is scientifically and medically recognized as a *unique and distinct person*; separate from his mother and not a part of "her body". To suggest that he is so simply because he depends upon her for shelter and nourishment is to suggest that newborn and even older children who need maternal care also fall under the category of being a part of their mother's physical body; a suggestion which is patently ridiculous.

Finally, if a woman's absolute control over her physical body is a constitutionally recognized "right", then the laws against prostitution, drug use and other crimes

involving the body must be removed from the books. However, as of this date, all such laws have been construed to be constitutional. The premise that a woman has the right to absolute and unfettered control of her body is applicable, judicially, only in the case of abortion.

“Who chooses: the woman or the government?” The so-called “pro-choice” argument.

When abortion is seen in terms of the “right to choose”, it is supported by the majority of Americans who look no further than the idea that some individual may be deprived of her “rights”. Yet, this analogy is false. If the sentiment were cast in another way, such as, “*Who chooses, the rapist [bank robber, mugger, child molester]*”, the argument of “choice” would have no appeal. For the public recognizes that such acts as rape, robbery and the sexual molestation of children are contrary to the good of both the individual and the society and cannot be condoned, much less promoted. Whenever the term “pro-choice” is used to present abortion as being simply the right of a woman to “choose”, the question must be asked, *what choice is being made?* In the case of abortion, the “choice” is to kill an innocent human being which is morally and ethically unacceptable.

We all recognize that not all choices are valid. Serial killer Ted Bundy made “choices,” but no one argues that the government had no business getting involved as they brought death to countless young women. The “choice” of an abortion has resulted in the death of over 30 million babies in the United States since 1974. To suggest that “government” - the moral force of the state representing all its people - has no part in a woman’s “choice” to kill her unborn child is to propose that it has no part in the “choice” to commit any other type of murder, which, of course, is nonsense.

If abortion were made illegal, women could be arrested for having or attempting to have one.

A Planned Parenthood ad shows a woman behind bars who has just had a miscarriage. The ad states that this could conceivably be the fate of every woman who has a miscarriage and certainly would be the fate of every woman who has or attempts to have an abortion. No pro-lifer has ever encouraged or supported criminal prosecution for women who have abortions. The call for such prosecution is limited to the abortionist and those who aid, abet and profit from the crime. Indeed, women are considered by the pro-life movement as the “second victim” since they are often coerced, bullied and deceived in the effort to force them to choose abortion over all other options. The cry of most women who have an abortion is, “*I had no choice!*”

Most of those in the pro-life movement are men. The pro-life movement is anti-woman.

Over 80% of those in the pro-lifer movement are women! On the other hand, many of those who support abortion are men. After all, men have the most to gain from abortion. The vast majority of abortionists are men. Abortion removes from men the burden of child support and allows them to escape the commitment which comes with fatherhood. One young woman standing outside an abortuary carried a sign which read,

“A WOMAN’S “RIGHT TO CHOOSE HAS BECOME A MAN’S RIGHT TO ABUSE”

Polls show that a vast majority of Americans favor abortion rights.

This is another “half-truth”. Most polls show that almost 70% of Americans favor abortion *only* in cases of rape, incest and threat to the physical life of the mother. Done for reasons of birth control, sex selection, convenience, or economics, abortion is repudiated by the public in virtually the same numbers, almost 70%. Further, those who study them know that polls *reflect the opinions of those who take them*. For instance, the above statement - that almost 70% of the public favors abortion - was made when the question: “Would you favor denying an abortion to a woman whose life was in danger or who had been raped?” brought the understandable answer of “no” from most of those being polled. This most specific answer to a most specific question was then extrapolated to the statement: *most Americans favor abortion on demand*. However, if one asks the question, “Do you support abortion for social and economic convenience”, the reason for over 97% of all the abortions performed since *Roe*, the majority of Americans will answer with a resounding *No!*

If abortion is limited or banned, who will care for the 1.5 million unwanted children who are now being aborted? It will be a tremendous burden on the welfare system and the taxpayers.

Ignoring the equation of children’s lives with money, this argument has also been proven patently false. When and where access to abortion is limited, *the pregnancy rate drops precipitously!* In one state where parental notification is necessary for minors, it was found that the teenage pregnancy rate dropped almost 75%. In adult situations where there is [supposedly] more mature judgement, it can be expected that the “unwanted pregnancy” rate will decline even more when abortion is no longer available as a backup method of birth control.

However, whether or not that should occur, we cannot murder children on the off chance that the taxpayers may have to shoulder some part of the cost of their upbringing. Given that there are *millions of couples waiting to adopt children*, this is not a true consideration in the elimination of legalized abortion.

There are those who ask the question, “what about the ‘unadoptables’; that is, minority, multiracial and handicapped children? Should we not provide abortion in such cases?” The adoption situation has changed radically in recent years and,

although healthy white infants are still the preference, many couples are willing and even eager to adopt children who are designated as “hard to place”. During the time the “natural parents” allowed a Down’s Syndrome infant to starve to death in a hospital in Bloomington, Indiana, there were six couples waiting to adopt him.

“Every Child A Wanted Child” [Planned Parenthood slogan]

Sounds great, doesn’t it! Wouldn’t we want every child born to be “wanted”? Yet think of the implication of this statement! What we are saying is, *if you aren’t wanted you have no value as a human being!* How far is it then to such slogans as, *Every Senior a Wanted Senior*, or *Every Jew a wanted Jew*. Human beings cannot be killed simply because, at some point in their lives, somebody perceives them as “unwanted”, even if that person is their mother. Almost everyone, sometime in his life may be “unwanted” by his family, his boss, his peers and even himself...*but he is never unwanted by God*. Being “unwanted” is not a capital crime in the United States!

Limiting or making abortion illegal would mean tens of thousands of women dying of illegal “back-alley” abortion as they did before *Roe vs. Wade*.

We have all seen the pro-abortion signs with the symbol of the coat-hanger and the diagonal slash. And, we have heard all the tales of the dirty, vicious “back-alley abortionists” who preyed on helpless women when abortion was illegal. Yet, according to Dr. Bernard Nathanson - a foremost proponent of abortion rights who performed abortions when they were both legal and illegal - most illegal abortions were done, not in back alleys, but in hospitals and not by bungling amateurs, but by licensed gynecologists. The death toll from illegal abortion the year before *Roe* was 39, not the 20,000 claimed by pro-abortion forces. Also, approximately 150,000 illegal abortions were performed annually in the United States before *Roe*, not 1.5 million as claimed by abortion supporters. The rate has increased by a factor of 10 since 1974.

Furthermore, women are dying today of so-called “safe, legal abortions”. The admitted death rate from 2nd and 3rd trimester abortions is only slightly lower than the rate of automobile deaths [1 in 5900 as compared to 1 in 5000] and the death rate from 1st trimester abortions (the most numerous performed) can only be estimated as *there are no government regulations concerning the reporting of deaths attributable to abortion*. The scandals which have rocked the abortion industry with regards to unsafe practices including the hiring and use of unlicensed physicians or physicians who have lost their licenses and the incredible fact that, in some states, *an abortionist does not even have to be a physician*, would have destroyed any other industry; but abortion is protected by the courts and the media. The “back alley abortionist” is still in practice, only now he is tax-exempt and government subsidized.

It isn't a "baby", it's a "blob of tissue", a parasite, a product of conception, a tumor etc.

This is how the abortion industry and its allies describe the unborn child. Yet, they are afraid to allow the public to see the pictures of aborted babies which clearly show severed arms, legs, and heads. Further, the abortion industry has constantly fought against "informed consent" legislation which require that a woman be told about the abortion procedure, the dangers she might encounter in that procedure, the nature of her pregnancy and the facts about the life of her unborn child.

At the moment of conception, the child possesses the 46 chromosomes needed for a new and unique human being. Even before the fertilized egg divides, the genetic patterns have established sex, hair, eye and skin color and such traits as musical, athletic and artistic talent and possible future diseases. In the month following conception, the child grows so rapidly that, if it were considered in proportion as weighing 1 pound at the moment of conception, at the end of that first month it's weight would be *5 tons!* At 24 days the heart is beating and circulating the child's blood (the mother's blood is *never* part of the baby). At 6 weeks there are recordable brain waves which are functionally little different from that of an adult. All organs are present and functioning at the end of 8 weeks of gestation. Most abortions are performed between 10 and 12 weeks gestation. Some children have survived outside the womb as early as 20 weeks [5 months], and development of a human being is not completed until the age of *23 years*.

The Pro-Life movement cares only for the unborn child and not for the woman or the child once he is born. Pro-lifers hold women in contempt.

It is not pro-lifers who hold women in contempt, but the abortion industry. Testimony of ex-abortionists and those who have worked in abortuaries speak ceaselessly to the fact that the only thing abortionists are interested in is money. Women are often misled, lied to, coerced, browbeaten and bullied into getting an abortion. Often they are treated brutally and the horror stories from these places are legion. Pro-life demonstrators who tell a woman that she is "killing her baby" as she enters an abortuary are only trying to reach her with the facts while there is still time. Many women later lament that there was no one outside the abortuary to tell *them* the facts when they had their abortion. Of course, the truth is most women *really know that they are killing their baby, but they ignore that knowledge for the sake of convenience* . Only later, when the guilt begins to destroy them, are they forced to face what they knew all along. It is infinitely easier for them to face that truth *before* their abortion than after, even if the truth is both unwelcome and unpleasant.

