

THE WONDER OF MYSELF: ETHICAL-THEOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF DIRECT ABORTION¹

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THE MAGNIFICENT wonders and mysteries of the creation and development of each human person are expressed simply and eloquently in Scripture. Addressing himself to Yahweh, the Psalmist inspiringly sings (Ps 139:13-15): "It was you who created my inmost self, and put me together in my mother's womb; for all these mysteries I thank you: for the wonder of myself, for the wonder of your works. You know me through and through, from having watched my bones take shape when I was being formed in secret, knitted together in the limbo of the womb." The Second Book of Maccabees (7:20-29) communicates a similar message and inspiration:

The mother [of the seven sons being executed by Antiochus Epiphanes] was especially admirable and worthy of honorable remembrance, for she watched the death of seven sons in the course of a single day, and endured it resolutely because of her hopes in the Lord. Indeed she encouraged each of them in the language of their ancestors; filled with noble conviction, she reinforced her womanly argument with manly courage, saying to them: "I do not know how you appeared in my womb; it was not I who endowed you with breath and life, I had not the shaping of your every part. It is the Creator of the world, ordaining the process of man's birth and presiding over the origin of all things, who in His mercy will most surely give you back both breath and life, since you now despise your own existence for the sake of his laws." [And to the youngest of her sons she continued:] "My son, have pity on me; I carried you nine months in my womb and suckled you three years, fed you and reared you to the age you are now and cherished you. I implore you, my child, observe heaven and earth, consider all that is in them, and acknowledge that God made them out of what did not exist, and that mankind comes into being in the same way. . . ."

Finally, in its own way the Book of Ecclesiastes (11:5) emphasizes the mystery of the beginning of human life: "Just as you do not know the

¹ Although I realize that in this symposium on abortion there are special articles on the physiological development of the newly conceived human being and on the historical development of Christian thought on abortion through the ages, in the interests of the clarity of expression needed to communicate my own ideas I shall have to review some of these same facts and reasonable interpretations as I understand them.

way of the wind or the mysteries of a woman with child, no more can you know the work of God who is behind it all."

I have entitled this article "The Wonder of Myself" (Ps 139:14), a wonder that includes within itself a proper respect and love for myself or for one's self. Implicit, too, in this wonder is included a recognition of and a respect and love for my fellowman. This fullhearted wonder properly and solidly founded is what this article is all about. I am basing the article on our heavenly Father's truth as I understand it. And I shall openly think through this truth as our heavenly Father has communicated it to us. In the next three sections, therefore, I shall consider in order three witnesses: the living voice of our Father's creation; the living voice of our Father's revelation; the living voice of our Father's Church founded by our Lord Jesus Christ. It will be my purpose to show that these three witnesses are not in contradiction with one other, since they are all under the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, but that they confirm and complement one another. Vatican II's Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World attests this (no. 36):

Therefore, if methodical investigation within every branch of learning is carried out in a genuinely scientific manner and in accord with moral norms, it never really conflicts with faith. For earthly matters and the concerns of the faith derive from the same God. Indeed, whoever labors to penetrate the secrets of reality with a humble and steady mind is, even unawares, being led by the hand of God, who holds all things in existence and gives them their identity.

THE LIVING VOICE OF OUR FATHER'S CREATION

With all the advances that have taken place in scientific studies of God's truth since the revelations in Scripture, many times it has been remarked how strange it is that the precise moment of each human person's entrance into and exit from life in this world remains somewhat locked away in mystery. I say "locked away" because these two moments are so important in the life of each individual that like precious jewels they seem to be specially protected by our heavenly Father. He seems to be saying to us: "I am reserving the secret of the precise moment of the beginning and end of your earthly existence because they are so precious in my own eyes that I want you to trust them completely to my care. Take care of the beginning of the life of another whom I have given to your care as though it were your own, trusting that I shall be actively and lovingly present there at that sacred moment. It is a most sacred commitment that I am entrusting to you. Prepare throughout your life for your own final moment, but

again do so with loving trust that I shall be actively and lovingly present at that final sacred moment of your earthly existence.”

In this discussion we are mainly concerned with the beginning of the life of others who have been given by our Father to our care. Modern molecular biology has not been able to remove all the mystery from the process of each individual man's origin. Is the precise moment of each human person's entrance as man into this world the precise moment of conception? The deeper one researches in the field of modern genetics, the more one finds that science inclines to give an affirmative answer to that question.

By conception is meant the process of union by which the parental cells (sperm and ovum) unite to become the first cell of a new individual. The action of uniting is not strictly instantaneous. It is rather a process. When we speak of “the moment of conception,” we mean the precise time when the process is completed. Molecular biology teaches us that the sperm and the ovum normally meet in the Fallopian tube, which connects the ovary with the uterus. The ovum has been prepared and is pushed along the tube toward the uterus. The sperm that reaches it is one of the few that survive the trip through the oviduct from the vagina, through the uterus and into the tube. Millions of sperm must start the trip. Many, many sperm go right by, unattracted to the ovum. When a sperm is attracted to the ovum, a complex chemical interaction occurs.

The sperm upon reaching the outer membrane of the ovum finds that the ovum is not unresponsive. Rather, the ovum reacts by surrounding the sperm and helping it to come in. The genetic material brought by the sperm and the genetic material present in the ovum are in two individual packets. These move toward each other and unite, so that the full number of forty-six chromosomes is restored, twenty-three from the mother's ovum and twenty-three from the father's sperm. The cell which results is in a full sense a fertilized ovum, but it is no longer merely an ovum. The fertilized ovum is called the zygote. Already it is a new individual; already it has the typical, unique set of chromosomes that belongs to each cell of the new, unique human body. Having derived half of its genetic make-up from each parent, the human zygote is unlike any cell that belongs to either the mother or the father. A totally new genetic package has been produced.

If we were asked through the help of science to point to a certain moment when the new individual begins to exist, we would point to the moment when the two individual genetic packets from the ovum and the sperm have completed the process of uniting with each other

to form one whole, the totally new genetic package. This certainly has occurred before the first cell division; for in the first cell division each of the two new cells receives from the zygote by the normal process of mitosis a full complement of forty-six chromosomes.

