

develops; human life is the concrete reality of a being that is capable of love, and of service to humanity.

‘If a person's right to life is violated at the moment in which he is first conceived in his mother's womb, an indirect blow is struck also at the whole of the moral order ... Human life is precious because it is the gift of God, a God whose love is infinite; and when God gives life, it is forever.’

From Pope John Paul II's homily at the Capitol Mall in Washington, D.C., on October 7, 1979. quoted in "Human Life is the Gift of God." *The Wanderer*, October 18, 1979, pages 1 and 9.

“The unborn human being's right to live is one of the inalienable human rights. God, the Lord of Life, has given man the exalted task of preserving life, and this must be carried out in a way which is worthy of mankind. From the conception, therefore, life must be protected with the greatest care. Abortion is the taking of a child's life and is a repulsive crime.”

Pope John Paul II, September 9, 1985, Knight's Hall, Vaduz, Liechtenstein.

“If you want equal justice for all, and true freedom and lasting peace, then, America, defend life! All the great causes that are yours today will have meaning only to the extent that you guarantee the right to life and protect the human person.

“Every human person no matter how vulnerable or helpless, no matter how young or how old, no matter how healthy, handicapped, or sick, no matter how useful or productive for society is a being of inestimable worth created in the image and likeness of God. This is the dignity of America, the reason she exists, the condition for her survival yes, the ultimate test of her

greatness: To respect every human person, especially the weakest and defenseless ones, those as yet unborn.”

Pope John Paul II, September 19, 1987, Detroit, Michigan. Quoted by Gary Potter. "Pope's Farewell Message ... "America, Defend Life!"” *The Wanderer*, October 1, 1987, page 4.

As strongly as the Church has spoken on abortion, perhaps nobody has described the very heart of the matter as well as Mother Teresa of Calcutta, who even condemned it during her Nobel Prize acceptance lecture. On September 17, 1988, in Ottawa, Canada, Mother Teresa eloquently reiterated this belief; "Every abortion kills two the child and the conscience of the mother. The latter will never forget she, herself, has killed her own child. If you don't want that child, I want it, give it to me!"

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Pamphlet 465

## **Statements of Recent Popes Condemning Abortion**

These Popes have condemned abortion clearly and unmistakably. No honest or open-minded person could possibly believe that there is a 'diversity of opinion' on the subject of abortion within the Catholic Church.

“But another very grave crime is to be noted, venerable brethren, which regards the taking of the life of the offspring hidden in the mother's womb ... As to the "medical and therapeutic indication" to which, using their own words, we have made reference, venerable brethren, however much we may pity the mother whose health and even life are gravely imperiled in the performance of the duty allotted to her by nature, nevertheless what could ever be a sufficient reason for excusing in any way the direct murder of the innocent? This is precisely what we are dealing with here. Whether inflicted upon the mother or upon the child, it is against the precept of God and the law of nature: "You shall not kill." The life of each is equally sacred, and no one has the power, not even the public authority, to destroy it ...

“The direct procuring of abortion is never justified by any "indication" nor by any human law; nor is it shown to be licit by appealing to the argument of self-defense or of extreme necessity ... Those who hold the reins of government should not forget that it is the duty of public authority, by appropriate laws, to defend the lives of the innocent, and this all the more since those whose lives are endangered and assailed cannot defend themselves. Among whom We must mention, in the first place, infants hidden in the mother's womb. And if the public magistrates not only do not defend them,

but by their laws and ordinances betray them to death at the hands of doctors or of others, let them remember that God is the Judge and Avenger of innocent blood which cries from earth to heaven.”

Pope Pius XI, *Casti Connubii* #67, December 31, 1930.

“Every human being, even the child in the womb, has the right to life directly from God and not from his parents, not from any society or human authority. Therefore, there is no man, no society, no human authority, no science, no "indication" at all whether it be medical, eugenic, social, economic, or moral that may offer or give a valid judicial title for a direct deliberate disposal of an innocent human life, that is, a disposal that aims at its destruction, whether as an end in itself or as a means to achieve the end, perhaps in no way at all illicit. The direct destruction of so-called "useless lives," already born or still in the womb, practiced extensively a few years ago [by Nazi Germany], can in no wise be justified ... The life of an innocent person is sacrosanct, and any direct attempt or aggression against it is a violation of one of the fundamental laws without which secure human society is impossible... [N]ever forget this: There rises above every human law and above every "indication" the faultless law of God [emphasis in original].”

Pope Pius XII, *Allocution to Midwives*, October 29, 1951.

“No matter what the distinction between those different moments in the development of life, already born or still to be born, for profane and ecclesiastical law and for certain civil and penal consequences according to the moral law, in all these cases it is a matter of a grave and illicit attempt on inviolable human life.

“This principle holds good both for the mother as well as the child. Never and in no case has the Church taught that the life of the child must be preferred to that of the mother. It is erroneous to place the question with this alternative: Either the life of the child or that of the mother. No; neither the life of the mother nor of the child may be submitted to an act of suppression. Both for the one and the other the demand cannot be but this: To use every means to save the life of both the mother and the child.”

Pope Pius XII, Address to the Family Front Congress, November 27, 1951.

‘In conformity with these landmarks in the human and Christian vision of marriage, We must once again declare that the direct interruption of the generative process already begun, and, above all, directly willed and procured abortion, even if for therapeutic reasons, are to be absolutely excluded as licit means of regulating birth.

“Equally to be excluded, as the teaching authority of the Church has frequently declared, is direct sterilization, whether perpetual or temporary, whether of the man or of the woman. Similarly excluded is every action which, either in anticipation of the conjugal act, or in its accomplishment, or in the development of its natural consequences, purposes, whether as an end or as a means, to render procreation impossible.”

Pope Paul VI, Encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, July 25, 1968, Paragraph 14.

“Disregard for the sacred character of life in the womb weakens the very fabric of civilization; it prepares a mentality, and even a public attitude, that can lead to the acceptance of other practices that are against the fundamental rights of the individual. This mentality can, for example,

completely undermine concern for those in want, manifesting itself in insensitivity to social needs; it can produce contempt for the elderly, to the point of advocating euthanasia; it can prepare the way for those forms of genetic engineering that go against life, the dangers of which are not yet fully known to the general public.”

Pope Paul VI, September 11, 1968.

“Life must be protected with the utmost care from the moment of conception; abortion and infanticide are abominable crimes.”

Second Vatican Council, Encyclical *Gaudium et Spes*, IV, 51.

“It must in any case be clearly understood that a Christian can never conform to a law which is in itself immoral, and such is the case of a law which would admit in principle the licitness of abortion. Nor can a Christian take part in a propaganda campaign in favor of such a law, or vote for it. Moreover, he may not collaborate in its application.”

Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. "Declaration on Procured Abortion." November 18, 1974, Paragraph 22.

“Barbarity and cruelty are the right names [for abortion]: The mothers conceive a child, then accuse it of being their unjust aggressor and suppress it.”

Pope John Paul I (as Cardinal Luciani), 1977.

“I do not hesitate to proclaim before you and before the world that all human life from the moment of conception and through all subsequent stages is sacred, because human life is created in the image and likeness of God. Nothing surpasses the greatness or dignity of a human person. Human life is not just an idea or an abstraction; human life is the concrete reality of a being that lives, that acts, that grows and