

ABORTION,

OIKONOMIA

AND

“THE HARD CASES”

{A Study}

by

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ABORTION, OIKONOMIA AND "THE HARD CASES"

THE REASON FOR THIS STUDY:

This examination of the issue of abortion, the Orthodox concept of *oikonomia* and certain individual situations used to support and promote the "right" to an abortion has been undertaken primarily because there is a legally and culturally perceived "right to an abortion" in America. Young people growing up today cannot remember a time before the Supreme Court decision *Roe vs. Wade* in 1973 legalized abortion on demand throughout all nine months of pregnancy. Should *Roe* be reversed by the High Court, legislative initiatives guaranteeing access to abortion presently exist in many states and at the federal level, strongly suggesting that the procedure has become institutionalized in our present culture and will not be either easily or quickly abolished whatever the efforts made toward that end. For that reason, it is becoming ever more difficult for the Orthodox Church to assert among the Faithful as well as witness outside the Faith to Her doctrines on the sanctity of innocent human life - doctrines which clearly state that no such "right" to an abortion exists in the Church and further, that no one can claim to be an Orthodox Christian while utilizing, promoting, providing, supporting or condoning abortion.

Yet, even with a complete understanding of the Orthodox doctrine on abortion, some consideration must be given to the so-called "hard cases" which, though few in number, present a far more complex situation than that of an abortion performed for social or economic convenience. In point of fact, these "hard cases" are presented as reasons for having or performing an abortion in less than 3% of the 1.5 million abortions performed annually in our nation since 1974. This fact makes them relatively unique instances of pastoral consideration and as such, possible candidates for the application of *oikonomia*.

This small study will, hopefully, provide some information for those with the weighty responsibility of interpreting the Faith and at the same time, comforting and guiding those who have turned to them in their hour of need. It is with the hope that

the material herein presented will be of use and in humble recognition of the limitations of the author that this study has been undertaken.

[About the term "*oikonomia*" (economy): This Scripturally-based concept is explained in more detail later in this article. However, for those encountering the term for the first time - and in order, hopefully, to maintain their interest in the subject under discussion - *oikonomia* is a pastoral function permitting what may or may appear to be the violation of the *letter* of canon law and/or pious practice without violating the *spirit* of either. In the West, the concept degenerated into the practice of "dispensation;" that is, a pope, bishop or priest "dispenses" with a particular point of Church law under appropriate (grants "dispensation") circumstances at the behest of the supplicant.

Of course, owing to the fallen nature of all human beings, the same type of thing can happen in the Orthodox Church with the practice of *oikonomia* (who can forget Jackie Kennedy Onassis's "Greek Orthodox" wedding?) but, in its proper understanding, *oikonomia* is always practiced with the intention of furthering God's Plan of Salvation. Thus, a soldier going to war may be permitted to marry during Great Lent when all such festivities are usually forbidden. Likewise, a guest may eat meat on a Friday (a violation of the rules of fasting) in order to avoid the greater fault of offending his host. ***However, it must be absolutely understood that oikonomia can never permit, excuse or justify the commission of a sin.*** If a bishop or priest does so, *he has exceeded his authority and fallen into sin.*]

THE DEFINITION OF THE TERM "HARD CASES":

In the abortion debate, proponents of the so-called "right to choose" often cite the "hard cases" in defense of their advocacy of abortion on demand. These consist of a pregnancy due to rape or incest and that which threatens the life - sometimes health - of the mother. Pregnancy arising from these unique and extremely emotional situations are used as a platform from which to attack those who support the right to life of the unborn child (pro-lifers). It is by such ad hominem attacks that abortion advocates encourage the belief among the general public that those who oppose abortion are heartless, judgmental, intolerant and lacking in compassion. Popular wisdom poses the question: who would legally force a woman to bear a child conceived by rape or incest, or condemn a woman to sacrifice her own life or health for the sake of her unborn child? The purpose of this study is not to become involved in the general arguments presented by either side on this issue, but rather to view the debate in light of Orthodox doctrine in general and the concept of *oikonomia* in particular.

THE POSITION OF THE CHURCH ON ABORTION:

In order to consider the question properly, it is necessary to review the doctrines of the Church on abortion and then define, as far as possible within this short study, the concept of *oikonomia*. The definitive work on the subject of abortion is a small book by Archpriest John Kowalczyk entitled "An Orthodox View of Abortion"¹. Fr. Kowalczyk points out that, during the first two centuries of Christianity, the teachings on abortion along with other moral issues were set down primarily in two works, the Didache (Teaching of the Twelve Apostles) and the Epistle of Barnabas. In the second chapter of the former we find the following proscriptions:²

"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 also gave absolute strictures regarding abortion:³

"You shall not slay the child by abortion. You shall not kill that which has already been generated."

The forbidding of such acts in writing was necessitated by the influx of pagans into the Faith. These new Christians did not have the Ten Commandments and Mosaic Law as a moral foundation, thus the Church found it essential to clearly prohibit behavior which though abhorrent to the Jews, was acceptable and even common among pagans.

THE FATHERS ON ABORTION:

The Fathers of the Church also spoke out strongly against abortion. Clement of Alexandria, writing in the third century stated:⁴

"Universal life would proceed according to nature if we would practice continence from the beginning instead of destroying, through immoral and pernicious acts, human beings who are given birth by Divine Providence."

In the fourth century, St. Basil the Great condemned the abortionist as well as the woman:⁵

"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."

He further reiterated his condemnation of the woman by saying:⁶

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

St. Basil also broached the "formed/unformed" concept of fetal development considered in the case of the accidental death of an unborn child as seen in Mosaic Law (Exodus 21:22-24):⁷

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

St. Gregory of Nyssa, Basil's brother and contemporary in the Church, was equally forthright about the protection due to the child in utero from the moment of conception, touching as well on the concept of "ensoulment":⁸

"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* (my emphasis) is one and the same for body and soul."

A precursor to the Fathers' testimony about the nature of the child from conception - a century before Basil and Gregory - Tertullian in the West addressed the question of at what point the fetus becomes human:⁹

“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.”

St. John Chrysostom spoke about those who would force a woman to abort in order to hide immoral activity. This Father of the Church was discussing the clients of prostitutes and male adulterers, but he could be speaking to the lovers, husbands and parents of today:¹⁰

“You do not let a harlot remain a harlot, but make her a murderer as well.”

The abortionist Chrysostom considered:¹¹

“.....even worse than a murderer.”

These teachings of the Fathers from the Golden Age of the Church were handed down through the centuries, eventually becoming part of the Photian Collection adopted in the year 883 as the official ecclesiastical book of law. This uncompromising doctrine has not been in any way changed or diluted but, in fact, has been reiterated down through the centuries by the spiritual leaders of each generation of the Faithful.

THE CANONS ON ABORTION:

In time, the Church recognized the necessity of including the prohibition of abortion within the written canons along with the specific ecclesiastical penalties attached. The first canonical pronouncement specifically on abortion was that of the regional Council of Elvira, Spain (c.303 A.D.) which imposed a life-long excommunication for the sin. The Eucharist was forbidden to the repentant guilty, even on their deathbed. This penance was relaxed when the Council of Ancyra, (314 A.D.) adopted Canon 21:¹²

“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.”

The final form of the Church's proscription on abortion came in 691 A.D. with Canon 91 of the Quinisext Ecumenical Council which decreed that people:¹³

“...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.”

THE MODERN ORTHODOX CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES ON ABORTION:

In keeping with the two thousand year continuity of the Faith, contemporary hierarchs and theologians have been equally outspoken about the doctrines of Orthodoxy with regard to abortion. Archpriest John Meyendorff, theologian and later Dean of St. Vladimir's Theological Seminary spoke to New York State's liberal abortion laws in 1972, 1,281 years after the Quinisext Council and one year before *Roe vs. Wade*:¹⁴

“ The fact that this interruption 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.”