The most momentous moment in the order of creation for any human being is the moment when he is called forth by our heavenly Father to be a unique person "in the image and likeness of God." If we understand at all what the scientists are telling us about ourselves and the evolving continuity of the process as one stage flows smoothly into the next from conception through the various stages immediately after conception through cleavage, morula, blastocyst, embryo, fetus, to infant, to child, we should try to see that the most miraculous moment is the moment of conception. It seems that that is the moment when our heavenly Father endows a new being with a human soul and a new unique person begins to exist.

The finally fertilized ovum differs vastly from the female ovum and the male sperm, especially in their chromosomal content. Another essential difference is that the ovum and sperm will inevitably die very soon, unless they are combined together in the process of fertilization. Separately these two do not have the power to reproduce themselves. The finally fertilized ovum or human zygote does have this power to reproduce itself.

Within the past thirty years molecular biology has made tremendous advances demonstrating that this newly formed zygote or living cell is not just a glob of human stuff but a complex, highly organized, dynamic, and unique individual entity. It is an already developing individual. It is already evolving into that adult human person it will one day be. In the understanding that hominization takes place immediately in the fertilized ovum, along with the human person the human body is also actually present, but only in an embryonic stage. It would also be accurate to speak of the fully formed adult human body as being virtually or potentially contained in the human zygote. With this understanding it would be incorrect to refer to the human body as being only virtually or potentially present in the zygote. The human body is actually present; the adult human body is potentially present.

The zygote has been called a blueprint of what the adult human person resulting from this cell will be. But it is not just a static blueprint of an object that must be constructed by others from external materials, as some comparably magnificent and beautiful architectural masterpiece is constructed from external materials by following the blueprint's markings. Rather, it is a dynamic blueprint which, if it receives the proper nourishment and suitable environment, grows

and develops from the inside. So true is this that a published report based on the proceedings of the International Conference on Abortion sponsored by the Harvard Divinity School and the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation, September 6-8, 1967, expresses one of the Conference's scientific conclusions as follows: "The potential for future development is as great in the fertilized egg as in the blastocyst, as in the embryo, as in the fetus, as in the premature, as in the infant, as in the child" (p. 39). What the molecular biologists are telling us today is that there is no qualitative difference between the life at conception and at the other stages of development including the birth of the newly-born infant. Paul Ramsey expresses substantially the same conclusion when he writes:

In a remarkable way, modern genetics also teaches that there are "formal causes," immanent principles, or constitutive elements long before there is any shape or motion or discernible size. These minute formal elements are already determining the organic life to be the uniquely individual human being it is to be. According to this present-day scientific equivalent of the doctrine that the soul is the "form" or immanent *entelechy* of the body, it can now be asserted for the first time in the history of "scientific" speculation upon this question that who one is and is to be is present from the moment the ovum is impregnated.²

Helmut Thielicke puts it this way:

We have seen that . . . a conflict can arise within the order of creation itself, in the sense that one side of its meaning and purpose—namely, the calling into a personal, responsible relationship with the Creator, which is granted only to man—can come into conflict with another side of its meaning and purpose—namely, the created relationship between wedlock and parenthood. There can be no argument here about the fact of this conflict—at least in the simple form here described. For once impregnation has taken place it is no longer a question of whether the persons concerned have responsibility for a *possible* parenthood; they have *become* parents.³

We must notice briefly, in response to Joseph Donceel, S.J., that if Thomas Aquinas had been aware of the biological advances to which we have adverted above, namely, that the fertilized ovum is biologically a living organism of the human species with the intrinsic capability of developing into a mature human person, it is reasonable to conclude that he would not have held the Aristotelian theory of mediate or delayed animation. Further, it seems reasonable to judge that

² "The Morality of Abortion," in *Life or Death: Ethics and Options* (Seattle, 1968) p. 69.

³ *The Ethics of Sex* (New York, 1964) pp. 226, 227.

the human zygote as we understand it today with DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) and RNA (ribonucleic acid) would in Thomas' understanding eminently satisfy as having the organized matter required for the infusion of a human spiritual soul. In the light of recent advances in molecular biology, what did Thomas see as present in the embryo of forty days that is not present actually in the zygote as we understand it today?

Granted that at the start of pregnancy there is not as yet a fully developed human body; it is also true that at the eighty-day stage, and a fortiori at the forty-day stage, there is not as yet a fully developed human body. According to contemporary molecular biology, it becomes increasingly clear that the newly formed ovum is a highly organized, dynamic, and complex cell, which needs only the proper nourishment and environment to develop into a fully developed human being. Indeed, in the first few days of its existence the human zygote provides its own nourishment. There is no qualitative difference between the human zygote and the human embryo at the forty-day or eighty-day stage.

Based on recent scientific advances, therefore, it does not seem unreasonable to maintain that the human zygote is a sufficiently organized unit to be a human person with a human body that is in process of continuous evolutionary development from the inside toward full development. Rather, then, than say it is "an actual human soul joined to a virtual human body," it would be proper to say that it is an actual human person with a body whose full development is already in dynamic process. Rudolph Joseph Gerber, in his scholarly study of the origin of the individual man, comes to the same conclusion:

Genetic DNA might be considered as a strong indication of immediate animation. These chemical patterns perform a unique role in cellular economy which St. Thomas and his contemporaries could not have discovered. As the chief functional unit of genetic material, DNA determines the basic architecture of every cell, the nature and life of all cells, the specific protein syntheses, enzyme formation, self-reproduction, and directly or indirectly, the nature of the developing individual.

It would be interesting to see how Aristotle, Thomas, and Avicenna would react to learning that the egg is not a mass of homogeneous menstrual blood but a precise blueprint of the later human adult. It seems safe to surmise that their preference for postponing the advent of the rational soul derived mainly from their understandably meager knowledge of embryology and genetics. Had they been provided with the discoveries of the past several years, it is not unthinkable that they would have altered their standing on the succession of

lower forms and seen good reason to believe that, in normal cases, the substantial form of rationality, the human soul, would be present in the zygote from the very first moment of fertilization.⁴

In the current critical discussion on the medical, legal, and ethical-theological problems of abortion it would be a disservice to exaggerate the importance of the precise moment when the fruit of a married couple's love becomes a human person. In the United States currently there are many differing shades of thought among the proponents of liberalized state abortion laws. Some of these go so far as to advocate abortion whether the fetus is a living person or not. Others make their own a crude nonscientific biology and claim that the fetus before birth is just another part of the mother's body.