The Pro-life movement *does* care for both the woman and her child before and *after* birth. Crisis pregnancy centers established around the country help women find jobs, apartments or housing with a volunteer if she is homeless, give her help with medical expenses, transportation to medical facilities, provide layettes for newborns, baby furniture, clothing for siblings and a host of other necessities. It is

interesting to note that pro-life endeavors such as these crisis pregnancy centers, receive no funding from any government agency *only the abortionists and their allies like Planned Parenthood are government funded*. In fact, there are government functionaries, like the Attorney General of New York, who seek to close some crisis pregnancy centers under the pretense of deceptive advertising since they refuse to counsel abortion as an alternative. However, these same functionaries do not seek to hold abortuaries to the same high standard of truth when they offer so-called “counseling” which consists solely of “selling” abortion to their clients.

The Pro-life movement is made up of the wealthy and is financed by the Roman Catholic Church.

Statistics on income distribution reveal that most pro-lifers are in the middle, lower-middle and lower income brackets while most abortion advocates are in the upper-middle and upper income brackets including millionaires. Pro-aborts boast such financial giants as Ted Turner and Donald Trump along with myriad media celebrities. On the other hand, pro-life ranks are filled with blue collar workers, housewives and religious. Nor is the movement financed by the Catholic Church. Pro-life agencies receive no government funding as do so many pro-abortion organizations; it is financed solely, totally and completely by the sacrificial offerings of its pro-life members.

If abortion were illegal, what about victims of rape, incest and women whose lives are endangered by their pregnancy?

Abortion is performed today for cases of rape, incest or danger to the life of the woman in less than 3% of the 1.5 million annual abortions. In cases where a woman’s life is in actual danger from a pregnancy as in the case of an ectopic or tubal pregnancy or cancerous uterus, there has always been a medical, legal and spiritual recognition of the necessity to save the mother’s life even when that salvation led, tragically, to the death of the child. No laws were necessary to legalize life-saving medical intervention.

Cases of rape and incest *very rarely lead to pregnancy* for a variety of reasons. In cases where they do, we must remember that the child in the womb is not guilty of any crime but is also a victim. As we do not ask the death penalty for the actual criminal of rape or incest, why should we demand it for the second innocent victim? Also, abortion leads to increased trauma as the victim will suffer the emotional and possibly physical damage which is common to all abortions. Between 50 and 80% of all women who have had abortions suffer mild to severe psychological trauma although it may take up to 8 or 10 years before manifesting itself. This is simply piling the trauma of abortion upon trauma of rape or incest. A woman who carries through a such a pregnancy may indeed wind up far better off physically and psychologically than a woman who chooses to abort.

Finally, we must remember that, as Christians, we are obligated to offer *God’s compassion* to the woman, not that of the world. The world says that the woman

would be much better off killing her child. This so-called “compassion” is wicked and leads to spiritual, moral and sometimes physical death. God’s compassion has more respect for the sufferer, offering the suffering of His Son as an example in our distress and the promise of His eternal love and constant support in times of trial.

Abortion is a woman’s constitutional right.

Abortion is mentioned *nowhere* in the Constitution. The so-called “right” to an abortion was made up out of whole cloth by the Supreme Court under the guise of the “right” of privacy, which is *also unmentioned in the Constitution*. In deciding that the unborn child was a human being, but not a *person*, the Court did to them what it had previously done to African-Americans in the infamous *Dred Scott* decision which said that blacks, though human, were not “persons” under the Constitution.

Abortion is legal only for the first three months of a pregnancy.

Roe vs. Wade and its attendant case of *Doe vs. Bolton* legalized abortion on demand *through all nine months of pregnancy*. A woman may abort her child for any reason or no reason at all up to the moment of delivery. The admitted “interest” which the State has in second and third trimester abortions is defined in *Doe vs. Bolton* as allowing the State only the right to determine who may perform an abortion and where one may be performed in such circumstances. The State may not, under these two rulings, prevent or forbid abortion whatever the “viability” of the fetus. The *Webster* case, however, has made some inroads in the totality of *Roe* and *Doe*; only time will tell just how much. Until both are overturned, however, abortion on demand through all nine months of pregnancy for any or no reason at all remains the law of the land.

What about the “population explosion”? Aren’t there too many people in the world already and aren’t they endangering the planet?

The replacement birth rate of any group is approximately 2.24 children per reproductive couple. *All European countries [except Ireland], and the United States, Canada and European Russia have fallen below that level*. We are a dying nation. Only immigration hides that fact. We have a current birth rate of 1.9 children per reproductive couple which means there are fewer and fewer young people to carry the burden of every growing numbers of elderly. Pro-life prophets see the current push for euthanasia as a way of handling the crisis of elderly dependency in the coming years.

Furthermore, if one placed every human being on the face of the earth together in a large crowd, they would not fill the state of Rhode Island. In the Third World, most poverty is the result of inefficient economies, political strife and poor management. Well run governmental and economic structures in such “overcrowded” places as Hong Kong, Japan, and Taiwan put the lie to the belief that people are a detriment. Most people who accept the “overpopulation” theory, don’t want to be

eliminated themselves to lower the number of people in the world, but rather are worried about having to share their abundance with someone else. When one says “there are too many people for the resources available”, the concept is *overpopulation*. However, when one says, “there are too few resources for the people”, the concept is *poverty*. There is more than enough arable land and goods available for all humanity; it is a matter of distribution and the poor management of much that should be far more productive.

Regarding “ecology” and “conservation”, we must remember that, as Christians, we are stewards of our planet. However, we cannot “save the whales” and “kill the babies”. Our brothers and sisters around the world are sacred to God, just as we are. If we follow His Commandments and seek His help, people, plants, animals and the whole “biosphere” can live in harmony without slaughtering our fellow man to save the snail darter.

The new abortion pill, RU-486 and the development of new contraceptives [such as “Norplant”] will end the debate.

Contrary to the hopes of abortion advocates, RU-486 will *not* end the abortion debate. This dangerous chemical is not a “morning after” pill which can be taken to “prevent” a pregnancy nor is the use of the pill “simple” but rather, a very complex and involved process which often results in the need to resort, after the course of medication, to a surgical abortion. The kill “window” for RU-486 is limited and it is ineffective before and after that time. Further, RU-486 has a relatively low “kill percentage” unless taken in conjunction with doses of prostaglandin, another dangerous and powerful drug. The pill itself has only been tested a very short time in the nature of drug testing but already shows many problematic side effects. Also, many drug firms are loath to carry the first “human pesticide”. The push to get this infamous material into our nation is reminiscent of the push to legalize that other “wonder drug” from Europe, Thalidomide.

The newly accepted “contraceptive” Norplant, is a device surgically implanted in a woman’s arm which has a 5 year+ life-span. Norplant suppresses the production of ova in a woman by the use of the gradual emission of a low dosage of a particular hormone and in this action, it mimics the low-dosage birth control pill. Women who can’t take “the pill” are advised to avoid this new product. The cost of implanting the five “match-stick” like receptacles will be on the average, about \$300.00 according to most medical sources. Unfortunately, what is not said is that, failing to prevent production of the egg, Norplant makes the lining of the uterus hostile to the now-fertilized egg, causing a failure of implantation. Thus a woman may abort up to 60 children in one five year period and never be the wiser.

Finally, abortion is abortion is abortion whether surgical or chemical, and will be fought by those who value the sanctity of human life.

Limitation or prohibition of abortion will increase the incidence of child abuse as most abused children are the result of unwanted pregnancies.

The Truth? *Over 97% of the documented cases of child abuse involve “wanted” children from “planned” pregnancies.* Since *Roe*, the incidence of child abuse has risen over 700% in the United States alone. Violence against women and societal violence has also risen precipitously. Killing human beings is not a solution to social problems because, inevitably, the society which resorts to such measures collapses. Today we are seeing our society in the throes of physical, moral and ethical collapse and abortion must be considered as a primary reason.

Abortion is necessary to help preserve relationships which might otherwise end under the strain of an unwanted child.

Numerous statistical studies over the years show that, of those couples unmarried at the time of an abortion, *over 70%* break up within one year of the abortion. Statistics on the situation among married couples is unavailable, but interviews with aborted married women indicate that these women harbor deep resentment and hostility where they perceive the abortion as due to the wishes of the husband even when they outwardly concurred with that decision. Similarly, married men whose wives abort despite or directly contrary to their desire, evince feelings of impotence, anger and helplessness. Neither situation bodes well for any marriage.

“I am not pro-abortion, I’m ‘pro-choice’”, “I would never have an abortion myself, but I cannot tell someone else what to do.” “I am personally opposed to abortion, but...” “You can’t legislate morality!”

These are the arguments used, by politicians in an attempt to court both pro-life and pro-abortion constituencies. These are also arguments used to excuse the pro-abortion beliefs and actions of politicians and others who belong to pro-life religious bodies. Finally, every felony law against rape, robbery, incest, murder etc. are laws which establish a cultural morality. Law has always been the vehicle by which any society described its most cherished moral and ethical beliefs.