At the All-American Council of the Orthodox Church in America in 1973, the same year as *Roe*, Metropolitan Ireney cried out against the legalization and therefore cultural and societal acceptance of abortion in these words:¹⁵

“The very moral foundations of society are being subjected to doubt, and there is no open objectionthe 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, this frightening transgression of the most sacred of all Divine Commandments.”

In further response to the Court decision, the Metropolitan, in his position as spiritual leader of the Church in America, sent a telegram to President Richard Nixon, which read in part:¹⁶

“Together we, the Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America, in the name of numberless Orthodox Americans, 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.”

In May of the same year, a seminar on the Orthodox approach to contemporary medical ethics held at St. Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, New York, released the following statement:¹⁷

“..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”

The Twenty-Third Clergy-Laity Congress of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America, held in Philadelphia in 1976, issued this statement:¹⁸

“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.”

In 1985, Metropolitan Theodosius, present leader of the Orthodox Church in America issued a statement in support of Roman Catholic Bishop John McGann's (Diocese of Rockville Centre, New York) historic "Life March" on the Feast of the Holy Innocents (December 28th). This statement included part of the "Resolution on Human Life" adopted by the Sixth All-American Council in 1980 and said:¹⁹

“...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* (my emphasis). To protect the life of the unborn all legal means should be employed, including the adoption of a human life amendment to the United States Constitution.”

This statement makes specific mention of two of the "hard cases" (rape and incest) and states unequivocally that any child so conceived is entitled to the Christian assessment of the sanctity of life - and hence the protection of that life - in the same way as any child conceived in love and joy.

In 1982, Orthodox moral theologian, Fr. Stanley S. Harakas wrote a book entitled "Contemporary Moral Issues Facing the Orthodox Christian"²⁰. In that book, Fr. Harakas devotes an entire chapter to the question of abortion as viewed within the context of Orthodox doctrine and spirituality. Among other comments made, Fr. Harakas points out:²¹

“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.”

and further:²²

“.....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 discussing the question of the "rights" of the woman and the "personhood" of the fetus, Fr. Harakas goes on to say:²³

“Orthodoxy rejects such notions (the right of a woman to an abortion) 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.”

and further:²⁴

“In opposition (to the idea that the unborn child is not "fully human"), 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.”

WHEN DOES LIFE BEGIN?

However, Fr. Harakas' book does bring up another question which is an integral part of the ongoing abortion debate; that is, when does life begin: at conception or at implantation; at “viability” (the age at which they child may survive outside the womb) or at birth; when the heart begins to beat (approximately twenty-four days of gestation) or at the earliest date fetal brain waves can be measured (approximately six weeks)? For most serious scholars, the choice would appear to be between the moment of conception and the moment of implantation which occurs several days after conception. Even the most staunch supporters of abortion recognize that the child in utero is most

assuredly alive and possessing of all organs in a functioning condition at two months after conception (eight weeks) which is considerably earlier than the earliest presently known time of viability ex-utero (twenty weeks). And certainly, birth is hardly a creditable time frame as that may successfully occur from twenty weeks on, the child being just as "human" at each stage of the pregnancy.

The statement of Fr. Harakas which makes this of primary interest in this study is one which concerns the two "hard cases" of rape and incest. On that subject, Fr. Harakas has said:²⁵

"In cases of rape or incest, due to the unnatural and often violent character of these crimes, as well as the danger of disease, it is urged that medical procedures take place as soon as possible to flush out the sperm before fertilization or *implantation* (my emphasis) can occur. Young women should be instructed that such action take place immediately (no later than three days *after impregnation* [my emphasis]) But once *implantation* (my emphasis) occurs, the pregnant woman should carry the child to term, and the alternative of adoption should be approached in a spirit of Christian love."

Clearly Fr. Harakas is speaking at least in part, of preventing the sperm from reaching the ovum. Naturally, the flushing of sperm to *prevent conception* is valid both medically and theologically. In the case of incest however, none of these well meant nostrums are applicable unless the incestuous relationship consists of a one time "rape." Clinically, incest is most often an ongoing, long lasting sexual liaison and therefore does not produce the one-of-a-kind encounter to which Fr. Harakas prescription is addressed. It may also be noted that in pregnancies resulting from either rape or incest, the victims often go through a denial process until the pregnancy is far advanced thus further rendering such nostrums ineffectual.

THE REALITY OF CONCEPTION:

When he mentions *implantation*, however, Fr. Harakas is now speaking of something which is already conceived and growing as it travels down the fallopian tube to the uterus. For a better understanding, it is necessary to know something about both conception and implantation - what they are and what part they play in the developing child. In their book, "From Conception to Birth, The Drama of Life's

Beginnings", Roberts Rugh and Dr. Landrum B. Shettles give a brief overview of the miracle of conception and its immediate aftermath:²⁶

"The sperm cell has an average life of about 48 hours inside the female tract. If it has not found and fertilized an ovum by then, it will die.....the unfertilized ovum lives for about 12 to 24 hours.

When the armada of spermatozoa, after battling through a murderous obstacle course at a speed of one inch in 20 minutes, finally arrives in the vicinity of the ovum, only about 2,000 of the original hundreds of millions remain in the running. The nose-cone-like cap (the acrosome) of each sperm produces an enzyme called hyaluronidase, which digests the protective cumulous cells in its path around the ovum. Now the finalists in the race confront the zona pellucida, the clear, gelatinous, but firm cover of the ovum. A mature spermatozoon bores with some effort through the zona pellucida, apparently with the cooperation of the ovum, and finally it pierces the cell membrane itself at any point on the surface. As soon as this occurs the ovum rejects all other spermatozoa, although many may try to attach themselves to the zona pellucida.

In the process of penetrating the ovum the successful spermatozoon loses its acrosomal cap. Once inside, it loses its tail as well, leaving just the sperm head, which is basically a nucleus containing 23 chromosomes. Only a mature spermatozoon can stimulate the otherwise dormant ovum. Now there begins a complicated process known as development, which never really ceases until the death of the individual many years later.

The protoplasmic content of the ovum begins to vibrate. If you could examine such an ovum alive under very high magnification, you might describe the activity of its cytoplasm as relatively violent, only everything would be taking place on a drawn-out time scale, like an exaggerated slow-motion picture.....The remaining nuclear material (of the ovum), the pronucleus, containing 23 chromosomes (half the normal complement, because a previous division had taken place within the ovary), then moves slowly toward the center of the ovum. There it meets the pronucleus of the sperm, which also contains 23 chromosomes. The two pronuclei become enlarged and lose their enclosing membranes. Within 12 hours they merge, so that the fertilized ovum, now called a zygote, has its requisite 23 pairs of chromosomes (one member of each pair from each parent) restored and is ready to develop into a baby.

Little in biology is more thrilling to watch or more significant in its implications than the first division of the zygote into two equal parts by the process known as cleavage. It is through this process that a single fertilized ovum will give rise to the more than trillions of cells of the newborn baby.....Every daughter cell is therefore identical in chromosomal make-up, and hence in hereditary potential, to the original zygote. Thus each cell of the developing baby, right from the beginning, contains an equal number of chromosomes from each of the parents, and it is these chromosomes that carry the all-important hereditary units known as genes.

The first cleavage of the zygote takes about 36 hours, but each succeeding division takes slightly less time. Finally the proliferation levels off to a fairly constant rate.