In discussing the ethicists' views whether or not from conception a truly human person begins to exist and whether the direct taking of human life is always wrong, the published report based on the proceedings of the International Conference on Abortion explains briefly some of the differing judgments:

The reasons offered for rejecting this approach are many and various. To many the arguments underlying it, however logical, are arid and unreal, contrary to the common testimony of mankind. If the fetus is to be defined, these critics believe, it would be reasonable to affirm that "essentially" it may be regarded as a part of the woman's body; or even if a separate entity, as a coherent system of unrealized capacities rather than as a person.

Other critics of the natural-law approach believe that regardless of the status of the fetus, the rights assigned to it should not be automatically regarded as absolute, superior to all the other rights and values which may be present in the special circumstances which give rise to requests for abortion.⁵

Those who would claim that the fetus is just another part of the mother's body seem to be ignoring biological facts that have been known for centuries, namely, that the fetus has its own brain, its own heart, its own circulatory system, etc. It is good to see that the State of California, which is one of the states with liberalized abortion laws in its courts, recognizes that at least sometime before birth the infant is considered a human person. The following press report for September 25, 1969, described a recent case:

It is murder to kill an unborn child capable of living if born prematurely, a California appeals court ruled last week. "We are satisfied that a fetus which

⁴ "When Is the Human Soul Infused?" *Laval théologique et philosophique* 22 (1966) 234-47, at 247. See also Vincent C. Punzo, *Reflective Naturalism* (New York, 1969) pp. 218-22.

⁵ *International Conference on Abortion*, p. 89.

has reached the stage of viability is a human being for the purposes of California homicide statutes," the Third District Court ruled 3-0.

"Viability" was defined for the case in this way: "given normal development through the first seven months of intrauterine life, a premature infant is expected to live."⁶

The defendant's attorney petitioned that the murder prosecution against his client be stopped because the law does not consider an unborn fetus a human being. The court unanimously denied this petition.

Similarly, it would be a disservice to exaggerate the importance of precisely how our heavenly Father brings about the animation of the two human persons who develop as identical twins. Again we are in an area of mystery, and it seems to me that we cannot rule out the possibility that the animation of the second twin results from the immediate creation of his human soul just at the moment of division into two identical twins. The identical-twin difficulty is hardly decisive in determining that hominization occurs after conception, except in the case of one of the identical twins. Rudolph Joseph Gerber explains the matter this way:

Identical twins spring from one ovum fecundated by one sperm, and the ensuing zygote for some unknown reason splits into two distinct entities. This permanent cleavage occurs in an early stage of development. Since it is metaphysically impossible for the soul to undergo the trauma of division, a second soul must be introduced by supporters of immediate animation. But in this event, there is no possible way of determining what material part of the divided germen is commensurately predisposed to receive the original soul and what part is to receive the newly-created one.

Nonetheless, some believe that it is relatively easy to explain the origin of the second soul. The individual rational soul, assuming it to be present from the first, remains in one of the separated parts, though it is not possible to determine in which. When the other part of the egg is fully separated from information by the first soul, a new soul is created and infused instantaneously for this second twin. There is no disproportion between form and matter in either case, because the division of the embryo into two parts implies that each part is equally formed and equally able to develop into a human person. It appears, then, that the argument from didymology is no absolute indication that the rational soul cannot be infused at the moment of fertilization.⁷

My own personal evaluation of the evidence presented by modern molecular biology, especially within the past thirty years, and by philosophical discussions that have taken place over the many centuries of developing Christian thought, guided also by my studies and

⁶ *Davenport Catholic Messenger*, Sept. 25, 1969.

⁷ *Art. cit.*, p. 242.

understanding of developing Christian theology, is that normally the human person certainly exists in the human zygote from the first moment of conception. But I can also appreciate how another, reviewing the same literature and doing similar or deeper studies, could be in a state of doubt about the precise moment when the new individual begins to exist as a human person. The identical-twin difficulty might lead to this doubt, bolstered maybe by the possible but remote future difficulties of human cloning and human "mosaics."

Still, I do not see how anyone can assign any other moment in the development of the fetus without doing so arbitrarily. And I cannot see how anyone can simply be certain on the evidence presented, especially in the last thirty years, that the human person normally does not exist in the human zygote from the first moment of conception.

For the remainder of this article, on the basis of the evidence and reasoning we have already presented, we shall consider that the opinion which maintains the new human person to be present in the human zygote from the first moment of conception is at least solidly probably true. Whoever, therefore, deliberately and directly causes an abortion in self or in another is choosing an action involving danger of taking an innocent human life. In the remainder of this article, therefore, unless otherwise indicated, abortion is understood as either the deliberate and direct killing of the fetus in the womb from the moment of conception or the deliberate and direct ejection of the fetus from the womb after conception and before viability.

Helmut Thielicke shares with us another relevant insight into the whole problem of abortion. Where he speaks about the couple becoming parents at the moment of impregnation, he adds:

It is important, to be sure, that we should always see this problem from the point of view of the destruction of human life, but certainly we should not think only of the life of the nascent child, but also of the status of the already existent parenthood. This status means that the "office" of fatherhood and motherhood has been entrusted to the parents and that they are now enclosed in that circle of duties which obligates them to preserve that which has been committed to them, but also endowed with a blessing which is to be received in gratitude and trust—even though it be gratitude expressed with trembling and a trust that is won through struggle. This makes it clear that here it is not a question . . . whether a proffered gift can be reasonably accepted, but rather whether an already bestowed gift can be spurned, whether one dares to brush aside the arm of God after this arm has already been outstretched.⁸

⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 227.

This consideration he sees properly as true in the theory of mediate as well as of immediate hominization. This reasoning I accept also as my own. In this same context it would be well at least to advert to the theological controversy that surrounds the whole question of the salvation of unbaptized infants, including unbaptized fetuses, whether spontaneously or deliberately aborted. It should give responsible pause to any Christian who is contemplating a deliberate abortion of her child to realize that a respectable theological judgment maintains the necessity of baptism for the supernatural salvation of infants.⁹

It is somewhat consoling also to note that strictly there is no simply unwanted child. Before each one of us was born, our parents could not have known us specifically as the unique person we really are. Our mother and father, therefore, could not have wanted us as the unique person each of us really is. In general, they could have wanted a child, or a boy or a girl. But our heavenly Father in creating each new human person chooses specifically the person who is to be. Before conception He knows the specific person He chooses to create. He creates him because He loves him and specifically wills him to be. Our Father may not want the circumstances under which man has put together the sperm and ovum, but once He has committed Himself to procreate when man has disposed the matter in the procreative process, He does specifically choose the unique person to be created. As Scripture reports that Yahweh told Jeremiah, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you" (Jer 1:5).