Conclusion:

Abortion is totally destructive. It destroys the woman, the child, the health care professional,* the family structure, the relationship between men and women and eventually, dehumanizes the society which has employed it as a “solution” for its problems. It leads to infanticide [which is already happening in this country], euthanasia [which is already happening in this country] and a loss of respect for human life which fosters increased societal violence and suicide [both of which are already happening in this country]. Death becomes a solution to life’s difficult problems - death, not only of the individual, should he desire it, but for those as well whom the individual finds inconvenient: an unborn or handicapped child, an older

parent and/or all those who are on the fringe of society whom the individual might be called upon to support through taxes or in the name of charity: the poor, the homeless, the elderly and the ill. Elite coteries in government, the bureaucracy, law and medicine have become arbiters of who shall live and who die. At the moment, age and physical condition determine who will die, but it is only a matter of time before such considerations as religion, race or political philosophy place a human being on the “unwanted” and “inconvenient” list.

America can no more survive “half-death” and “half-life”, than she could “half-slave” and “half-free”. All those who value life, liberty and due process as well as those who love God and Neighbor have a duty to fight for an end to this holocaust and a return to the understanding of the sanctity of each and every innocent human life.

*[American doctors no longer take the original Hippocratic Oath. This Oath which protects patients from the depredations of unscrupulous physicians has been abandoned only twice in 2500 years, in Nazi Germany and today in America]

A Response to Recent Violence Associated with the Pro-Life Movement

*Valerie H. Protopapas
Educational Director, Orthodox Christians for Life*

The Pro-Life Movement is under the heaviest attack it has yet to sustain in its twenty-year history. Many people newly come to the movement are considering abandoning their commitment to life in the face of being publicly branded a religious fanatic, hate-monger and murderer. It is unbelievably ironic that those whose only motive is the saving of lives are subjected to such infamy by real murderers, the abortionists and their accomplices in the so-called “pro-choice” movement. Of course, pro-lifers have been called names since they determined not to accept legalized abortion after *Roe vs. Wade* in 1973. The epithets, curses and attacks - vocal, physical and legal - leveled against the defenders of life have been many and furious and have arisen not only from the lunatic fringe of the abortion alliance - radical feminists, militant homosexuals, and other strange beings - but also from the mightiest forces of society - government, law, science, medicine, commerce and the media. If there were ever a modern example of “David and Goliath,” it is the abortion issue in which a relative handful of (mostly) traditional Christians have stood against the force of an entire world culture bent on the wholesale destruction of the unborn.

In the twenty and more years the Pro-Life Movement has existed - and in spite of the frustration of its members as abortion has become institutionalized and continues at the rate of 1.6 million annually in the United States alone - fewer than a dozen people claiming pro-life sympathies have engaged in any kind of violence on behalf of the cause *and no one has been killed or injured as a result of their actions*. Consider: during this same time-period *over thirty million babies have been killed by abortion and countless women have been killed and maimed in abortuaries*. It is clear just where gross acts of violence are being perpetrated and who is perpetrating them legal though they may be. Furthermore, any time there has been any so-called “anti-abortion violence,” the entire Pro-Life Movement has instantly gone on record as condemning the act even though they understood the frustration and anguish animating the actors. All attempts - and they have been many - by the media and local, state and federal law-enforcement agencies to connect those involved to the Pro-Life Movement have been fruitless. In each and every case, one or two people acting alone had directed their animus against property while making every effort to insure that no human life would be placed in jeopardy by their actions. However, in March, 1993, a lone individual not affiliated or associated with any pro-life group or organization, shot and killed a Florida abortionist.

When this incident was broadcast, the Pro-Life Movement was stunned and horrified. The vast majority of pro-lifers immediately condemned the man and his actions but, of course, it was useless. Instantly, abortion supporters everywhere began to call for an FBI investigation of the Pro-Life Movement and a crackdown on pro-lifers, their activities and the groups to which they belong. These people and

their pro-abortion organizations have mendaciously insisted that this single attack by an obviously disturbed individual, is a commonplace occurrence and that the Pro-Life Movement routinely indulges in “terrorism.” Presidents Reagan and Bush were labeled as accomplices(!) as was every person who is now or who has ever been involved in the struggle against abortion. However, these ludicrous charges and the demand that all pro-life activity be curtailed and/or prohibited by law, have been leveled against pro-lifers by pro-abortion supporters since before 1973. They represent an ongoing and largely successful effort to stifle all opposition to abortion and deny the pro-life position access to the public forum. Among the legislative initiatives the abortion movement has demanded from the federal government are:

1] Passage of the so-called “clinic protection act,” making it a federal crime to block access to an abortion facility. However, the term “blocking access” affects not only those who actually seek to prevent persons from entering an abortuary - rescuers - but also those who accost persons entering the facility such as sidewalk counsellors, those offering assistance to desperate women and those distributing literature. Though these people make no attempt to interfere with access, they, too, would be prevented from exercising their Constitutional rights of free speech, association and dissent.

2] The passage of laws to make opposition to abortion a federal crime with extreme penalties. This is in response to the recent Supreme Court ruling in the *Bray* case which said that the Ku Klux Klan act could not be used against pro-life activity as opposition to abortion does not constitute discrimination against women.

3] The passage of F.O.C.A., an extreme law which would remove the few restrictions which presently exist on the procedure such as parental notification for minors having an abortion, conscience clauses to protect pro-life physicians and church-affiliated hospitals, fetal age-limits, safety regulations etc.

Unfortunately, many pro-life sympathizers are not sufficiently informed about the Movement to defend it against this deceitful attack. Truthfully, ***the Pro-Life Movement is totally non-violent and absolutely dedicated to the sanctity of human life.*** Violence is contrary to everything in which the Movement and its followers believe; it is the other side which advocates violence and death. Pro-life activities range from prayer vigils to “rescues” - that is, placing one’s body between the abortionist and his victim. No responsible pro-life person or organization - and the vast majority are responsible - either advocates or practices violence. *However*, pro-lifers have often been *victims* of violence. Those engaged in peaceful, prayerful, non-violent civil disobedience (an accepted tactic of American dissent since the days of the civil rights movement) have been brutally tortured by police and corrections officers in among other American cities, Los Angeles, West Hartford, Atlanta and Pittsburgh. Those engaged in legal and constitutionally protected activities have also been arrested and prosecuted at the behest of the abortion industry. Huge fines and long prison sentences have been levied against people whose only “crime” is

opposition to abortion. If the abortion juggernaut has its way, *all* opposition to abortion will be outlawed. Even pro-life speech - if the abortion movement has its way - will eventually be defined in law as “hate-speech” and censored no matter where it occurs. This premise may sound ludicrous, but remember, 1.6 million legal abortions a year in America once sounded equally farcical.

In this time of the persecution and shrill condemnation of the entire Pro-Life Movement, many may hesitate to remain committed to life - after all, who wants to be associated with murderers. Yet, this fact must be kept in perspective: those who are noisily condemning the Movement for the act of one disturbed man are the *real* murderers:

- Abortionists - not pro-lifers - murder 4,500 children a day.
- Radical feminists - not pro-lifers - want the right to murder any child in the womb.
- Police who torture peaceful, prayerful, unresisting demonstrators - not pro-lifers - murder respect for the law.
- Judges who use their position to punish and curtail dissent - not pro-lifers - murder justice.
- The President of the United States who wants to “jail all rescuers for life” - not pro-lifers - is murdering the Constitution.
- Journalists who lie and blame a Movement for the act of one man - not pro-lifers - are murdering the truth.
- Liberal Christian churches that support abortion - not pro-lifers - are murdering Christian moral witness.
- Christians who abandon the unborn for fear of the World - not pro-lifers - are murdering the Church.

This time of crisis and trial is the time for all Christians to “keep your eyes on the prize” and not waver or despair; this is what Christ requires; this is what the Saints expect; this is what the Church teaches; this is what the Faith demands.

WHAT ABOUT OPERATION RESCUE?

(Non-violent civil disobedience)

We of Orthodox Christians for Life have received numerous questions from our members regarding “OPERATION RESCUE” and other “OR-like” activities and the proper Orthodox response to this type of pro-life activism. We hope the following will be of assistance:

WHAT IS “OPERATION RESCUE”?

Operation Rescue is a revival of the type of passive, non-violent civil disobedience once used so successfully by the civil rights movement in the 50’s and 60’s. Where once demonstrators “sat-in” at lunch counters and other businesses which denied equality to African-Americans, pro-life demonstrators “sit-in” at abortuaries, blocking access to the premises with the intention of preventing the murder of unborn children and the abuse of their mothers. This is not a new phenomena in pro-life, but it has gained tremendous momentum within the last few years.

WHAT DOES IT HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH?

OPERATION RESCUE accomplishes several goals:

- 1] The abortuary is (usually) closed for the day . *No killing can go on there.*
- 2] Statistics prove that, of every abortion cancelled for whatever reason, *one woman in four chooses not to reschedule.* That is, one baby in four - statistically - is saved.
- 3] Closing the abortuary gives sidewalk counsellors a chance to talk to women, offering assistance through a crisis pregnancy center or other pro-life alternative. Many babies have been saved this way.
- 4] Perhaps the most important things accomplished by a Rescue is that the public is made to recognize that killing goes on in that nondescript building around the corner and that Christians (the vast majority of Rescuers are Christians) are saying “no” to abortion.

IS “RESCUE” CONSISTENT WITH OR CONTRARY TO THE TEACHINGS AND DOCTRINES OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH?