The second cleavage is completed by 2 days after conception. By the end of 3 days there are 16 to 32 cells, and by 4 days there may be 60 to 70 cells.....In a few days there are enough cells to form a sphere called a morula, which looks like a mulberry encased in a transparent envelope called the zona pellucida.

The cells of the morula are functionally integrated. They have already lost some of their independence, and if one cell were separated from the cluster it could no longer give rise to a separate individual. As the number of cells increases, the morula moves away from the site at which the original ovum was fertilized, down through the ciliated oviduct, and, on about the third day, through a narrow opening into the uterine cavity, where there is more room. (At this age, if the embryo were examined under a special microscope, the prospective sex could already be ascertained.) This is where the embryo (and later the fetus) will grow and develop for the next nine months."

Here then, in the simplest of terms and the briefest of descriptions, is the marvel of conception and all that follows including implantation. It is easy to see here that the actual beginning of life must be acknowledged as being at the moment of conception; implantation is simply another step along the path of a life already established. *It is not for nothing that the Fathers speak only of conception although they knew nothing of intra-uterine life and therefore of implantation.* Without microscopes or modern technology, they knew by the Grace of the Holy Spirit that life begins at that miraculous moment when the sperm pierces the egg. St. Basil the Great spoke to the issue of the protection offered by the Church to the unborn child during the different stages of pregnancy and here his statement is reiterated:²⁷

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

It is also interesting to note that in the scientific and medical communities, even those who support abortion acknowledge the fact that human life begins at conception. In the journal *California Medicine*, this editorial which appeared fully three years before *Roe vs. Wade* was intended to justify the spurious "debate" about the beginning of life then being waged in scientific, medical and political circles:²⁸

"The process of eroding the old ethic and substituting the new has already begun. It may be seen most clearly in changing attitudes toward human abortion. In defiance of the long held Western

ethic of intrinsic and equal value for every human life regardless of its stage, condition or status, abortion is becoming accepted by society as moral, right and even necessary. It is worth noting that this shift in public attitude has affected the churches, the laws and public policy rather than the reverse. Since the old ethic has not yet been fully displaced it has been necessary to separate the idea of abortion from the idea of killing which continues to be socially abhorrent. The result has been a curious avoidance of the scientific fact, which everyone really knows, *that human life begins at conception and is continuous whether intra-or extra-uterine until death* (my emphasis). The very considerable semantic gymnastics which are required to rationalize abortion as anything but taking a human life would be ludicrous if they were not often put forth under socially impeccable auspices. It is suggested that this schizophrenic sort of subterfuge is necessary because while a new ethic is being accepted the old one has not yet been rejected."

The "old ethic" which the editors so loftily dismiss is, of course, the Biblical (Christian) Ethic and the "new ethic" is the utilitarian philosophy of Atheistic Secular Humanism. This editorial was written over nineteen years ago and in that time things have gotten worse as Humanism asserts its dominance over every aspect of American and Western culture.

THE NEW BATTLEFIELD:

The danger in setting the period between conception and implantation as an acceptable time to destroy the already conceived child is that it is both arbitrary and artificial without any real medical, scientific or theological meaning. It has instead the meaning each individual involved cares to give it. Therefore, while one person may speak scrupulously and compassionately only about cases of rape and incest, the less scrupulous will use this "dispensation" - not *oikonomia* - to cover every "traumatic" pregnancy. And, by accepting for whatever "good" reason the legitimacy of the termination of pregnancy after conception, there is no way to intellectually or theologically forbid the taking of that life at a later stage for reasons which may be less "good." Like the proverbial hole in the dike which begins as a trickle but leads to a flood, such exceptions inevitably lead back to abortion on demand and the death of 1.5 million unborn children annually.

Although the possibility of the interruption of pregnancy between conception and implantation as a mass means of abortion seemed unlikely just a short time ago because

of among other reasons the need for surgical intervention, the development and planned marketing of the abortifacient “birth control,” Norplant - whose purpose is to not only prevent conception but to also prevent the implantation of the fertilized ovum when conception has taken place - now makes the period between conception and implantation a new battlefield in the abortion war. Of course, the ubiquitous “low-dose” birth-control pill may also act as a chemical abortifacient and the common IUD (intra-uterine device) does so as well.

RU486, the “abortion pill,” does not even have the spurious legitimacy of preventing conception but is an abortifacient pure and simple. In reality, RU-486 is used long after the implantation of the child has taken place and so it cannot be considered within the context of this particular situation. However, Dr. Bernard Nathanson has advised that an actual “morning after” pill (a drug which can be taken directly after intercourse so that a woman need never know if she has been pregnant) is close to release. If this is indeed the case, it becomes even more urgent to restore the understanding of the sanctity of life from the moment of conception. In fairness it must be stated that Fr. Harakas has always clearly stated that his position on the acceptability of destroying an embryo conceived through rape/incest after conception but prior to implantation reflects only his opinion and not Church doctrine.

WHAT IS THE TRUTH ABOUT ABORTION TODAY?

This treatise was designed to help Orthodox Christians - and especially clergy - cope with those who demand that oikonomia be invoked to allow them to use abortion as a solution to various life crises. It was never the author’s intention to go into detail about abortion itself; such a study would require a book and perhaps several books. However, it may be necessary to point out at least a few facts about abortion that have been withheld from the American public by the pro-abortion media. For instance:

1] Abortion on demand for any or no reason is available up until the moment a child is delivered. The interest of the State in the unborn child after viability (the time when he can live outside the womb) is limited to legislating where an abortion can be performed and who may perform it; it cannot be forbidden although it can be made more difficult to obtain. Fully 160,000 late-term (2nd and 3rd trimester) abortion

are performed annually in the United States. 1.6 million abortions are performed annually in America. The United States has the most unrestrictive abortion policy of any Western nation.

2] Most abortions are performed between 10 and 12 weeks after conception. By that time the baby's heart is beating, all its organs are present and functioning and it exhibits brain-waves little different from an adult human being. Experiments have shown that a child of that age *feels pain*.

3] Abortions are performed in the following ways:

The D & C - a sharp curette is inserted into the womb and the contents - including the child - are scraped out;

The Suction Abortion - a suction apparatus is inserted into the womb and the child is pulled apart; the skull is crushed so that it can be removed by forceps. These two types are only used in early abortions. As the child matures, the bones become too hard for either to be used and the following procedures must be done:

The "D & E" or dilation and evacuation - the abortionist goes into the womb with a forceps and tears the child apart much as suction machine does. The child is then re-assembled to be sure that it has been totally removed.

The D & X - This new abortion procedure was dreamed up by a "doctor" who specializes in late-term abortions. A forceps is introduced into the uterus and the baby's leg is grabbed. The whole child *except the head* is pulled from the birth canal. A blade is then thrust into the base of the skull while it is still in the cervix, killing the child. The skull is then crushed and the child completely removed.

The Saline Abortion - A very strong saline (salt) solution is injected into the womb through the abdomen and the child is burned to death both outside (skin) and inside (lungs). The child thrashes about in agony for hours before dying and then the "mother" delivers a dead (or dying) baby. This procedure has been outlawed in Japan because of maternal mortality; it is still practiced in America.

The Prostaglandin Abortion - A strong dose of prostaglandins (a hormone) is injected into the mother to initiate labor. A living child is then delivered, killed or allowed to die. However, they are also shipped to labs for experiments. This method promises to be the one of choice when "fetal experimentation and organ

harvesting” becomes a big industry in this country. Remember, organs can only be harvested and experiments done *on the living* - not the dead.

The Hysterotomy - A child is delivered by a type of C-section, the only difference being that the mother doesn’t want the child and so it is killed or “recycled” in the growing industry of fetal experimentation.