THE LIVING VOICE OF OUR FATHER'S REVELATION

Before proceeding to an explanation of the official teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, I would like to investigate what Scripture has to say about truths relevant to this question of abortion. The passages from the Old and the New Testaments which I shall cite are not meant in any way to exhaust those relevant to the question. They are merely some texts to bring out the ideas I am trying to express.

In its own way Scripture significantly lays stress on the following truths: the dignity of man and the sacredness of human life; that in creating each new human person our heavenly Father knows and chooses and loves specifically the unique person who is to be; that our Father alone has the power of life and death; that our Father by His laws protects the lives especially of the innocent and just; that there is a big difference between the killing of the innocent and the killing of one who has done something criminal; that there is also a big difference between accidental and deliberate killing of the innocent.

⁹ Cf. George Dyer, *Limbo: Unsettled Question* (New York, 1964).

First, the dignity of man and the sacredness of human life:

God said: "Let us make man in our own image, in the likeness of ourselves, and let them be masters of the fish of the sea, the birds of heaven, the cattle, all the wild beasts and all the reptiles that crawl upon the earth." God created man in the image of Himself, in the image of God He created him, male and female He created them. (Gn 1:26-27)

What is man that you should spare a thought for him, the son of man that you should care for him? Yet you have made him little less than a god, you have crowned him with glory and splendor, made him lord over the work of your hands . . . (Ps 8:4-6)

The Lord fashioned man from the earth. . . He gave them authority over everything on earth . . . gave them a heart to think with . . . endowed them with the law of life. (Sir 17:1-10)

To all who did accept Him He gave power to become children of God. . . (Jn 1:12)

If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we shall come to him and make our home with him. (Jn 14:23)

You know, surely, that your bodies are members making up the body of Christ. . . Your body, you know, is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you since you received Him from God. (1 Cor 6:15, 20)

We are God's work of art, created in Christ Jesus to live the good life as from the beginning He had meant us to live it. (Eph 2:10)

Now I can live for God. I have been crucified with Christ, and I live now not with my own life but with the life of Christ who lives in me. The life I now live in this body I live in faith: faith in the Son of God who loved me and who sacrificed Himself for my sake. (Gal 2:19, 20)

Second, in creating each new human person, our heavenly Father knows and chooses specifically the unique person who is to be:

Yahweh called me before I was born; from my mother's womb He pronounced my name. (Is 49:1)

The word of Yahweh was addressed to me saying: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you came to birth I consecrated you. . . ." (Jer 1:4-5)

[About John the Baptist's birth:]

Even from his mother's womb he will be filled with the Holy Spirit. . . Now as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. . . "For the moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leaped for joy. . . ." (Lk 1:16, 41)

Then God, who had specially chosen me while I was still in my mother's womb, called me through His grace and chose to reveal His Son to me. . . (Gal 1:15)

Third, our heavenly Father alone is the one who has the power of life and death:

See now that I am He, and beside me there is no other god. It is I who deal death and life. (Dt 32:39)

For you, Lord, have the power of life and death; you bring down to the gates of Hades and bring back again. . . . (Wis 16:13, 14)¹⁰

Fourth, our heavenly Father by His laws protects the lives especially of the innocent and the just. He alone, as we have seen, has the right to decide when an innocent and just man shall die. There is no exception to the prohibition against the killing of the innocent and the just, against the shedding of innocent blood:

"You shall not kill." (Ex 20:13; Dt 5:17)

Good master, what must I do to inherit eternal life? Jesus said to him: "You know the commandments: *You must not kill . . .!*" (Mk 10:17-19; Lk 18:18-20)

[On the occasion of Cain's murdering of his brother Abel:]

Yahweh asked Cain: "Where is your brother Abel?" "I do not know," he replied. "Am I my brother's guardian?" "What have you done?" Yahweh asked. "Listen to the sound of your brother's blood crying to me from the ground." (Gn 4:9-11)

I will demand an account of every man's life from his fellow men. (Gn 9:5-6)

See that the man who is *innocent and just* is not done to death. . . . (Ex 23:7)

The Lord has said: "You must not put the *innocent and the just* to death. (Dn 13:53)

You must banish the *shedding of innocent blood* from Israel, and then you will prosper. . . . (Dt 19:13)

You must banish all *shedding of innocent blood* from among you if you mean to do what is right in the eyes of Yahweh. (Dt 21:9)

A curse on him who accepts a bribe to take an *innocent life*. (Dt 27:25)

There are six things that Yahweh hates, seven that his soul abhors: a haughty look, a lying tongue, *hands that shed innocent blood*, a heart that weaves wicked plots, feet that hurry to do evil, a false witness who lies with every breath, a man who sows dissension among brothers. (Prv 6:16-19)

The ancient inhabitants of your holy land you hated for their loathsome practices, their deeds of sorcery and unholy rites, hated them as *ruthless*

¹⁰ Cf. the *Jerusalem Bible*, p. 1029, n. h: "Here the author teaches that God has absolute power over life and death, not only in the sense that He can rescue anyone He pleases from imminent death, but also apparently in the profounder sense that He can bring a soul that has gone to Sheol back to physical life. . . ."

murderers of children, as eaters of entrails at feasts of human flesh, initiated while the bloody orgy goes on, as *murderous parents* of defenceless beings. You determined to destroy them at our father's hands, so that this land, dearer to you than any other, might receive a colony of God's children worthy of it. (Wis 12:3-7)

Yahweh says this: "Practice honesty and integrity; rescue the man who has been wronged from the hands of his oppressor; do not exploit the stranger, the orphan, the widow; do no violence; *shed no innocent blood* in this place. (Jer 22:3)

If you refuse to love, you must remain dead; to hate your brother is to be a murderer, and *murderers*, as you know, *do not have eternal life* in them. (1 Jn 3:15)