The Church has always held that obedience to the Civil Authorities and civil law is the proper course for a Christian. *However*, this is always preached in the context that the civil authorities and the law do not require of the Christian that which is contrary to God’s Will. Hence, the Christians living in Nazi Germany or Communist Russia were required to *disobey* those governments when they demanded unChristian action.

The whole history of the Church and that of the Saints and the Martyrs is one of obedience to God even where such obedience required *disobedience* to the laws of

men and nations. As long as the action being taken is one of Christian love and non-violence in the face of the horrendous situation of abortion, a case can be made that OPERATION RESCUE is reminiscent of historical Christian activity.

DOES ONE HAVE TO PARTICIPATE IN OPERATION RESCUE TO SERVE THE PRO-LIFE EFFORT?

Here the answer is clearly, no. Not everyone is called by God to participate in a sit-in demonstration and be arrested. There are even some who should not do so for various reasons*. However, everyone can come to a RESCUE and peacefully demonstrate in solidarity with those who are called to do so. This activity is completely lawful and calls further public notice to the RESCUE. It may also prevent the use of brutality by the police since the presence of witnesses often interferes with unlawful acts of police brutality and harassment where those do take place. If one is interested in such support activities, contact any local pro-life or OPERATION RESCUE group for information on how to help.

WHAT ARE THE DANGERS IN OPERATION RESCUE?

Clearly, OPERATION RESCUE is not without its perils. Apart from some appalling incidences of police brutality in many cities and towns throughout the nation, getting arrested in this day and age has serious, far-reaching consequences and should be undertaken only after earnest and unemotional consideration coupled with consultation with one's spiritual counsellor.

Young people especially, can find themselves cut off from certain jobs because of an arrest record, such as those which demand so-called "security clearance". Further, abortion advocates have instituted RICO suits and other harassing tactics against pro-lifers who participate in RESCUES.

**RESCUE IS NOT A FRIVOLOUS AND INCONSEQUENTIAL ACTIVITY!
IT SHOULD ONLY BE UNDERTAKEN AFTER THE MOST CAREFUL AND
PRAYERFUL CONSIDERATION!**

CAN I PARTICIPATE IN OPERATION RESCUE AS A MEMBER OF OCLife?

If you have determined, after proper prayer and consideration, that you wish to participate in a RESCUE, there is certainly no reason why you cannot do so as a member of the Orthodox Church and OCLife. Be aware that some RESCUE agencies [not all RESCUES are under OPERATION RESCUE, most are under local control] are rather stridently fundamentalist Protestant and their leadership is reserved for male Protestants. If, however, you merely wish to participate, this condition should not deter you. Once a RESCUE is in progress, all such differences are lost in the common cause.

However, it must be remembered that Orthodox Christians for Life is an educational organization. For reasons of prudence and to protect the founders and

members of OCLife, we ask our members who wish to participate in activities described as “civil disobedience” such as OPERATION RESCUE, that *they not do so in the name of OCLife, but rather, as individual Christians*. It is in this same consideration that OCLife does not sponsor any pro-life activity [with the exception of educational symposiums] including RESCUE, but rather encourages its members to become involved in the abortion issue through local pro-life agencies in the capacity of their choice.

WHAT HAPPENS AT A RESCUE?

The actual events differ from RESCUE to RESCUE and may be anything from a situation where the police ignore the demonstrators and everyone goes home after the abortuary closes for the day, to a full-blown police action with physical violence perpetrated against the RESCUERS. Different parts of the country as well as different cities and localities account for the gamut of possibilities. For information about an actual RESCUE in a particular area, it is best to contact a local group and attend a RESCUE RALLY where one can speak to those who have been on RESCUES and hear the details. *RESCUES are not activities for individualists! Strict discipline is maintained at all times. It is not a “do your own thing” scenario!*

CONCLUSION:

Finally, OCLife does not take any stand with regards as to whether anyone should or should not participate in OPERATION RESCUE. That is beyond our competence as an organization. We do believe that the tactics of OPERATION RESCUE, as long as they remain peaceful, non-violent and loving - which they are at present - reflect the best tradition of the Orthodox Church. Having spoken with quiet, middle-aged Catholic laywomen who have gone to jail in Riker’s Island (New York City) and ministered to the poor women within that miserable institution (and, consequently won such respect that they were given a standing ovation by usually rowdy male prisoners), we cannot but believe that the members of OPERATION RESCUE - in the great majority - represent the best tradition of Christianity and no one should be ashamed to be among them, people, priest or bishop.

{*Persons who, for reasons of psychological aberration, find a “thrill” in pain, fear and/or getting arrested, or those who desire to “atone” for past “sins” (such as having had an abortion) *without having first availed themselves of the healing Sacrament of Confession and Absolution*, are advised *NOT* to participate in RESCUE. Such persons should limit themselves to peripheral involvement such as support prayer-picketing. Any attempt to derive psychological pleasure or expiation from such an activity can lead to even greater sickness and pain. OPERATION RESCUE is designed to *SAVE BABIES*, not to be a drug or a crutch for those with special spiritual and psychological needs.}

To Reflect On:

The Prophecy of St. Nilus the Myrrh-gusher:

(A 16th Century Orthodox prophecy as reported in several Orthodox publications)

After the year 1900, toward the middle of the 20th century, the people of that time will become unrecognizable. When the time for the advent of the Antichrist approaches, people's minds will grow cloudy from carnal passions, and dishonour and lawlessness will grow stronger. Then the world will become unrecognizable. People's appearances will change, 'and it will be impossible to distinguish men from women due to their shamelessness in dress and style of hair. These people will be cruel and will be like wild animals because of the temptations of the Antichrist. There will be no respect for' parents and elders, love will disappear, and Christian pastors, bishops, and priests will become vain men, completely failing to distinguish the right hand way from the left. At that time the morals and traditions of Christians and of the Church will change. People will abandon modesty, and dissipation will reign. Falsehood and greed will attain great proportions, and woe to those who pile up treasure. Lust, adultery, homosexuality, secret deeds, and murder will rule in society.

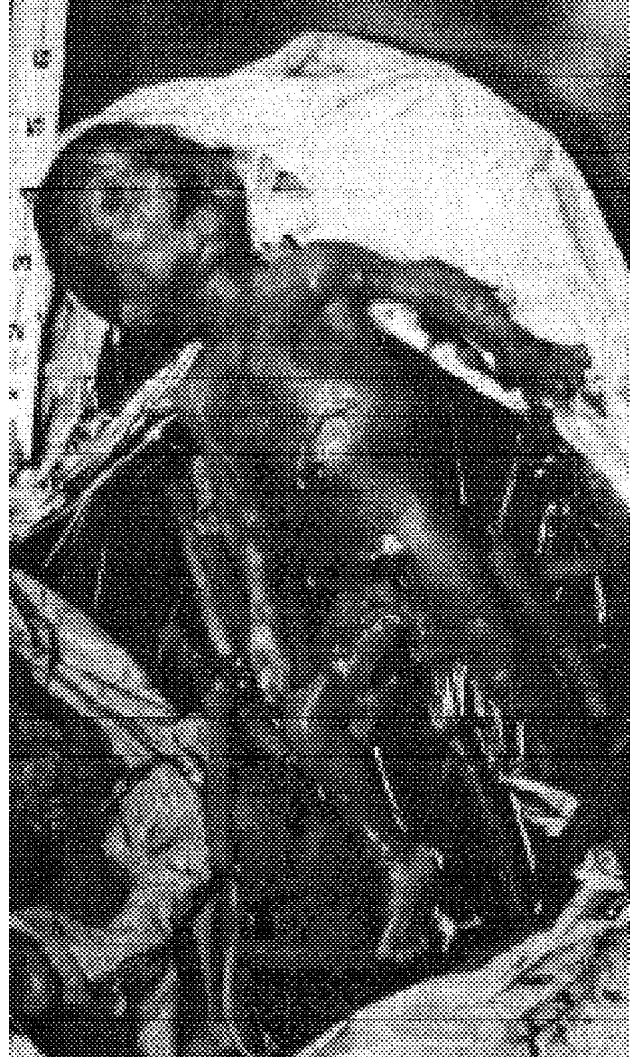
At that future time, due to the power of such great crimes and licentiousness, people will be deprived of the grace of the Holy Spirit, which they received in Holy, Baptism, and equally of remorse. The Churches of God will be deprived of God-fearing and pious pastors, and woe to the Christians remaining in the world at that time; they will completely lose their faith because they will lack the opportunity of seeing the light of knowledge from anyone at all. Then they will separate themselves out of the world in holy refuges in search of lightening of their spiritual sufferings, but everywhere they will meet obstacles and constraints. And all this will result from the fact that the Antichrist wants to be lord over everything and become the ruler of the whole universe, and he will produce myriads and fantastic signs. He will also give depraved wisdom to an unhappy man so that he will discover a way by which one man can carry on a conversation with another from one end of the earth to the other. At that time men will also fly through the air like birds and descend to the bottom of the sea like fish. And when they have achieved all this, these unhappy people will spend their lives in comfort without knowing, poor souls, that it is the deceit of the Antichrist. And, the impious one! - he will so confuse science with vanity that it will go off the right path and lead people to lose faith in the existence of God in three hypostasis.