Then there are other things to be considered in our present abortion climate. For instance:

1] For the first time, laws are being passed that are directed at the *motives* for people’s actions rather than their actions. Thus, pro-life activists counselling, praying, and otherwise demonstrating at abortuaries or practicing civil disobedience to prevent abortion are being punished with severe criminal and civil penalties for doing things that go unpunished by other social activists such as homosexual advocates and animal rights groups. This is totally diametric to the spirit of American jurisprudence, but no one seems to be particularly upset. In Buffalo, recently, a judge ruled on what two Protestant ministers could and could not preach from their pulpits - something unheard of in this nation founded on religious liberty.

2] Abortion as an act is protected far more than the women for whom it is supposed to exist. Thus, there are some states - with more are considering it - *who do not require an abortionist to be a physician*. All fifty states require that an animal be treated by a licensed veterinarian, but the advocacy of abortion is so strong that it is considered more important for there to be abortionists than that they be qualified physicians.

3] The Attorneys General of several states, including New York and Texas, are waging war not only against pro-life demonstrators, rescuers (sit-ins) and side-walk counsellors, but also against so-called “crisis pregnancy centers” which offer women an alternative to abortion through help during and after their pregnancy. Since most women who have abortion have said that they did so because they had “no choice,” it seems strange that the government should work so diligently to remove what little choice they presently have.

THE SECULAR CULTURE ON ABORTION:

As is obvious in just this quick study of abortion within our nation's culture today, compared to the pure, clear and undiluted moral certainty of the Church, secular society in the Twentieth Century is a sink of ethical depravity that has lost all concept of moral absolutes - unless it be to embrace absolute evil. Utilitarianism, the philosophy of Atheistic Secular Humanism, preaches moral relativism and situational ethics saying in effect that there is nothing which is intrinsically good or evil, but rather that all things are dependent upon situation and circumstance. This errant nonsense has become the guiding light of all cultural reasoning and has caused the moral and ethical chaos rampant in Western society.

The Ten Commandments have become the "Ten Suggestions" even in some so-called "Christian" churches. The Golden Rule is forgotten or interpreted to mean government intervention on behalf of some "minority" group which is perceived as being persecuted. This modern schizophrenia is made evident in the spectacle of people supporting "choice" (abortion) as a "right" of children to be "wanted" and "loved." Nowhere is this madness more evident than in the name of the world's largest abortionist, "*Planned Parenthood*."

The first deadly sin of pride no longer, for all intents and purposes, exists. Blatant egotism and extreme selfishness are exalted in the name of "rugged individualism," "rights" and "freedom." Gone is the concept of individual responsibility for individual action and there is a deliberate attempt within the culture - largely successful - to eradicate any knowledge or opinions which might interfere with America's humanistic, hedonistic lifestyle.

The mass media, both print and electronic, sole providers of every channel of information, carefully censors from the public almost all materials which could possibly cause an examination of the humanistic aims, goals and directions in which modern Western civilization is moving. Any attempt to provide such information and to teach moral absolutes - even within the family - is considered an unconstitutional invasion of the privacy of others including dependent minors. The very concept of privacy has come to mean the right to do whatever the individual pleases without interference or restraint and all efforts to inculcate different moral precepts is becoming - with increasing frequency - looked upon as a "hate crime."

Those in power within the society are, in the vast majority, believers in and advancers of secularism, humanism, nihilism, relativism and utilitarianism with all their myriad and monstrous aims and goals. This roster of power includes the elite of commerce, science, academia, philosophy, medicine, government, the arts (including the entertainment arts: motion pictures, television, radio and popular publications) and even to a very large extent, that which is presented as "religion." For instance, most of what today is described as "Jewish thought" is not reflective of devout Judaism, but rather of those "cultural" (secular) Jews who are either agnostics, atheists or believers in New Age syncretism. The "main-line" Protestant churches have also abandoned - in the vast majority of cases - every vestige of traditional Christian morality and many theological fundamentals as well. Yet, this extremely non-traditional, often anti-religious "religious" opinion is given greater weight by the organs of influence than such traditional bodies as the Roman Catholic Church, the various (and much larger) conservative Protestant denominations and Orthodox Judaism - not to mention, of course, the Orthodox Church.

Further, this non-traditional sentiment is often utilized to deny actual religious viewpoints - especially Christian - access to the public forum through the use of the much abused concept of the "separation of church and state." For decades the media and other segments of judicial and social influence have been able to use this popular misconception of the constitutional propriety of religious thought in public affairs simply because it has been preached by so-called "religious" groups, most of which are the antithesis of everything actual "religion" represents. As stated previously, much of mainline Protestantism has been subverted by humanist and syncretic philosophy and now even the Roman Catholic Church is, apparently, going the same way especially in the West.

Even more frightening, however, is the public advancement and societal recognition and acceptance of the occult including ancient pagan practices, witchcraft (wicca) and Satanism - all of which are flourishing in the modern moral void. In fact, such movements as radical feminism are bound up in a desire to return to pagan goddess worship, sorcery and witchcraft. As far as Satanism and demon worship are concerned, one need only peruse the album covers, tee-shirts and other memorabilia of

heavy-metal rock music to appreciate just how prevalent the occult is among today's youth. As we return to the days of paganism - and worse - there remain few sources of true Christian witness left in modern culture, only further emphasizing how infinitely important - and often how utterly lacking - is the witness of Orthodoxy.

But all of this is just the tip of the iceberg with regards the unconstitutional, unjust and immoral advocacy of abortion practiced by the power structure of this nation including the government, the judiciary and even law enforcement at all levels. The treatment of pro-life activists who have come under the "care" of local and state police are reminiscent of horror stories from the concentration camp and the gulag. For those who think "it can't happen here," think again. It not only has happened, but it continues to happen and the trend seems to imply that things will only get worse. Truly, the time is shortly upon us when those who speak out against abortion and those who serve that bloody god among others, will be considered - and treated - as "enemies of the State."

THE CHURCH'S WITNESS IN THE WORLD:

However, martyrdom notwithstanding, the Orthodox Church existing in the fullness of Christ must do what She has done for the last two-thousand years; that is, to preach Christ and His Eternal Truth. Within the Church, moral relativism is non-existent. Her Eternal, Omniscient, Omnipresent and Omnipotent Founder, Guide and Savior, Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever.²⁸ If we, the Faithful, are true to the Church, we need have no fear about how we should react to this or that current "moral crisis," for Almighty God has made known to us, through His Church, His Divine Will and we will not stray as long as we know and obey that Will.

THE GENERAL REACTION OF TODAY'S CHURCH TO ABORTION:

In recognition of the state of the culture, those in authority within the Church have the awesome responsibility to unceasingly teach the doctrines of the Faith especially in the crucial area of morality. Sadly, many have chosen to remain silent. In a few cases doubtless, this silence was occasioned by culture-related attitudes manifested especially among those whose background is reflective of foreign birth and nurture far from the

American concepts of freedom of speech and dissent. Then there is the silence of the naive, those who believe as did one elderly bishop that "Orthodox people don't do such things." But the silence of the vast majority who should have spoken but have chosen to remain mute is the result of apprehension, apathy or even, sadly, tacit approval. It is in this third group, that the abuse and misuse of *oikonomia* has most frequently occurred.

After an initial outcry by the leading hierarchs of numerous Orthodox jurisdictions within the United States against the legalization of abortion - attended by occasional official pronouncements emanating from jurisdictional, archdiocesan or diocesan headquarters along with a few programs initiated at the time of the *Roe* decision by some jurisdictions - the overwhelming reaction to abortion by most of the clergy and laity in the United States has been one of silence. In fairness, it must be stated that there have been those who have spoken out strongly and consistently from the beginning and it is necessary to recognize that the Orthodox Church does not command headlines for its pronouncements. Yet, we cannot pretend that the Church has acted in a forceful and vigorous manner on this issue even internally.