Fifth, at the same time Scripture bears witness that there is a big difference between the killing of the innocent and the killing of one who has done something criminal. Scripture itself testifies that the commandment "You shall not kill" is not to be understood simply in an absolute sense. Although there is no exception to the prohibition of the killing of the innocent and the just, the killing of those who have committed especially grave crimes, such as murder, is prescribed as just retribution:

I will demand an account of every man's life from his fellow man. He who sheds man's blood shall have his blood shed by man, for in the image of God man was made. (Gn 9:5-6)

Any son of Israel or any stranger living in Israel must die if he hands over any of his children to Molech . . . (Lv 20:2-5)

The murderer must be put to death . . . You are not to accept ransom for the life of a murderer condemned to death; he must die . . . (Nm 35:16-31)

Anyone who strikes a man and so causes his death must die. . . Should a man dare to kill his fellow by treacherous intent, you must take him even from my altar to be put to death. (Ex 21:12-14)

My reason for referring to these texts of Scripture is to point out that some exceptions to the prohibition against killing are indicated in Scripture, but that none of them could be used reasonably to justify the deliberate taking of the innocent life of the human fetus. Also, when I make reference to the acceptance and approval by Christ of the Old Testament commandment "You shall not kill," I mean to understand it only in a minimal sense. When our Lord approved of that commandment, He was approving of it at least in so far as it was saying "You shall not kill the innocent and the just." That interpretation is sufficient for the purposes of this article.

Finally, Scripture recognizes that not all killing of human persons is deliberate. The killing could have occurred accidentally and been completely without fault:

Yahweh spoke to Moses and said: "You are to select towns which you will make into cities of refuge where a man who has killed accidentally may find sanctuary. . . . If he has manhandled his victim by chance, without malice, or thrown some missile at him not meaning to hit him, or without seeing him dropped a stone on him capable of causing death and so killed him, so long as he bore him no malice and wished him no harm, then the community must decide in accordance with these rules between the one who struck the blow and the avenger of blood. . . . In any case of homicide, the evidence of witnesses must determine whether the murderer is to be put to death; but the evidence of a single witness is not sufficient to uphold a capital charge." (Nm 35:9-30)

Then Moses set apart three cities to the east, beyond the Jordan, where a man might find refuge who had killed his fellow unwittingly and with no previous feud against him. (Dt 4:41-43)

Yahweh said to Joshua: "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'Choose the cities of refuge of which I spoke to you through Moses, towns where a man who has killed accidentally, unwittingly, may find sanctuary; they are to be your refuge from the avenger of blood. . . . The man who has killed must remain in that town until he has appeared for judgment before the community.'" (Jos 20:1-6)

I cite these texts to show that Scripture is fully aware that accidental deaths to the innocent and just can occur without fault. But one who deliberately and directly intends to cause an abortion cannot be said to do so "accidentally" or "unwittingly."

As we move now from the explicit witness of our Father's revelation into the witness of our Father's Church, I would like to delineate how the one grew out of the other. Respect and love for children in particular was demonstrated and inculcated by our Lord Himself when He taught that "Anyone who welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me" (Lk 9:48). "People brought little children to Him, for Him to lay His hands on them and say a prayer. The disciples turned them away, but Jesus said: 'Let the little children alone, and do not stop them coming to me, for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs.' Then He laid His hands on them" (Mt 19:13-15).

That this respect and recognition was extended to the unborn child is indicated by the events surrounding the births of John the Baptist and of our Lord Himself (Lk 1:1-45). John was to be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb; and shortly after the An-

nunciation and the conception of our Lord, Mary was greeted as the mother "of my Lord." David Granfield expresses this thought very well when he writes in comment on the above passage:

The compelling precedent of the unborn Christ and the unborn Baptist gave this commandment [of Christian charity] a new and uterine dimension. The Gospel story is simple, a retelling of the conversation of two pregnant women. Mary, shortly after she conceived, visited her cousin Elizabeth, who was finishing the second trimester. At the salutation of Mary, who was "with child of the Holy Spirit," the six-month old fetus in the womb of Elizabeth "leapt for joy." Elizabeth explains this unusual fetal reaction: the embryo, the fruit of Mary's womb, was "blessed" because it was "the Lord." Henceforward, future generations would recognize the dignity of the unborn child.¹¹

The letter of the law in the Old and the New Testaments did not forbid abortion, but in its reverence for human life the spirit of the law did. In the faith of the early Church expressed in the New Testament Gospels and Epistles there is patent respect for one's fellow man growing out of the central message of love of neighbor common to both the old and the new law: "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment" (Mt 22:37-38; cf. also Lk 10:25-27; Dt 6:4-6; 10:12, 13). "The second resembles it: You must love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang the whole law and the prophets also" (Mt 22:39-40; cf. also Lk 6:27-35; Gal 5:14; Lv 19:18; Dt 10:19).

We receive the first explicit Christian teaching against abortion in the earliest of postscriptural reliable documents, the *Didache* and the *Epistle of Barnabas*. It is clear from these documents that toward the end of the first Christian century and at the beginning of the second these doctrinal prohibitions grew out of a developing appreciation of the law of Christian love:

Now, the Way of Life is this: first, love the God who made you; secondly, your neighbor as yourself: do not do to another what you do not wish to be done to yourself . . . Do not murder; do not commit adultery; . . . do not kill a fetus by abortion or commit infanticide . . . Hate no man; but correct some, pray for others, for still others sacrifice your life as a proof of your love. . . .¹²

The Way of Light, then, is as follows. . . Love your Maker; reverence your Creator; glorify Him who ransomed you from death. . . Do not bear mal-

¹¹ *The Abortion Decision* (Garden City, 1969) p. 54.

¹² *Didache* 1-2, in *Ancient Christian Writers* 6 (Westminster, Md., 1948) 15-16.

ice against your brother. . . . Love your neighbor more than yourself. Do not kill a fetus by abortion, or commit infanticide. . . .¹³

THE LIVING VOICE OF OUR FATHER'S CHURCH

Although in the earlier centuries of the Church many influential theologians, such as Jerome, Augustine, and Thomas Aquinas, acknowledged theories of mediate hominization as scientifically and theologically respectable, from the very earliest times destruction of all fetal life, regardless of its stage of development, was regarded as gravely immoral. The *Didache* and the *Epistle of Barnabas* witness that this was true even from the first and second centuries. Some, however, as Jerome and Augustine, explicitly acknowledged that only the destruction of the formed or animated fetus could at that time be judged destruction of a human person.