Then the All-good God will see the down fall of the human race and will shorten the days for the sake of those few who are being saved, because the enemy wants to lead even the chosen into temptation, if that is possible. Then the sword of chastisement will suddenly appear and kill the perverter and his servants.

A Plea for a Consistent Sanctity of Life Perspective

In any debate over abortion, the use of photographs of aborted unborn children usually evokes strong negative reactions. This phenomenon is quite puzzling in light of the visual publicity accorded to Nazi atrocities against the Jews, massacres in Vietnam and Central America or even the gruesome bludgeoning of Harp Seal pups by hunters. These images are shown again and again to underscore the horrors associated with them.

However, when shown a picture such as the aborted child on the right, many



people are shocked, offended and very often severely criticize those who use such pictures to educate about the fundamental horror of abortion. These photographs are usually described as obscene, in bad taste and unsuitable for viewing. As well, the media suppresses this evidence . . .

It seems to me there is something wrong in all this. We put up with all sorts of graphic violence in the media. But when it comes to abortion, there is great intolerance shown even among those who object to the killing of the unborn. And

rather than reacting against the act, more often than not hostility is directed to those exhibiting pictures which expose the evil.

Why this double standard? Why the hypocrisy? Where is the compassion for this child? Who will love this child with the Love of Christ? Can anyone give a rational explanation of the psychology involved?

***Every human being
who has been, is being, or ever will be
conceived
is a unique creation of God
and, once gone, will never be
again . . .***

John Protopapas

A Commentary

Who has not seen the pictures of children suffering the ravages of war, disease and famine? Whose heart does not go out to these dying and dead - limbs blown off, faces mutilated, skeletal bodies covered with flies and dung? Who complains that such sights “offend” when they appear in newspapers and magazines or on television?

These grisly images *are expressly intended to shock as part of a calculated effort to elicit a strong emotional response*. Why? Obviously so that the viewer is incited to “help” either by donating money or pressuring politicians to intervene to “stop the slaughter.” In other words, pictures of suffering and dead infants and children are premeditatedly used as propaganda objects to further a desired social/political cause. Everyone knows this is so, but no one objects because the cause involved is usually considered worthy and just.

However, there is one cause where the pictures *are not* shown - in fact, *they are forbidden, censored and banned*. Whenever that cause is the subject of debate, those who champion these dying and dead children are specifically instructed, “*no pictures!*” But how can this be when the utilization of such pictures is a routine part of so many social/political causes? Simply put, it is because *this* cause - the campaign against abortion - is not “politically correct” and those who advocate abortion rights greatly fear that the pictures of aborted babies would elicit that same strong emotional response from the public that arises out of other similar displays. And as the media is irredeemably pro-abortion, Americans have been in the past and continue to be in the present, denied the truth about what abortion actually does as indisputably manifested, confirmed and illustrated *by the pictures*.

Oh, there are excuses given for this blatant censorship: the pictures of aborted babies are “obscene” (the babies are naked; they are also decapitated, dismembered and burned); they are “offensive” (it is the reality that they represent, not they, that offends). Children would be shocked (it is *adults* who would be shocked and that is what abortion advocates fear) and, of course, the most ridiculous excuse, television

is “not allowed”(?!) to show such “obscene,” “offensive” and “shocking” pictures.

Apologists for the murder of the unborn declare that abortion is and must continue to be a matter of “free choice.” Yet, they deliberately interfere with that choice by censoring from the public forum one side of the issue because they fear exposure of abortion through the publication of the pictures of its victims. As long as those victims remain a mere intellectual concept - that is, they remain silent and invisible- the debate over abortion will remain just that, a debate. The commitment on either side will remain numerically with abortion supporters who know of its evil but support it anyway for financial or ideological reasons. If, however, the American public *actually sees the truth about abortion* through the wide-spread distribution of the pictures of its victims, their propaganda about the benign nature and the benefits of the procedure will be revealed as the frightful lie that it is. That is why they must censor the pictures.

Americans must demand, in the name of truth and justice that the mass media **SHOW THE PICTURES!** -

by Valerie Protopapas

***Orthodox Doctrines on the Sanctity of Life
and
The Opportunity for Evangelization***

The Orthodox Church in the United States has for the last several years been focused on evangelization in accordance with the command of our Lord to “go and make disciples of all nations.” Unfortunately, those efforts seem to have been primarily directed at unchurched persons of “suitable ethic background” while evangelization of the *American* culture has been largely an exercise in contemplation rather than action. In fact, conversions of persons from non-Orthodox cultures continue to be more in the manner of the convert seeking the Church than vice versa.

One reason why Orthodox evangelization has been so fruitless in this nation is that many Orthodox do not know how best to get Church’s message to the culture and, indeed, this is a profound dilemma. The Church speaks to the world in three ways: *worship, theology and ethics-morals*. When Christianity held sway in the culture, worship and theology were virtually the only means of evangelization as they defined the Orthodox Church in contrast to all others. On the other hand, the ethical and moral doctrines of Christianity, East and West, were absolute and presented no real means of evangelization. The tenets of Scripture on these matters were unfailingly taught whatever differences existed in theology and worship among the religious bodies of the day.

But that is not the case today. With the secularization (and many believe demonization) of the culture and the disintegration of Western Christianity, worship and theology have become almost useless as tools of *widespread* evangelization even though they remain useful in certain limited circumstances. But consider: how can one appeal to religious illiterates through the use of Trinitarian doctrine or pagans through discussion of Christian worship? On the other hand, the

ethical-moral leg of the Apostolic triad has become immensely important for the great *social issues* of the day - and especially abortion - seize and hold the attention of millions of people. The position of an individual or group on these issues directly affects the amount of exposure to the culture accorded them by the media and the strength of that individual or group's commitment to the issues is general judged by how strongly their position is expressed. ***As a result, a strong, high-profile stand against abortion and in favor of the sanctity of human life will necessarily attract the attention of millions.***

Of course, most of that exposure and a considerable amount of the attention it garners will be negative but that is not always unfortunate. Many who strongly support abortion are actually better people than those who are indifferent and apathetic to the systematic murder of unborn children. These people desperately need to be released from delusion and, more often than not, healed of whatever sins have made them pro-death in the first place. But once they are healed and have received the Peace of Christ, they quite often become the strongest workers for the cause of life and excellent Christians in the bargain.

Consider, too, those who would be drawn to the strong pro-life stand of the Church because they are pro-life themselves and work diligently in that area. Often they are Christians suffering from their own denomination's "pro-choice" position. But even many Roman Catholics are unhappy with the lack of enthusiastic support they get for their commitment to life from "American" Catholicism. That disappointment together with other problems they have with the Novos Ordo Church makes them eminently open to the "orthodoxy" Orthodoxy offers. As for the unchurched within the pro-life movement: the Orthodox Church represents a great gift from God, a reward for their faithfulness to His Little Ones. In short, whether the attention gained from a strong stand on the abortion issue is negative or positive, there will be a gathering of souls into the Church.

Unquestionably, these great social issues offer the Church the means by which to begin serious evangelization. Primarily, they present opportunities for exposure to the culture in ways far more meaningful than ethnic festivals and halupki sales. Such exposure is paramount for evangelization since our continued obscurity is perhaps our greatest disadvantage. Light hidden under a bushel cannot light the world. Further, our relatively few numbers are less important in this area because the issues themselves - and especially abortion - are so controversial that even small groups - *provided they are bold* - gain publicity all out of proportion to their size. ***However, in order to utilize Orthodoxy's moral doctrines for the cause of evangelization, a concerted campaign must be waged on every level and at every opportunity to promote and publicize the Church's position on the sanctity of innocent human life.*** Metropolitans, archbishops, bishops, priests, seminaries, monasteries and laity must be *highly visible* in this battle otherwise, our efforts will be totally (and rightly) discounted as the mere recitation of meaningless cant and become a sterile exercise in futility.

Most importantly, the Church must not fear those who are presently considered "Orthodox" who may be scandalized and leave the Church because of this public witness. Those who cannot accept Orthodox doctrine on ethics and morals as well

as theology are Orthodox in name only and their departure is merely a physical manifestation of that which has already occurred spiritually. To hold hostage the entire Church in an effort to placate such people is an apostasy and a sin against the Holy Spirit who demands that the Church witnesses the Truth whatever the consequences- yes, even to the loss of “numbers” and the revenue those numbers generate.

The embarkation on such a great Evangelical effort will insure that the Orthodox Church in America will gather converts and incur criticism, be bestowed with blessings and reviled with curses - evangelization is not a “safe” activity. Yet, as in all of history, the Church must be willing to endure the latter in order to obtain the former. That is Her reason for existence.

by Valerie Protopapas

The Personal Testimony of Vera Lord

The following autobiography is a true story. It is a tragedy familiar to anyone who has worked in the pro-life movement and the saddest thing is that it continues and will continue until and unless the slaughter ends. Could an energetic witness to the sanctity of human life and other moral doctrines of the Orthodox Church have prevented this tragedy? And might not such a witness prevent similar tragedies in the future? The unfortunate thing is that we will never know the truth about that until such a witness exists in both the Church and the culture; it is even more unfortunate that that strong witness becomes less probable with every passing day.

I have a small ghost who follows me everywhere. He changes. Sometimes he’s an infant, sometimes a toddler, sometimes - mostly now - he’s a teenage boy.