There are some mitigating circumstances in this matter. For example there are those who consider involvement in any secular (and especially political) situation as "unOrthodox," and that open defiance of societal polices somehow constitutes a "lack of humility." But a study of Christian history will show that the Church has always been on the cutting-edge of society especially where great ethical and moral issues were at stake. As the legal understanding of silence, both East and West (including Russia) is *assent*, the silence of the majority of the Faithful especially the clergy, both in the Church and the World has been a great evil. It has deprived the Faithful of clear and fixed guidelines for belief and behavior and the world of our unique witness to the Truth of Jesus Christ of which Orthodoxy alone is the repository. The Orthodox Church's relative silence during America's "slaughter of the innocents" is a black chapter in Her Apostolic Mission to the New World. Even worse, the result of that silence has been confusion and contention surrounding the issue within the Church Herself and when the "hard cases" become an added consideration, any application of *oikonomia* with respect to granting permission for an abortion becomes perilous.

Finally, let us consider the witness of today's Orthodox hierarchs and priests in light of the words of the Blessed Tikhon of Zadonsk:

"Sometimes a word of reproof must be spoken to all in general, and sometimes to some particular person. When reproof is given in general, then one may speak strictly and sharply, that sinners listening might feel the lash of fear in their hearts, and so be wakened as from the sleep of sin. We see this in the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures...When people whomever they may be, commit iniquity and you know it openly, take extreme care not to be silent, but everywhere reprove their iniquity in your speech, lest you be like a dumb dog that does not bark when thieves break into a house and loot it, and wolves fall upon the flock and devour it. Stand firm, beloved, and show your pastoral work even though you must necessarily suffer. In this work, you have as your examples the prophets, apostles and luminaries of Christ who lived in times of old." [On the Duties of Pastors, "Journey to Heaven, Counsels on the Particular Duties of Every Christian," St. Tikhon of Zadonsk]

Is there anyone who would seriously attempt to try to reconcile St. Tikhon's teaching with the rewards showered upon pro-abortion politicians and celebrities by one large jurisdiction within the Orthodox Church? Is it any wonder that it is extremely difficult to bring the pro-life message to Orthodox Faithful when they witness these honors being bestowed by that jurisdiction on individuals whose only "claim" to them is their ethnic heritage? Even where such scandal is not present, how does the silence emanating from the pulpits across this nation compare with the specific direction to "not remain silent" that is found in the writings of a Saint who has been lauded to the skies by the very bishops and priests occupying those silent pulpits?

A SHORT DEFINITION OF "OIKONOMIA":

For the sake of clarity, as the Church's stand on abortion was previously defined, it now becomes necessary to give a short definition of the concept of *oikonomia* (economy) which application in possible response to abortion is being considered. *Oikonomia* is succinctly defined by Greek Orthodox moral theologian, Rev. Stanley Harakas, as:³⁰

"...the carrying out of the spirit rather than the exact and rigid letter of a law without a contravention of any prescription, canonical or legal. It addresses the issues of human and spiritual well-being as they relate to the application of church rules."

In his book, *A Dictionary of Greek Orthodoxy*, Rev. Nicon D. Patrinos gives a more in-depth definition:³¹

“According to Orthodox Canon Law, the term *economia* (*oikonomia*) denotes a timely and logically defensible deviation from a canonically established rule for the sake of bringing *salvation* (my emphasis) either within or outside the Church. But this deviation does not extend to the point where it could violate the dogmatical boundaries of the rule in question. Also, *economia* should be decided upon only by the canonically instituted authority of the Church...It should be kept in mind, however, that *economia* is an out of the ordinary ecclesiastical measure, the nature of which is timely and its duration temporary. Its intent is solely Christian, an expression of the love that guides the Church and of the virtues that issue from it, sympathy, leniency and understanding of human weakness. But no dogmatical boundaries should be moved or removed when *economia* is applied...”

In his work, "Byzantine Theology", the late Archpriest John Meyendorff addressed the origins of the concept of *oikonomia* thusly:³²

"In both historical and theological literature, the principle of *oikonomia* is often referred to to illustrate the particularly Byzantine ability to interpret the law arbitrarily to suit political or personal purposes. Such a use betrays an obvious misunderstanding of the term, and is an injustice both to the principle itself and to its proper application. The term *oikonomia* does not belong originally to legal vocabulary; meaning "household management," it designates in the New Testament the divine plan of salvation: 'He has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of his will, according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ as a plan [*oikonomia*] for the fullness of time, to recapitulate all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth' (Ep 1:9-10 v. also 3: 2-3). But this divine plan for the management of history and of the world has been entrusted to men. For Paul, preaching of the word is an *oikonomia*, entrusted by God (1 Co 9:17), and, therefore, we should be regarded as 'servants of Christ and stewards [*oikonomoi*] of the mysteries of God' (1 Co 4:1). More specifically, the 'management' or 'stewardship' belongs to those who fulfill the ministry of leading the Church: 'The Church, of which I became a minister according to the divine office [*oikonomia*] which was given to me for you' (Col 1:24-25). In the Pastorals, the *oikonomia* belongs particularly to the episkopos: 'For a bishop, as God's steward [*oikonomos*], must be blameless.'"(Tt 1:7).

Meyendorff then contrasted *oikonomia* to the Western concept of *dispensatio* (dispensation):³³

"In the Latin versions of the New Testament, and in later ecclesiastical vocabulary, the term *oikonomia* is very consistently translated by *dispensatio*. In Western canon law, however, the term *dispensatio* acquired a very definite meaning of 'exception to the law granted by the proper authority.'...innumerable references to *oikonomia* in Byzantine canonical literature, clearly interpret it in a much wider sense. What is at stake is not only an exception to the law, but an

obligation to decide individual issues in the general context of God's plan for the salvation of the world. Canonical strictures may sometimes be inadequate to the full reality and universality of the Gospel, and, by themselves, do not provide the assurance that, in applying them, one is obedient to the Will of God. For the Byzantines - to use an expression of Patriarch Nicholas Mystikos (901-907, 912-925) - *oikonomia* is 'an imitation of God's love for man' and not simply an 'exception to the rule.'

And in his closing passage, Fr. Meyendorff presented an historical scenario that is strikingly similar to the modern ecclesiastical situation:³⁴

"Of its nature, *oikonomia* cannot be defined as a legal norm, and practical misuses and abuses of it have frequently occurred. Throughout its entire history, the Byzantine Church has known a polarization between a party of 'rigorists,' recruited mainly in monastic circles, and the generally more lenient group of Church officials supporting a wider use of *oikonomia*, especially in relation to the state. In fact, *oikonomia*, since it permits various possible ways of implementing the Christian Gospel practically, implies conciliation, discussion, and, often, unavoidably, tension...In fact, no one in Byzantium ever denied the principle of *oikonomia*; rather everyone agreed with Eulogius, Patriarch of Alexandria (581-607), when he wrote: 'One rightly can practice *oikonomia* whenever pious doctrine remains unharmed.' In other words, *oikonomia* concerns the practical implications of Christian belief, but it never compromises with the truth itself."

It is therefore obvious that the concept of *oikonomia* must, first and last, be concerned with God's Plan for the Salvation of Man rather than such worldly considerations as emotional or financial distress or benefit. This is, of course, diametric to the atheistic, materialistic, anti-religious mentality which insists that only temporal concerns are the criteria upon which human judgements can and should be based. Not only is this mode of thought found within the secular culture but also, sadly, within certain elements of the Church as well.