In its penal legislation before the time of Gratian, i.e., from the early Councils of Elvira and Ancyra at the beginning of the fourth century up to the middle of the twelfth century, commonly enough no distinction was made between the animated and the unanimated fetus. But during those years especially immediately preceding Gratian's *Concordia discordantium canonum*, popularly known as Gratian's *Decretum*, published in 1140, not all were saying the same thing on important details. Some even seemed to be identifying sterilization and contraception along with abortion as murder.

Gratian's *Decretum* became the model for ecclesiastical legislation and interpretation for the next five centuries, including the *Decretals* of Pope Gregory IX (1234). Although he does not say when the fetus is formed, he does maintain that the one who causes an abortion before the soul is in the body is not a murderer. Penalties were assessed according to the degree of fetal formation. New terms entered the discussion: "quasi murder" and "quasi homicide." All abortion was judged to be murder, but the destruction of an unformed fetus was only "quasi murder."

Pope Sixtus V, by his Constitution *Effraenatam*, changed that situation and in so doing clarified the canonical and pastoral picture briefly for three years beginning in 1588. By this legislation he imposed an automatic excommunication reserved to the Holy See for the actual destruction of a formed or unformed fetus. In 1591 his successor Pope Gregory XIV, by his Constitution *Sedes apostolica*, limited the excommunication exclusively to the destruction of the animated fetus. The punishment for the killing of the unanimated fetus was a grave

¹³ *Epistle of Barnabas* 19, in *Ancient Christian Writers* 6 (Westminster, Md., 1948) 62.

penance on the occasion of absolution from the grave sin. This remained the legislation in the Church for the next three centuries, until the Constitution *Apostolicae sedis* promulgated by Pope Pius IX on October 12, 1869.

Since Pope Gregory XIV did not define the precise moment of animation, the question remained dependent upon the evidence science offered. Since canon law and theology always strive to base their directives and insights on the best relevant science of the time, the authors with great unanimity held to the common norm: the fortieth day after conception for males, the eightieth for females. Today we recognize that those previous centuries were centuries of crude biological understanding of the zygote's nature and fetus development. It was inevitable that man should break out of that crude situation, but it happened gradually.

Scientific advances, theological discussions, and magisterial directives of a doctrinal nature co-operated together to make the nineteenth century a century of transition. By the beginning of the twentieth century the living voice of the Church was speaking a rather clear message of the Father's truth, with few dissenting opinions in theory and none in practice. To understand how this developed we must call brief attention to what transpired before and into the nineteenth century.

It was not until toward the end of the seventeenth century, when the microscope began to be developed into an efficient instrument, that the early stages of the embryo could be studied effectively. True, Arantius had already shown in the sixteenth century that the maternal and fetal blood circulations were separate, neither continuous nor contiguous. But ovarian follicles were first described by de Graaf only in 1672; and human spermatozoa were seen by Hamm and Leeuwenhoek only in 1677. Even then the true significance of the sperm and the ovum was not understood.

Spallanzani and Wolff demonstrated in the eighteenth century that both the female ovum and the male sperm were necessary for the initiation of human development, which occurred through progressive growth and differentiation. In the 1820's Von Baer's work established the foundation for the biologist's knowledge of the germ layers in embryos. In the 1830's Schleiden and Schwann formulated the cell theory. This knowledge that the adult body is composed entirely of cells and cell products paved the way for a realization of the basic fact that the body of the new individual is developed from a single cell, the cell formed by the union in fertilization of a germ cell contributed by the male parent with a germ cell contributed by the female parent. This

knowledge was somewhat crystallized in Wilhelm His's work *The Anatomy of Human Embryos*, published in 1880.¹⁴

Especially with these advances in the science of biology, it became more and more apparent that Aristotle's judgment of the fortieth day of gestation for the hominization of the male and the eightieth day for the hominization of the female was arbitrary and unsupported by modern scientific advance. There seemed to be no scientific reason for distinguishing between the male and female as far as hominization is concerned, and no scientific reason for choosing precisely the fortieth or eightieth day for the hominization of a new individual. As the true significance of the earlier stages of fetal development became better understood, it became more apparent also that hominization might well occur earlier, even at the moment of conception.

In the field of theology there were various conflicting opinions maintaining or rejecting the liceity of expelling the nonviable living fetus before or after viability by way of exception, and maintaining or rejecting the immediate hominization of the human fetus.

A few individual theologians had sponsored the opinion that it was permissible, in order to save the life of the mother, either to expel the fetus after animation and before viability or to perform a craniotomy. This never became the common opinion of theologians. Lehmkuhl is an example of a nineteenth-century theologian who at one time sponsored craniotomy. In the later editions of his work he admitted that he had been mistaken, "And in truth," he said, "the reasons which I adduced were specious rather than truly convincing. For the truth is that the fetus himself is primarily and per se the object of attack, just as is a person whom another might strike with a mortal wound. . . . This, as anyone can see, is a direct killing, and intrinsically evil."¹⁵

Before the time of Alphonsus Liguori some theologians, e.g., Sanchez, who rejected the opinion that the animated fetus may ever be expelled directly, did maintain that in their opinion, for a grave cause, especially to save the life of the mother, it was permissible to expel a certainly unformed fetus.¹⁶ Liguori himself gives a succinct summary of the theological picture of abortion as it appeared to him at the end of the eighteenth century:

It is certain that to expel a fetus, even though it be inanimate, is per se a mortal sin; and the person guilty of it is responsible for homicide . . . because,

¹⁴ For the historical data on embryology, cf. Bradley M. Patten, *Human Embryology* (2nd ed., New York, 1953) pp. 1-5.

¹⁵ Translation from T. L. Bouscaren, S.J., *Ethics of Ectopic Operations* (Milwaukee, 1944) pp. 13-14; Lehmkuhl, *Theologia moralis* 1 (12th ed.) nos. 1007-1008.