I was 34 when I killed my child. If I had allowed him to live, he would have been born in August, just like his mother. There is not a moment of my life that he is not with me. Our relationship has changed. In the past, I always saw him as my accuser or my judge. Today, my murdered child is no longer my judge, but a sad regretful ghost, whose smile I have never seen.

I was 21 weeks pregnant. I had felt movement. There is no easy “it was just a piece of tissue” argument for me. One more week, and I would have been beyond the legal limit for abortion in the state where I lived. There are many so-called “mitigating factors” that led to my killing my baby at 21 weeks of life:

Until three days before the abortion, I did not know I was pregnant. I had had three negative pregnancy tests and thought my growing stomach was a tumor similar to those that had killed several in my family. The movement I felt I dismissed as gas. Having no idea of my condition, I had continued to smoke three packs of cigarettes a day and abuse alcohol and drugs - mostly methamphetamines. I was in a dysfunctional abusive marriage and my baby was not conceived in love - he was conceived in extreme violence.

I was going to leave out all three of the above, but I have told you about them for a very important reason: The abortion industry would cite any and all of the above as reason enough to kill my child, since they consider any “inconvenient” pregnancy abortable and, although mine

was not life-threatening to me, it went far beyond “inconvenient.” Those who practice abortion would have you believe that all three of these factors absolve me of guilt, and make the murder of my child perfectly all right - rather like the extraction of an impacted wisdom tooth - painful and regrettable and stressful, but totally necessary.

Well-meaning friends have all at one time or another said things like this: “With all the nicotine, alcohol, and drugs, you would have had a seriously damaged child - abortion was the kind thing to do.” “Considering who the father was, the child could’ve been a serial killer - better to abort.” “It was the result of a near-rape in a violent, abusive marriage - better to abort.” “You were forced into it by your crazy ex when you were in a weakened condition - you’re not responsible anyhow.” “You did the best and only thing you could do - get on with your life.”

You see? I have to tell you my story, because, if any case exemplifies a supposed guiltfree abortion, it is mine. I’ve heard every rationalization - every single one. I have lived behind the feel-good, warm and fuzzy walls of public opinion, political correctness, and conventional wisdom - and I am here to tell you it is all unmitigated [absolute nonsense].

Every pro-abortion argument is a lie. You probably think that I am about to take all the abortion industry slogans and dissect them one by one, winning each point with flawless logic, like a good political debate- I don’t need to do that - You already know. I already knew. We are female. It is our nature to be mothers. Our mothering can vary from cold indifference to smothering adulation, but mothers we are. We cannot fathom the horror of a Susan Smith, who can put her two little boys in a car and push it into a lake. We see her as another species - a creature in a horror film.

I have a theory. I have lost many friends by openly espousing this theory, so read on at your own risk. Despite the fact that we are now highly-evolved, computer-using intellectuals, I believe that the primitive part of our brain, the part that is pure instinct, is alive and well. Case in point: At age 13, I developed a crush on a 15 year-old boy. I proceeded to seduce him. No sex, this was 1961, - what I mean is - I seduced him. All the glances, all the subtle moves, the whole female arsenal. All that ancient primal knowledge was just suddenly there - pure gut-level instinct, coming from some part of my brain that had, until that moment, lain totally dormant.

I may as well have started conversing fluently in Mandarin Chinese. I just, inexplicably, knew how. I believe that on the same primal gut level, we all know - really know - that abortion is murder at its most horrific. Telling ourselves that it is anything else is pure denial. All the careful layers of makeup we blend over it are for naught. We know it for what it is. And that pure soul-knowledge cannot be erased or eradicated by all the feel-good rationalizations on earth.

Self-hatred may be the worst sin - I know it is certainly the worst feeling. After I killed my baby, self-hatred became my whole life. Subconsciously, I thought suicide to be too easy an out (much like the notion that lethal injection is too easy a punishment for many really brutal murderers). So I did not kill my physical body as I had killed my child - instead I committed emotional and spiritual suicide.

I created a whole new personality. Since then, I have had psychiatrists tell me that what I did was not unusual - very similar to child abuse victims, who “split-off,” and become another personality in order to deal with the abuse.

During the next 17 years, there were many times when I literally did not know the person in the mirror. Self-hatred colored my every waking and sleeping moment. It was as if I had pushed an invisible self-destruct button. I divorced my husband only to enter into a disastrous marriage with a man I did not love, who I knew to be totally dependent and incapable of honest work, and

proceeded to allow myself to be used by him and his family for 13 years. Deep inside, I was convinced I deserved all of it. My self-worth had totally disappeared. All the things I had loved to do in my old life were now off-limits - I would not allow myself enjoyment. Dreamless sleep was my only respite, and it did not come often. When I did pray, it was a secret prayer - I prayed to die -to simply cease. I believe in an after-life, and I knew that hell itself could not be any worse than the life I was experiencing.

The pain would lie in wait and ambush me at unexpected times. A scene on TV, a passage in a book - always about someone's missed chance at being a mother. I would be overcome by the kind of racking sobs that are more like spasms than crying. I wanted to just lie down and go to sleep and never get up. I lived in this self-imposed hell for 16 years.

Then, in 1997 a heart condition I'd had since childhood became suddenly worse, and I decided to move back to the east coast to die. As always, I was last on my own priority list. My main reason for the move was so that the leech I'd married would have a better chance at getting work after I was gone.

Living again on the east coast and in the same state where I'd had a happy youth was like sprinkling water on a nearly-dead plant. The total change in environment created the first crack in my shell of self-hatred. I slowly began to feel like me again.

In the fall of 1997, came the event that finally set me free. I was taken as a guest to the All-Saints Greek Orthodox Church. Although, in my youth, I had studied nearly every major religion, I had never entered an Orthodox Christian Church. Suddenly, I was home. All the pieces of my life fell into place. Although I really knew no one there except my host, it was undeniably my home. I took instruction with my Spiritual Father for the next 10 months, and on August 28, 1998, I was chrismated. At the confession before my chrismation, I finally, after nearly two decades of wandering in hell, laid down my burden. My Spiritual Father, an Orthodox priest who can trace his priesthood in a direct line to the Apostles, in much the same ceremony performed in the Catacombs, laid his hand on my head, and, in Christ's name, forgave me of the murder of my child. I am free.

Regaining my self-love has led to my regaining something else that I thought was lost forever. I have entered into a loving relationship with the most wonderful man in the world and I am truly blessed. I am indeed free.

Which brings me to the reason I am telling you my story. When I first began classes in the Orthodox religion, I read everything I could about Orthodox views on everything. All that I read said that Orthodox Christians were anti-abortion. I asked when and where does the local Orthodox Right-to-Life group meet? Huge faux pas - vaguely akin to a loud burp at a sophisticated cocktail party. I am a very fast learner- I never make the same social error twice.

I circled warily around the issue, and, by bits and pieces, I learned that the charitable organizations, the food festival committees, the fund-raisers, were all politically correct. Even the occasional weekend retreat at the monastery, as I was in the habit of doing, was just fine. But, abortion? "It's no one's business and each woman's private choice" - now tell me again, which food festival committee are you joining?

Excuse me, but it is my business. It is not your private choice to kill your baby, and, if I can persuade you not to commit the same awful life-ruining act that I did, it is my duty to do so.

There is a huge echoing silence from the Orthodox Church on abortion. Strange, but everyone who tells me that "it's a woman's private choice" is a mother and/or grandmother. Perhaps they fear their daughters or granddaughter may be faced with a life-disrupting pregnancy and want an

escape hatch.

As it turned out, the baby I murdered was my last chance. I am an only child of an only child, who had me late in life. All of my relatives are dead. I am divorced. I have no legal or biological family. I am 52 years old, and I am no one's daughter, sister, cousin, most of all, I am no one's mother, niece, wife, and at this point, you're probably thinking "here's the part where I'll be asked to join some group, make my voice heard, etc., etc." Wrong.

You've just read my story. I murdered my child. Because of that act, I spent 18 years in the depths of hell itself, and did a pretty good job of murdering my own soul. And yet, the first time a dearly-valued friend said to me, "it's nobody's business - it's the woman's own private choice, don't you agree?" (This was exactly like someone telling a holocaust survivor, with a number tattooed on their forearm, that the holocaust was a myth and didn't they agree?) What do you suppose, considering what you know about me - what do you suppose I said?? I said nothing. To my eternal shame, I said nothing. I did the cowardly, socially-acceptable thing, and politely changed the subject.

I'm not asking you to march in parades and wave placards and sign petitions or even to put a bumper sticker on your car. I can't do any of those things. I am not a placard waving, in-your-face activist. Here it is: The next time anyone, even a dearly-valued friend or family member tells you "It's a woman's choice," don't say anything. Just give them a copy of this article. If reading this can make one person even just begin to reconsider their "Pro-Choice" position, I have succeeded.

I would give my own life to be able to go back in time and allow my child to live. I cannot. I pray that your showing someone - just one person - this story will cause someone to stop and reconsider before they perform the same horrible act that killed my child and nearly killed me.

I need no perfect, logical arguments. You know, in your soul, that abortion is the murder of your baby. In the name of 2,000 years of Orthodox Christianity, I say now, break your silence and speak - not in parades and demonstrations, but quietly, as you are reading this now - one child of God at a time.