THE OIKONOMIA/ABORTION COLLISION:

Within the Church, *oikonomia* is supposed to be applied with utmost care and with an eye toward the perfection to which we are called as followers of Christ. It is also (properly) invoked with the intent of making a bad situation better, not worse. However, this practice means that possibly and under certain circumstances there can be a departure from the seemingly unchangeable position of the Church on matters which include morality. And because we no longer live in a Christian culture and many things which in the past would have been considered crimes are now presented as

acceptable and even preferable, the practice of *oikonomia* is fraught with moral and spiritual perils. Any deviation however slight from the moral doctrines of the Faith in light of the present culture is perilous. The question now becomes: is there a place for the practice of *oikonomia* with respect to abortion and, if so, where is that place?

If such a place does indeed exist, it can only be in connection with the "hard cases." This is made abundantly clear by the April 9, 1973 statement of Metropolitan Ireney then primate of the Orthodox Church in America:³⁵

"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."

However, the Sixth All-American Council of the Orthodox Church in America in its "Resolution on Human Life" combined with the reiteration of that statement by Metropolitan Theodosius in his message to Bishop McGann said unequivocally that the tragic nature of conception does not rob a child of the protection of Almighty God. This clear and unqualified pronouncement as to the sanctity of the child even when conceived by rape or incest, effectively defines the doctrine of the Church with respect to those particular "hard cases." Neither is this inimical to secular reasoning as we do not demand the death of the criminal for the crimes of rape or incest. As that is the case, why then should we demand death for the innocent child who is simply another victim? Still more, why should those who choose to defend that child's right to live be castigated?

PREGNANCY AND RAPE/INCEST:

Comprehensive statistics indicate that rape and incest lead to pregnancy in only a tiny fraction of reported cases for a variety of reasons.³⁶ Of course, that is no consolation for the women who comprise that fraction and who find themselves facing the double tragedy of the trauma of rape or incest further complicated by a decidedly unwanted pregnancy. Yet, of the women who choose not to abort the child so conceived, many of those interviewed have said that it was a wise and healing decision; in addition, that the child produced had been a joy and an emotional balm for their wounded minds and souls. Many of those who did decide to abort found themselves with the double burden of emotional trauma, first from the rape or incestuous

relationship and second from the guilt and pain of the abortion itself. It is odd that in the case of those already wounded by grievous distress, we should choose to offer them further pain, suffering and death as amends. It is also necessary to point out that Christians cannot alleviate the pain of one individual, however great, by inflicting pain (and death) upon another, totally innocent individual. However pure the motive may be, the action is evil and therefore impermissible.

MINISTRY TO THE RAPE/INCEST VICTIM:

As difficult and painful as it is to accept such a situation when it arises, it might be far less so if, in the Church, the doctrines on the sanctity of innocent human life were made clear from the beginning. It is too late to speak of the love of God for the child of such a conception to a woman who is suffering from the trauma of rape or incest. At that moment at least, she has precious little love to offer the innocent soul whom she perceives as an intruder in her body and who is, through no fault of his own, the result of a far more heinous intrusion. However, if Orthodox Christians knew the facts about the biological development of the unborn child and God's love for him as a routine part of their catechesis (such as they are about other doctrines of the Church: the Trinity, the Virgin Birth, the Eucharist etc.), it would be far easier to witness to a pregnant rape or incest victim that the child she carries is neither evil nor filthy because of the nature of his conception, but rather, he is a part of God's Divine Plan and must be accepted as such whatever arrangements will be made for him after birth.

RAPE/INCEST AND THE THREAT OF SUICIDE:

There are those who believe that the risk of a possible suicide by the afflicted woman should be the determining factor as to whether to abort the child conceived by rape or incest. It should be understood that a woman who becomes suicidal especially after rape may do so whether or not she is pregnant. Further, abortion and the guilt it engenders have also driven women to suicide. There is no proof that either preventing or allowing an abortion will affect any eventual suicide attempt. Indeed, studies now underway show that between 50% and 80% of women who have had surgical abortions suffer psychological distress ranging from slight to severe.³⁷ In Orthodox Christian

morality, no one human being can be deliberately sacrificed in an attempt to prevent another taking his or her own life. The threat of suicide must be recognized as a cry for help to which the Church is uniquely qualified to respond.

With a further regard to suicide, the virtual acceptance by our society today of an act which was once considered the epitome of cowardice and blasphemy, is just a further example of our loss of reverence for life. Suicide removed from Judas the possibility of repentance and reconciliation. It is pride, the first deadly sin, and despair born of pride which tells a man that he has the right to reject God by rejecting His first and most Blessed Gift, Life. In willful self-destruction motivated by the overwhelming desire to have human will triumphant over the circumstances of life we can best see Satan's blasphemous rejection of God and His Love.

THE CHRISTIAN UNDERSTANDING OF SUFFERING:

Having lost the understanding of the redemptive nature of suffering, society today believes that to endure suffering is the evidence of mental aberration. This reflects the secular and humanist understanding of earthly life as being the totality of existence. If there is no God and if there is no Eternal Life, no Heaven, no Hell, then suffering is futile and foolish.

Those who are Christian however, have the promise that earthly sufferings are but as jewels in the Crown of Salvation. Like gold refined in the fire, we will be made more beautiful through suffering in Imitation of Christ. To counter the culture, the Church must strongly teach that avoidance at all costs of humiliation and suffering is not the Christian Way. Should a woman afflicted by a "crisis pregnancy" have both that teaching to console her and the support of her Christian community and the whole Church in her time of trial, the need to weigh one life against another will cease. Just as pastors and others minister to those of the Faithful who have suffered other tragedies such as the loss of a child or a terminal illness, so too the woman with a "crisis pregnancy" can be comforted and healed without abandoning the Church's fundamental moral teachings or the child entrusted to her - and the Church - by God.

ABORTION: A DECEPTIVE "SOLUTION":

Above all it is necessary to reject the deceptive "solution" of abortion. Firstly, of course, because it is murder but also because it is a deception of Satan and leads only to more and greater tragedy. Abortion takes a woman who has pain but no sin and makes of her a worse sinner than the man who perpetrated the original crime. Should she threaten suicide in hopes of making the priest or lay counselor countenance an abortion, it is necessary to remember that such a threat is a form of emotional blackmail through which she may, in her pain, attempt to impose her will upon the godly, forcing them to do the ungodly. It is not permissible for a Christian to embrace or condone sin in the hope of preventing another from sinning. This is especially true when acquiescence will lead to the commission of a sin more grievous than that originally committed. While all humanly possible must be done to comfort someone who is

emotionally distressed, it is a triumph for Satan when that comfort extends to the commission of sin - especially the sin of murder.

THE CONCEPT OF "HEALTH" OF THE WOMAN:

Having considered the situations of rape and incest, there then remains the inescapable hard case, "life of the woman." Here it is necessary to make a distinction between the concepts of "life" of the woman and that of "health" of the woman. The first situation means that a woman's physical life is in serious danger; that, if nothing is done, death is inevitable (as in the case of an ectopic pregnancy). The second means that for a variety of reasons, a woman's "health" (as defined by the courts) may be perceived as being affected adversely by the pregnancy. These reasons include social (the humiliation of a bastard child), financial (the "unplanned" fourth or third, or second, or even first child), physical (the desire to wear a bikini on vacation) or myriad other "reasons" which some psychologist, physician or abortionist can devise - often in order to tap into welfare funding. When it is suggested that abortion be limited to the three "hard cases:" rape, incest and "health" of the mother, one may be sure that the resultant situation would be just as it is now, abortion on demand through all nine months of pregnancy without any restrictions whatsoever.