¹⁶ Sanchez, *De matrimonio*, 9, disp. 20, no. 9.

although he does not destroy a human life, yet his act has a close causal connection with preventing a human life. The question is raised whether, when a mother is in an extreme illness, it is lawful to give her medicine whose direct effect is to expel the inanimate fetus. One opinion says it is. But a second opinion more commonly held says that, while it is lawful for the mother to take medicines whose direct effect is to cure the illness, even though indirectly the fetus be thereby expelled, yet it is not lawful to take medicine for the direct purpose of expelling the fetus. . . . And it will not do to say that an inanimate fetus is part of the mother; for the answer is that the fetus does not form part of the body of the mother, but is a distinct human individual in an early stage of development.¹⁷

The theory of immediate hominization, too, was to undergo development. Before the nineteenth century the theory of mediate hominization was commonly accepted by the theologians, but not without some dispute. According to John T. Noonan:

A stream of thought distinct from papal authority began in the seventeenth century, without immediate effect but with ultimate significance for the view of abortion. The title of the first work of the new approach summarizes its content: *A Book on the Formation of the Fetus in Which It Is Shown that the Rational Soul Is Infused on the Third Day*. It was written by a physician at Louvain, Thomas Fienus, and appeared in 1620. A year later there was an even more influential treatise, *Medico-Legal Questions*, by a Roman physician, Paul Zacchias. In his learned treatise on medical aspects of the canon and civil law Zacchias attacked the prevailing interpretation of Aristotle. . . . Belief that the rational soul was in fact instilled after forty days rested on no evidence. . . . On the contrary, a true Thomistic view of the unity of man required that there be a single human soul from the beginning of the existence of the new fetus. The rational soul, Zacchias argued, must be "infused in the first moment of conception." Zacchias' thesis on ensoulment was well received. . . . The theory of Zacchias had no immediate impact on the theologians dealing with abortion. . . . The theologians were slow to respond to the new arguments. By the eighteenth century Constantino Roncaglia . . . contended in analyzing the sin of abortion that it was "most probable" that the fetus was ensouled at the instant of conception or "at least from the third or seventh day." But the leading moralist of the day, St. Alphonsus, declared that "some say badly" that the soul is infused at conception."¹⁸

By the early part of the twentieth century so many more moralists had espoused the immediate-hominization theory that Bouscaren in 1944 could confidently maintain:

¹⁷ *Theologia moralis* 3 (Gaude edition) no. 394; translation from Bouscaren, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

¹⁸ "The Catholic Church and Abortion," *Dublin Review* 241 (1967-68) 300-345, at 328-30.

... most moralists after Ballerini have so inclined to the opinion that the spiritual soul exists in the fetus from the moment of conception that they have practically neglected the contrary hypothesis. . . . While we do not regard the probability of a tardy infusion of the soul quite so favorably as do Vermeersch, Vol. 2 (Second Edition) nn. 622, 623, and Cardinal Mercier, *Cours de Philosophie: Psychologie*, T. 2, p. 236, we believe that the hypothesis deserves to be considered.¹⁹

Vermeersch is one of the twentieth-century theologians who explicitly recognized the trend of the authors in the nineteenth century to sponsor the immediate-hominization theory but who himself rejected it as unproven.²⁰ Although writing before the discovery of DNA and RNA, he still recognized the theory as sufficiently well founded that in practice, as he said, "the fetus from the first moment of conception theologically must be baptized and must be treated as a human person."²⁰ It is this theological demand in practice that has united all the theologians of the twentieth century, even when there was or is theological difference in theory. The Dutch theologian Alphonsus van Kol, S.J., summarizes the situation in 1968 as follows:

There are some [theologians] even today who think that some time elapses between the conception and the hominization of the fetus. But these agree that all moral questions referring to the human fetus must be answered in the same way as they would be were the fetus certainly a human person from the first moment of conception. In practice, therefore, the human fetus from the first moment of conception has the right to life, is capable of being baptized, etc.²¹

Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the matter under discussion, the magisterium of the Church has admirably provided significant leadership to all her people and especially to the theologians of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This leadership has been provided through official penal legislation and formal doctrinal teaching.

Beginning with Pius IX and his Constitution *Apostolicae sedis* in 1869, and continuing down to and beyond Vatican Council II which ended in 1965, the magisterial directives have been most consistent in their developing clarity of detail. Pius IX eliminated the distinction between the animated and unanimated fetus as far as the penalty of excommunication was concerned. Towards the end of the century, in 1884, 1889, 1895, and 1898, the Holy Office in doctrinal responses to doubts made it explicitly clear that all craniotomies of a living fetus and all direct expulsion of nonviable fetuses even to save the life of the mother are morally wrong and admit of no exceptions.

¹⁹ Bouscaren, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-39, n. 25.

²⁰ *Theologiae moralis* 2 (3rd ed., 1937) no. 580.

²¹ Alphonsus van Kol, S.J., *Theologia moralis* 1 (Freiburg, 1968) no. 787.

The Code of Canon Law, promulgated in 1917, reflected the clear teaching which had already developed and in addition eliminated an inconsistency in the matter of irregularities. If there was any doubt in the minds of Catholics or others about whether the Church through all these magisterial judgments was dealing with nothing but ecclesiastical law, Pius XI in 1930 and Pius XII in 1951 both make it clear that they are explaining the divine law.²² Without making any mention whether hominization takes place in the first moment of conception, Pius XII explains clearly that

Innocent human life, in whatsoever condition it is found, is withdrawn from the very first moment of its existence from any direct deliberate attack. This is a fundamental right of the human person, which is of general value in the Christian conception of life; hence as valid for the life still hidden within the womb of the mother, as for the life already born and developing outside of her; as much opposed to direct abortion as to the direct killing of the child before, during, or after its birth. *Whatever foundation there may be for the distinction between these various phases of the development of life that is born or still unborn, in profane and ecclesiastical law, and as regards certain civil and penal consequences, all these cases involve a grave and unlawful attack upon the inviolability of human life.*²³ (Emphasis added.)

In another part of the same collection Pius XII explains that by direct abortion and direct killing of the child he means a moral action that aims at abortion or killing of the child "either as an end in itself or as the means of attaining another end."²⁴

This doctrine, succinctly expressed in the words of Pius XII, has become certain Catholic teaching of the meaning of the divine law, universally accepted by theologians and faithful alike, and binding on all members of the Catholic Church. It has been further confirmed by the Council fathers in Vatican II in the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World.²⁵

CONCLUSION

In recent years since Vatican II there have been many attempts by theologians and others to contribute to the development of Catholic moral theology by rethinking fundamental principles, freedom and responsibility of conscience, the validity of absolutes, the importance

²² Pius XI, *Casti connubii*, Dec. 31, 1930 (AAS 22 [1930] 563); Pius XII, *Moral Questions Affecting Married Life* (Washington, 1951) p. 6 (cf. AAS 43 [1951] 838).