Written by my hand and published at my request,

Vera Lord
Bethel Park, Pa

Abortion Quiz
(answer True or False)

- 1] Abortion on demand (no medical reason) is available through all nine months of pregnancy. T___ F___
- 2] States may only regulate abortion in the last two trimesters by defining by whom and where an abortion may be performed. T___ F___
- 3] Physicians must inform a woman about the abortion procedure (informed consent). T___ F___
- 4] If a child is viable (able to live outside the womb) the state may make laws to protect the child's life if it is aborted alive. T___ F___
- 5] Most abortions are performed in doctor's offices. T___ F___
- 6] Over 4500 children are aborted daily in the United States. T___ F___
- 7] A minor child (under 18 years of age) must obtain parental permission before having an abortion. T___ F___
- 8] A minor child (under 18 years of age) must obtain parental permission before having her ears pierced. T___ F___
- 9] Many states pay for abortion for women on welfare. T___ F___
- 10] The new "health care plan" being drawn up by the administration will probably include coverage for abortion. T___ F___
- 11] The father of an unborn child must be consulted before an abortion is he is married to the mother. T___ F___
- 12] Abortion is a form of contraception. T___ F___
- 13] Since 1974, 1.6 million children have been annually aborted in the United States alone. T___ F___
- 14] Abortion is usually safer than childbirth. T___ F___
- 15] At 24 days an unborn child has a heartbeat and at 5 weeks brainwaves comparable to an adult human being. T___ F___
- 16] Most abortions take place at around 12 weeks (3 months). T___ F___
- 17] Abortion is a multi-million dollar industry in the United States. T___ F___
- 18] Married women with no money problems aren't having abortions. T___ F___
- 19] New York State pays over \$18 million a year in Medicaid abortions. T___ F___
- 20] Planned Parenthood is the world's largest promoter and provider of abortion. T___ F___
- 21] Abortion is the best solution for a "crisis pregnancy." T___ F___
- 22] Except in rare cases, there are no physical or psychological aftereffects of an abortion T___ F___
- 23] Abortion has always been a recognized constitutional right. T___ F___
- 24] Aborting unwanted children has lowered the rate of child abuse in the United States. T___ F___
- 25] Abortion-on-demand is supported by most Americans. T___ F___

Answers below

Answers to Quiz on page 8
1-T, 2-T, 3-F, 4-F, 5-T, 6-T, 7-F, 8-T, 9-T, 10-T, 11-F, 12-F, 13-T, 14-F, 15-T, 16-T, 17-T, 18-F, 19-T, 20-T, 21-F, 22-F, 23-F, 24-F, 25-F. If any of these answers startle you, please contact us for the true story about abortion. Please give this test to your own parish - especially the teenagers - to discover just how much your fellow Orthodox "know" about abortion THAT ISN'T TRUE!

About Orthodox Christians for Life

Orthodox Christians for Life (OCLife) is a non-profit religious educational Pro-Life organization consisting of members primarily from the Eastern Orthodox Church which is recognized as a fourth major faith in the United States. OCL was founded in early 1986 by Rev. Edward Pehanich an Orthodox priest of the American Carpatho-Russian jurisdiction and John Protopapas, now a Subdeacon of the Orthodox Church in America. It functions in cooperation with the hierarchy, clergy, and laity of the Orthodox Church regardless of jurisdiction or geographical location; and supports the doctrines and canons of the Church. The organization consists of over 700 members (including four chapters) in the United States, Canada, and England as of March 2001. It is also open to interested non-Orthodox Christians on an affiliate basis. OCLife maintains a web page: www.oclife.org and an E-Mail address: oclifehq@aol.com.

Our Vision

The aims and goals of **Orthodox Christians for Life** are as follows:

- (1) To present and support the position of the Orthodox Church on matters of the sanctity of innocent human life to all peoples, Orthodox Christian and non-Orthodox alike. This includes not only abortion, but also euthanasia, infanticide (pediatric euthanasia), suicide, and child abuse.*
- (2) To initiate and encourage education and energize action on all issues of sanctity of human life in all Orthodox parishes regardless of jurisdiction.*
- (3) To act as a clearing house for information relating to sanctity of life issues for the Orthodox Christian community.*
- (4) To aid and assist all those who wish to establish sanctity of life programs or Pro-Life groups on a parish, diocesan, or archdiocesan level and to have representatives available to work with those who wish to establish such programs.*
- (5) To reiterate and underscore traditional Christian values such as the sanctity of marriage, the blessing of children, the holiness of chastity (both in and out of marriage), the honoring of parents, the love of one's neighbor, and of course, the sanctity of all innocent human life regardless of age or condition of health.*
- (6) To work in a cooperative spirit with all Pro-Life organizations, regardless of religious affiliation, providing they espouse a complimentary sanctity of life ethic. In this area we serve as a unique witness to the teachings of the Early Christian Church.*
- (7) To present the Orthodox position on these issues to the secular culture.*

Examples of our activities include the recent coordination and creation of an Amicus Brief submitted to the United States Supreme Court (February 23, 1989) on behalf of the Orthodox Church which supports the State of Missouri (Webster Case) in the effort to overturn *Roe v. Wade*. Since 1986 we have coordinated the Orthodox Christian presence in the annual January 22 March for Life in Washington, DC.

The years 1989 and 1990 saw four Orthodox bishops (offices as of 1990) participating in the March for Life: Bishop Herman (OCA), Bishop Nathaniel (OCA), Bishop Nicholas (American Carpatho-Russian), and Bishop Maximos (Greek Archdiocese); in 1996 there were over 400 bishops, clergy, and lay from various parts of the United States participat-

ing. In recent years the usual participation has been two hundred,

Orthodox Christians for Life is primarily a religious-educational organization and does not organize marches, demonstrations, or sit-ins; however, we do participate in such Pro-Life events as a group, or as individuals, providing they are peaceful and do not conflict with Church doctrine.

A yearly subscription to our newsletter, **Rachel's Children** is \$5.00 per year; a suggested minimum membership contribution is \$10.00 year and includes the newsletter. Recognition pins are available for \$6.00. All donations and membership funds made out to: Orthodox Christians for Life (in U.S. Dollars). Please allow 6-8 weeks .

If you are interested in **Orthodox Christians for Life** write to: Valerie Protopapas, Executive Secretary, P.O. Box 805, Melville, NY 11747 or Phone (631) 271-4408. E-mail: oclifehq@aol.com.

Staff

Rev. Deacon John Protopapas,
National Director and Co-founder

Rev. Fr. Edward Pehanich,
Spiritual Director and Co-Founder

Matushka Valerie Protopapas,
Educational Director, Executive Secretary, and Co-Founder

V. Rev. John Kowalczyk,
Theological Consultant

Mr. James George Jatras, Esq.,
Legislative Director and Legal Adviser

Dr. Peter S. Rosi, MD
Medical Consultant

Mr. Paul Tish
Internet Webmaster

OCLife Operating Guidelines:

(1) The organization known as Orthodox Christians for Life shall be in conformity with the canons and teachings of the Holy Orthodox Church and shall meet the criteria outlined above.

(2) Full membership in Orthodox Christians for Life is reserved to those who are baptized, chrismated, and communicating members of the Orthodox Church, regardless of jurisdiction; associate membership is available to Christians who are not Orthodox. Area representatives or contacts shall be established in key geographical locations to serve as focal points of communications with the main office. All official positions are non-salaried. Out of pocket expenses for work and material directly related to the operation of Orthodox Christians for Life shall be reimbursed.

(3) A newsletter shall be published no less than three (3) times a year; it shall be titled "Rachel's Children."

(4) Full membership to Orthodox Christians for Life is accorded by contributing a desired target minimum donation of \$10.00 per year per person; family memberships are a minimum donation of \$15.00 per year.; life membership is accorded to those donating \$100.00 or more; students and senior citizens are \$5.00 per year; for those who are members of OCLife chapters or affiliated groups, a minimum of \$5.00 per person per year group membership shall be available; clergy membership is a minimum of \$5.00 per year; hierarchs and monastics are to be accorded complimentary membership if desired. Membership includes a yearly subscription of the Newsletter.

(5) Orthodox Christians for Life can be also identified by the acronym - "OCLife" which has been in use since 1986 and is not to be confused with another organization, "Orthodox Christian Laymen" which uses the acronym (OCL) and is not involved in sanctity of life issues.

(6) Chapter affiliation: local groups may form as chapters of Orthodox Christians for Life; they must, in addition to conforming to the bylaws of Orthodox Christians for Life:

(a) Call themselves (*Name*) Orthodox Christians for Life or Orthodox Christians for Life of (*Name*) [eg: *Anyplace* Orthodox Christians for Life or Orthodox Christian for Life of *Anyplace*]; there must be no ethnic or jurisdictional connotations to the appended name.

(b) Not advocate, endorse, sponsor, initiate, or willfully participate in any violent action and maintain membership in Orthodox Christians for Life.

(c) Not sponsor, endorse, or directly participate in acts of civil disobedience as representing the parent group, "Orthodox Christians for Life"; they, however, may as individuals, participate in, or sponsor, peaceful non-violent forms of protest and acts of civil disobedience as their conscience dictates. There is no prohibition as to mentioning that they

belong to "Orthodox Christians for Life," but they may not claim to act in its name.

(d) Chapters are responsible for their finances and electing their own officers. They are to periodically report their activities and progress for publication in our newsletter "Rachel's Children."