THE CONCEPT OF "LIFE" OF THE WOMAN:

In the case of "life of" however, there exists an either/or situation; that is, either something is done or the woman dies. Often, if nothing is done, both mother and child will die. It is also unusual in these situations that the child can be saved even were it decided to choose his life rather than that of his mother. In such medical scenarios there is the understanding of "the salvageable life;" that is, the life which is most likely to survive the necessary medical procedures and in the vast majority of such instances, the salvageable life is that of the woman.

SITUATIONS NOT CAUSED BY, BUT INVOLVING PREGNANCY:

There have been cases where women severely injured in accidents or suffering from some other terminal medical problem such as stroke or advanced heart disease

have been kept alive by artificial means in an attempt to save the child they carried. Usually, if all goes well, the child is delivered through spontaneous or induced labor or is taken by surgery at the earliest possible moment. In most cases the child is unaffected by the mother's condition and will be perfectly healthy. After the birth, if no further medical intervention will benefit, the woman is allowed to expire naturally. In cases where the mother's condition is not as extreme and life is still in evidence, the birth of the child has, in some cases, prompted a return to awareness and a start on the road to at least partial recovery. These are individual cases requiring expert medical and theological judgement and guidance, and are so rare as to be removed from generalized pronouncements on "life of the mother" considerations.

Further, most medical experts agree that, in cases where the woman's condition is terminal, any attempt to save the child in the womb by medical intervention will not affect her condition adversely. And, in cases where the woman is severely injured but is not necessarily considered terminal, there is no present medical proof that the condition of pregnancy is deliterious or that termination of pregnancy is beneficial. As, in this medical scenario the pregnancy itself is not the cause of the woman's condition but rather some other agency - such as trauma - has brought her into medical extremis, most physicians agree that there is little reason to consider abortion as a curative agent.

LIFE THREATENING SITUATIONS CAUSED BY PREGNANCY:

Included in the category of "life of the mother" situations, is the previously mentioned ectopic pregnancy, a condition where the newly developing child does not reach the uterus but remains in the fallopian tube and grows large enough to cause severe pain which leads eventually to the rupture of the tube and death for both mother and child. Another case would involve the need to remove a cancerous uterus or other part of the reproductive system, or to treat cancer in other organs through radiation or chemotherapy. These situations would either directly affect the child through surgery or, in all probability, lead to a spontaneous abortion brought on by the use of potent medicines or radiation. Then, of course, there are problems which may arise during a pregnancy, such as eclampsia, which can be fatal to both mother and child if not treated aggressively at their earliest stages.

FURTHER CLARIFICATION OF "LIFE OF THE WOMAN" SCENARIO:

In further clarification of the "life of the woman" situation, it must be stated that, given the advances of medical technology, there are very few circumstances where such "either/or" situations exist. Childbearing has become extremely safe where proper prenatal care exists and where both the woman and child receive adequate medical care. Even a woman with a serious illness can successfully deliver healthy, normal children with proper care and medical attention. This is evidenced by the fact that, in the present situation of abortion on demand, statistically fewer than 1% of the 1.5 million abortions per year are allegedly performed because the pregnancy presents a danger to the life of the mother.

“ABORTION” AS UNDERSTOOD WITHIN THIS TREATISE:

It is important to remember, however, that these procedures are not to be considered abortions in the understanding of that term as used within this treatise. While medically, the term "abortion" indicates the termination of a pregnancy before completion, either naturally or otherwise, the procedures just mentioned are not "abortions" as defined herein, because they are not an unprovoked and direct attack on the unborn child. Each procedure is done to alleviate a potentially fatal medical threat to the mother. Only with an ectopic pregnancy can the case be made that destruction of the child is the object of the procedure. In that unique case, however, the procedure must be done as the continuation of the pregnancy will lead invariably, and in all cases, to the death of both woman and child.

ORTHODOX THOUGHT ON LIFE-THREATENING SITUATIONS IN PREGNANCY:

The understanding that, in cases of dire medical necessity, the life of the mother must receive primary consideration is valid Orthodox thought. However, recognition of the value of the life of the woman must be coupled with the understanding that the child is not expendable, but rather, that everything must be done to protect his life as well. Only in the last extreme of dire necessity is it condoned to forfeit his life when all other avenues of medical endeavor fail. In the words of Fr. Stanley Harakas:³⁸

“When the life of the mother is in jeopardy due to her pregnancy, then an exception to the prohibition on abortion may be allowed...Any decision of this sort should be made by the woman in consultation with her medical and spiritual advisors, as well as the father of the child.”

ANCIENT CANONS AND CONTEMPORARY ABORTION PRACTICES:

Then there is the consideration which must be given to the fact that the canons of the Church do not, as they are presently written, seem to address the "life of the mother" scenario as presented. There is no mention of life-threatening situations or life-saving techniques. Indeed, the canons do not speak to surgical abortion at all. They speak of "potions", that is, chemical abortifacients which placed the life of the mother in almost as much jeopardy as that of her unborn child. Yet, though the canons speak to

an antique understanding of the technology of abortion, their condemnation of the intent to abort is timeless. It is not necessary for the canons of the Orthodox Church to single out each and every method practiced by the modern abortionist in order for them to be "relevant." It is only necessary for them to clearly separate the intentions of the abortionist from that of the physician; the former is a killer, the latter, a healer. The canons predicated in the very infancy of the Church are more than sufficient to enlighten Twentieth Century men on the doctrines of the Orthodox Church with respect to abortion.

ABORTION AND THE "DEFECTIVE" CHILD:

There is one final "hard case" not included in the first three but which is often used to excuse abortion; that is the case of the "defective" fetus. Should a woman be allowed by law (and counseled accordingly) to abort a child who, when born, will suffer from a serious birth defect (such as Down's Syndrome or spina bifida). Actually, no Christian should even have to consider this supposed "hard case". Although we may sympathize greatly with the family of a handicapped child and with someone who has been afflicted since birth with a debilitating and crippling condition, it is never morally acceptable to kill a human being because he does not live up to some arbitrary standard of perfection or because he may be an emotional and financial burden on his family. As Fr. Harakas puts it:³⁹

"In cases where the possibilities are high, or it is definitely known that the child will be born severely deformed or retarded, no exception can be made. Even such human beings are created in the image of and likeness of God."

In "Contemporary Moral Issues", Harakas has pointed out, whatever the medical circumstances, any human being, however physically and/or mentally compromised, is created in the image and likeness of God. As such, Christ became incarnate for that person, suffered for that person, died for that person and will raise that person on the Last Day. To kill someone in the name of "compassion" is the antithesis of everything for which Christ and the Church stand. Compare this attitude with the attitude of the World and the Prince of the World as reflected in such proposals as that of Nobel prize

winning geneticist Dr. James D. Watson, the co-discoverer of the double helix DNA code, who has seriously proposed:⁴⁰

“If a child were not declared alive until three days after birth, then all parents could be allowed the choice only a few are given under the present system. The doctor could allow the child to die if the parents so choose and save a lot of misery and suffering. I believe this view to be the only rational, compassionate attitude to have.”

This is the philosophy and guiding ethic of the deadly political systems of Facism and Communism and it has become, by and large, the philosophy and guiding ethic of Twentieth Century America. This nation, which had as its foundation the Christian ethic, and whose cornerstones were the Ten Commandments and the Golden Rule, has embraced the poisonous, sterile creed of Secular Humanism. How far we have come from our Lord’s Commands, to "Love thy Neighbor" and "Love one another as I have loved you".