²³ Pius XII, *Moral Questions Affecting Married Life*, p. 26 (cf. AAS 43 [1951] 857).

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 6 (cf. AAS 43 [1951] 838).

²⁵ Cf. *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Walter M. Abbott, S.J. (New York, 1966) pp. 226-27, 255-56.

of the person, etc. Many of these attempts have been very thoughtful and thought-provoking and a significant contribution to ongoing positive development. In general, these published discussions are asking questions but not giving answers that can be reduced to practice.

In the area of abortion some new questions are being asked and some new tentative answers are being suggested, but none of them can legitimately be reduced to practice. The authors are offering their suggestions for theoretical consideration and discussion and not immediately for use in practice—if indeed they ever will be usable in practice.

In 1965 William H. Van der Marck, O.P., published a book²⁶ in which he offers some new tentative insights on many “contemporary questions about birth regulation,” including abortion. But in the Introduction he also provides a key for the proper understanding of his insights: “. . . the purpose of this book is to open up questions rather than to solve them. If any final decision is to be reached it will, as always, be that of the whole Church, not of private theologians. In the meantime the more thoroughly these questions are discussed, by clergy and laity alike, the better.”²⁷

In an article published in 1966, Bishop Francis Simons of Indore, India, similarly raises many questions for the modern theologian to mull over and discuss with his peers.²⁸ Bishop Simons is not presenting us with conclusions now reducible to practice, when his thinking inclines toward approval of abortion in extraordinary circumstances. I think we can reasonably accept the evaluation of the Bishop’s thinking presented to us by a moral theologian clearly sympathetic to his thrust of thought. In June, 1967, Robert H. Springer gave a digest of the Bishop’s article and finished with this evaluation: “The questions raised in the article above are ones on which research is needed. They are not conclusions ready to be reduced to practice. Nor does Bishop Simons intend this. He has done the Church a good turn in pointing out areas of special difficulty in moral science today. What is of validity in ‘the new morality’ points in the same direction.”²⁹

A more recent article by Jesuit philosopher John G. Milhaven included some of the author’s “new morality” insights on abortion. This article appeared in *Commonweal*, with a peer-evaluation article by James Gustafson as companion. Milhaven describes with approval what he judges to be a trend of “the new ethics” in evaluating the morality of abortion. “The new ethics,” according to Milhaven, uniquely values

²⁶ *Love and Fertility* (New York, 1965).

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. xv.

²⁸ “The Catholic Church and the New Morality,” *Cross Currents* 16 (1966) 429–45.

²⁹ Robert H. Springer, S.J., “Notes on Moral Theology,” *THEOLOGICAL STUDIES* 28 (1967) 311.

“experienced life” over the more fundamental right to life of a fetus or another human person. As an example he uses the tragic case of a woman with German measles during pregnancy. He estimates her decision to have an abortion as a morally fitting response to the specific problem.³⁰

I cannot help but agree with Gustafson’s evaluation in general and as applicable to the specific thinking on abortion. He finds that the thinking represented in the article leaves much to be desired, and he does not seem sure that Milhaven’s analysis of the new-ethics ethicists is accurate. Gustafson delicately evaluates in general: “. . . My response is more in terms of hypothetical reflection; if Milhaven is correct, then *ethicists have certain sorts of work to do in order to tidy up their thinking.*”³¹ Gustafson seems to be representative of theologians keenly aware of the need today to be critically understanding of the morality insights of new-ethics ethicists.

Catholic teaching on abortion is not based on a clarity of vision which reveals the answer to all relevant theoretical questions. But it is based on sufficiently solid foundation for it to maintain in practice that all direct abortion, whether as a means or as an end in itself, is contrary to divine law and admits of no exceptions. It is based on and flows from the truths communicated to man by our heavenly Father—on the human dignity and fundamental right to life of every human person made in the image and likeness of God; it flows from the divine and Christian commandments of love and respect for our fellow man. In an age when men are reaching a renewed and deepening insight into the true dignity of every human person, the relaxing of moral and civil laws against abortion would represent a retrogression of man’s respect for his fellow man and a retrogression of Christian morals.

Today there are special causes, social evils, that prompt individual men and women to clamor for the right to have an abortion and for the relaxation of civil laws against abortion. I should not finish this moral evaluation of direct abortion without making a plea that all men should co-operate in a realistic way to try to bring about an end to these social evils and thereby to remove many of the causes leading to the seeking of abortion.

In conclusion, therefore, I would like to make my own the statement of the Roman Catholic Bishops of Illinois, in their judgment against abortion, published March 20, 1969:

. . . The Church extends deepest sympathy and compassion to some women who are thrown into agonizing distress by pregnancy: the mother who is in pre-

³⁰ Milhaven, *Commonweal*, Oct. 31, 1969, pp. 135–40, at 140.

³¹ Gustafson, *ibid.*, pp. 140–41, at 140; emphasis added.

carious health, or who is very poor, or who already has more children than she can care for; a mother in a troubled frame of mind, an unmarried mother, a woman raped or involved in incest.

Moved by such sympathy and compassion, the Church rejoices that modern science and medicine, sociology and psychology have achieved remarkable new ways of preserving health, well-being, and life itself. She encourages the State and private agencies to make positive efforts to help troubled mothers and to remove the evils that often are the occasion for desiring abortion. Every effort should be made to help the poor and to redeem them from helplessness, frustration and despair. Efforts should be made to afford better care for defective children and to advise and support their families. Sympathy and help should be given to unmarried mothers. Their children should be sheltered from stigmas and provided with institutional or private homes. Agencies for social service should be provided, especially for women for whom a new pregnancy creates painful burdens. Families should be helped through education for family living, counseling, family allowances, employment opportunities. By positive action, society should show respect for the sanctity of life and strive to enhance the quality of life for all.

“Who is ignorant that the hand of the Lord has made all these things?
He holds in His power the soul of every living thing,
and the breath of each man’s body” (Jb 12:9-10).³²

³² *Statement of the Roman Catholic Bishops of Illinois about Abortion*, Illinois Catholic Conference, March 20, 1969.