(7) Affiliates or Chapters may not exclusively form under ethnic or jurisdictional lines. They may form on an individual parish or diocesan basis, providing membership is open to all Orthodox Christians in the surrounding geographical area who wish to participate in the local activities.

(8) Membership in Orthodox Christians for Life is world wide and is not strictly limited to the United States and Canada.

(9) No member of Orthodox Christians for Life may take any unilateral action or claim to speak on behalf of the parent organization without first consulting and obtaining the written permission of the following staff members: (1) Executive Director and (2) Spiritual Advisor.

(10) Orthodox Christians for Life as an organization shall not affiliate with any secular organizations; it shall be free to work with Pro-life organizations for the purposes of a common Pro-Life witness, but shall remain independent in its actions, ultimately submitting itself only to conformity to the doctrines and canons of the Holy Orthodox Church. Individuals may personally affiliate with any other Pro-life organization as they see fit providing that they conform to the aforementioned guidelines. Furthermore, in ecumenical encounters, we do not ascribe to the concept of "denominationalism," but maintain in all love and humility that the Orthodox Church is the one true Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. Thus, we consider ourselves to be a "communion" or a "religious body," but not a "denomination."

(11) The "logo" for Orthodox Christians for Life shall be that used on the prosphora (eucharistic bread), signifying that we are a eucharistic community gathered around the center of our lives, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ who is the "Bread of Life;" said logo shall appear on any recognition pin, masthead of newsletters, business cards, and official letterheads.

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Parent Group mailing address:

Orthodox Christians for Life
P.O. Box 805, Melville, NY 11747

The central office is physically located at:

14 Peartree Lane
Huntington Station, NY 11746
Phone: (631) 271-4408

General Discussion:

Although most of those who belong to Orthodox Christians for Life do so on the basis of individual membership, there are times when a group of people on the parish or diocesan level wish to integrate those individual memberships into a Chapter. The benefits of such an arrangement are numerous, not the least being a stronger voice in the parish, diocese and local pro-life arena.

Orthodox Christians for Life (OCLife) was conceived as an organization of loosely joined chapters with the central head located on Long Island, New York. At the time of its inception, the founders of OCLife recognized that there was no way the limited group comprising the leadership of the organization could actively pursue the Orthodox "sanctity of life" witness throughout the United States [and Canada]. Therefore it would be necessary to have an active membership working together who would be in a position to present that witness around the country.

The ultimate goal of Orthodox Christians for Life is to educate interested Orthodox Christians so that they, in turn, can witness to the teachings of the Orthodox Church on the sanctity of human life in their own area of the country. This witness should be both to their fellow Orthodox and to the World at large. In order to do this, OCLife has presented and will continue to present information in the form of a newsletter (Rachel's Children) and other publications containing insights and facts of interest in the pro-life area.

Needless to say, any chapter of Orthodox Christians for Life must espouse only those things which are in concert with the dogmas and doctrines of the Orthodox Church and which are represented in the bylaws and statements of the national organization. When and if any chapter or individual is in doubt as to whether a statement or activity of said chapter or individual is in keeping with this stipulation, they are [he is] obligated to contact the national organization for clarification of the matter involved.

Duties of a Chapter:

Orthodox Christians for Life chapters which are formed within Churches or in some other arrangement have duties to the parent organization which include:

(1) All publications which have in its name the title Orthodox Christians for Life must be accurate as to content, consistent with Orthodox doctrines and reflect Christian teachings regarding especially, the command of brotherly love. Special care must be taken to see that nothing printed and distributed using the name of Orthodox Christians for Life can be used to bring suit against either the parent organization, the local chapter, or officials thereof.

(2) Similarly, all activities which are done in the name of the chapter must be legal, even though the law may be unjust. Participation in instances of civil disobedience [such as Operation Rescue] except when it can be proven that such participation in no way violates any ordinance, law or regulation, local, state or federal [such as being a "prayer supporter" at a Rescue] is forbidden *in the name of the organization*. This stipulation is in an effort to avoid Orthodox Christians for Life and/or any of its chapters or members

being named in a “RICO” or other criminal or civil lawsuit which is a current tactic of the abortion movement to impoverish pro-life advocates. Orthodox Christians for Life must insist that, should any of its members wish to participate in such an activity, it must be done on an individual basis and not be represented to the authorities or the media as participation by the organization at the local or national level. This restriction, of course, does not pertain to participation in any march, picket, demonstration or other public assembly which falls within the Constitutional guarantees of the freedoms of speech, dissent and assembly.

(3) The chapter is not obligated to financially support the national organization unless it desires to do so. However, all chapter members must be members of the national organization. In the case of the sale of items bearing the Orthodox Christians for Life logo [such as the OCLife pin], the chapter will be required to reimburse the national organization for the cost of the items plus shipping and can then use the resale of those items locally for fund-raising should the chapter so desire. Of course, all items bearing the Orthodox Christians for Life name and/or logo, especially those which constitute acknowledgement of membership - such as the pin - should be sold or distributed only to those who meet the necessary criteria for said membership. In some cases this might include non-Orthodox individuals who have performed unusual services to the pro-life community or who are interested in furthering the Orthodox witness, but these things should never be considered in the same category as “souvenirs” which can be sold to anyone.

(4) Where there is any question regarding some function or activity by the chapter, someone in authority within the chapter must contact the national organization for clearance. This is especially important where there is any possible legal consequence of the chapter’s or member’s involvement. Orthodox Christians for Life does have two attorneys on its board who can rule on the legal consequences of intended actions by either the national organization or any of its chapters; as well, our clergy representatives may do the same for any spiritual suitability.

(5) The local chapter must work in concert with the Church at the parish, diocesan and national level, whatever the jurisdiction involved. In so saying, however, we recognize that not all parish priests or diocesan functionaries view the pro-life movement in a favorable light. It is therefore important that we treat these situations in a loving Christian fashion, at least avoiding open confrontation and bitterness. The national organization will be happy to assist local chapters with any internecine difficulties where possible and to provide suggestions and any other help which might be of use in such a situation. There is, at the present, a good working relationship between Orthodox Christians for Life and most of the jurisdictions of the Orthodox Church in the United States.

(6) Chapters must remember that Orthodox Christians for Life is a volunteer, non-profit religious-educational organization. Any activities designed to raise funds should be for the chapter’s day to day operational expenses or to support Pro-Life efforts within and outside the Orthodox Church.

Responsibilities of National Organization to Local Chapter:

The national organization of Orthodox Christians for Life is obligated to assist its chapters in such ways as:

(1) Presenting said chapters with a copy of the organization's bylaws upon request and all statements which have been issued by Orthodox Christians for Life pertaining to the teaching of the Orthodox Church on abortion, euthanasia, etc. where available. Furthermore, any future publications by the national organization will be made available to said chapters at cost and all those publications, statements, etc. which are not under copyright can be reproduced and distributed by the chapters without recourse to the national organization. However, there must be credit to the source and/or author.

(2) Answering in a timely way any inquiries or requests from chapters. Where a delay in answering becomes inevitable for reasons beyond human control, the national organization will inform the interested chapter as to the nature and probable length of the delay.

(3) The national organization will make every attempt to assist a chapter with any difficulties it may encounter in its operation. However, it is to be understood that chapters should make every attempt to function without recourse to the national organization except on an emergency basis.

These are the basic blueprints for establishing a local chapter of Orthodox Christians for Life. OCLife is not a highly structured organization and is easily adaptable to the needs of almost every situation. Where formation within a local parish is, for some reason undesirable or impossible, a chapter may still be formed by interested Orthodox external of the parish structure. A case can be made for the superiority of several smaller chapters rather than one large one, however, if fragmentation presents problems of involvement and/or member participation, then the opposite may be true. It is up to the individual members to decide which, in their situation, is best.

For further questions or objections to the contents of these guidelines contact: John Protopapas (631) 271-4408 - 6:30-10:30PM on weekends 7:00AM to 5:00PM Sat. or Sun. 2:00-10:30PM (Eastern Time); Email: oclifhq@aol.com

Recommended Further Reading for the Basics:

Orthodox:

The Sacred Gift of Life
ISBN = 0-88141-183-3, St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 320 pp,
Focuses on the unprecedented advances in bioethics over the past 30 years based on Scripture and Patristic tradition. It provides an overview of major theological themes that condition any Orthodox response to issues involving the creation and termination of human life.

V.Rev John Breck,

An Orthodox Perspective on Abortion

V.Rev John Kowalczyk, Light and Life

Contemporary Moral Issues
Life

Rev. Dr. Stanley Harakas, Light and

Life Transfigured (Ethics and Moral Theology) Rev. Dr. Harakas, Light and Life

Abortion, Oikonomia, and the Hard Cases

Matushka Valerie Protopapas, OCLife

Rachels Children (newsletter)

Orthodox Christians for Life
(OCLife)
P.O. Box 805
Melville, NY 11747-0805

Non-Orthodox

Why not Love Them Both`

Dr.&Mrs J.C. Wilke,
Hayes Publishing Co.
6304 Hamilton Ave.
Cincinnati, OH 45224
(513) 681-7559

Abortion and the Early Church

M.J. Gorman, InterVarsity Press

Human Existence, Medicine, and Ethics

William E. May, Franciscan Herald Press,
1434 W. 51 St, Chicago, IL 60609