MODERN MEDICINE’S “SEEK AND DESTROY” MISSION:

This change in basic ethical reasoning can be seen in the routine screening of older women by a procedure called amniocentesis. This is done in order to "identify" Down's Syndrome and other afflicted children in utero so that they might be destroyed before birth (there is a popular misconception that older women are more likely to give birth to Down’s Syndrome children, however recent studies done have refuted that belief). Large numbers of tests are being developed to screen children in the womb, the sole object being a wholesale "search and destroy" mission against any unborn child who proves to be less than "perfect". What parents are not told is that, most of these tests increase the danger of spontaneous abortion (miscarriage) and, further, that they are not anywhere near 100% accurate in their results. When a large national birth defects "charity"⁴¹ solicits money for "genetic screening and counseling," it is with the deliberate but unexpressed intention of recommending abortion to women who find their unborn child is affected. They are "helping the handicapped" to death using the charitable contributions of well-intentioned people.

SEX SELECTION - THE CONSEQUENCES OF AMORAL TECHNOLOGY:

The "new" use of such tests as CVS and amniocentesis is to screen for the sex of the child so that parents can abort an "unwanted" girl (most usual) or boy (less common). When abortion was first legalized, very few of the physicians interviewed said they would abort a healthy fetus for the sole reason of sex selection. Now, however, many polls show that over 60% of physicians polled stated that they would abort a healthy child solely on the basis of sex if that should be the parents desire. Once again, medical advances have created moral situations which remain largely unchallenged by the Christian community in general and by the Orthodox Church in particular.

CHILDBEARING AND THE WILL OF GOD:

In clarification, this is not necessarily a total condemnation of "genetic counselling" which helps at-risk couples determine whether or not to attempt to have children of their own or to pursue some other avenue, such as adoption. If there are grave genetic problems within a marriage (anencephaly, Tay-Sachs, Sickle Cell Anemia, hemophilia etc.), such advances can be a blessing and prevent tragedy. Yet even this must be done with the understanding that God is the ultimate arbiter of the future and we, as Christians must stand ready to accept His Divine Will with patience, humility and love. If a pregnancy should occur, despite plans to the contrary, that child is the beloved of God no matter how afflicted, and should be considered in that Light, whatever the eventual circumstances of his life. Speaking from experience, a handicapped child can bring greater blessings than any other single occurrence in the lives of all who surround that child, if the love of God and the acceptance of His Divine Will is present. Not one single life is without meaning before God, however difficult it may be for us as fallible human beings to see or appreciate that meaning.

Very much in the same understanding of the acceptance of God's Will in the matter of child bearing, those who cannot have a child must not succumb to the culture's "solutions" for this human tragedy which often include fetal experimentation and abortion, especially in the matter of "fertility drugs," in vitro fertilization and fetal reduction.⁴² The means and methodology employed by science and medicine today in order to "help" those desirous of becoming parents requires a study of its own and is

only mentioned here in connection with Christian willingness to accept God's Will, no matter how difficult and painful that acceptance may be.

WHAT IS THE PLACE FOR *OIKONOMIA* IN THE ABORTION QUESTION?

Having now examined *oikonomia* in relation to the so-called "hard cases" of pregnancy due to rape, incest or that which threatens the life of the woman, as well as that which will result in the birth of a "defective" child, the question still remains: is there a place for *oikonomia* in the abortion question? In practice, *oikonomia* is presently being applied in this situation. The Orthodox Church today asks of those who are involved with abortion only sincere repentance and a change of heart and mind in order to be received back into the Community of the Faithful. The ecclesiastical penance of ten years excommunication as directed unchanged, in the Canons, is very rarely if ever, required of those who repent of their involvement with this most heinous of sins and undergo the proscribed penitential exercise of Confession and Absolution. This absolution in some extreme cases, may involve a proscribed period of abstention from the Eucharist and/or other penitential exercises but this is a discretionary matter between the penitent and his or her priest.

WHO ARE THE GUILTY?

For the woman who has had an abortion (and survives), the guilt and pain attending this act are far more bitter and galling than any penance which could possibly be prescribed by the Church. There are priests who tell of women who continue to agonize over an abortion after countless confessions and absolutions. The duty of the Church with respect to these poor sufferers is to bring them to peace with themselves and God, purging them of the delusion that they are unworthy of God's forgiveness and salvation. Bringing the Peace of God to a woman so blighted is a spiritual labor which may take years. Such is the deadly fruit of abortion for its second victim, the woman.

However, and in addition, for every woman who has an abortion, there are hundreds, perhaps thousands who have contributed to her sin and suffering and the death of her child and bear the heavy burden of guilt no less (and, in some cases, more

so) than she. These too, if they are Orthodox Christians, must come before Almighty God in the Sacrament of Penance, repent and turn away from their sinful acts.

- the physicians and medical staffs who do the actual abortion procedures.
- the clerical staff, maintenance workers and others whose work in abortuaries allow them to continue to murder children and desecrate women.
- the politicians who vote for abortion legislation or who are too timid, apathetic or ambitious to stand for life.
- the social workers who counsel abortion and deliver women into the hands of the murderers.
- the judges and lawyers who use the legal system to promote abortion as a "right" and persecute those who fight against the killing of the unborn.
- the members of the media who hide the reality of abortion, telling half-truths and lies to lull the American people into accepting abortion as a "right" and a "social necessity".
- those who are "Orthodox" on Sunday morning and, in the world outside the Church, consider themselves "neutral" or even "pro-choice", supporting with their resources the advocates of abortion.
- those who are directors of foundations, corporations and companies who fund the powerful advocates of abortion such as the National Organization of Women.
- those who work for the companies which make the suction machines whose only function is to dismember and kill children in the womb and the crematories used to burn the bodies of the slaughtered.
- those whose money and research produce prostaglandins and other abortifacients such as the IUD, the so-called "birth control" pill and the human pesticide, RU-486.
- those who promote, advance and/or perpetrate experiments on living children in the womb or who have been aborted in the cause of so-called "fetal tissue research."
- those who work for and/or support Planned Parenthood, which is the world's largest and richest abortion procurer, promoter and provider. (Further, it is necessary to discover if one is supporting a seemingly unrelated organization which advocates abortion, such as the vast majority of conservation and environmental groups.)⁴³

Finally, the guilty are *all who stand idle* and allow the killing to continue without protest. To paraphrase the great philosopher Edmund Burke, evil will triumph when good men do nothing.

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CHURCH:

There is not nor can there ever be, an *oikonomia* which allows people engaged in such sinful activities to go to Confession on Saturday, Communion on Sunday and work as usual on Monday. If there is no change of heart, no turning around, if they believe that they can continue to spill innocent blood however removed they might be from the abortion procedure itself and remain an Orthodox Christian, they are deluding themselves. For the Sacrament of Penance to be valid it is necessary for them to abandon their sinful lives, repent and try to make amends for the great evil they have done. Any priest or bishop who practices *oikonomia* by knowingly allowing such people to receive the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ without demanding that they cease their bloody course will have to answer for the souls of those who have profaned with his permission, the Holy Eucharist.

ABORTION - THE "UNRECOGNIZED" SIN:

Yet, it is not only possible but probable that those Orthodox involved directly or indirectly in abortion are not even aware (!) they are in a state of grievous sin through their involvement. There is a story (possibly apocryphal) of an abortionist who sat for twenty years in the front pew of an Orthodox Church, served on the Church Council and was considered a "pillar" of that community. This was at a time when abortion did not even have the spurious sanction of legality. Therefore, what this man did was not only immoral, but illegal as well.

Then there is the (actual) story of the priest who was called by a woman to go and give Communion to her daughter who was in the hospital for surgery. When he inquired as to the nature of the surgery, the mother told him that she would be undergoing a late-term abortion! What a tragedy that the Church's doctrines on the sanctity of innocent human life, including the forbidding of abortion and the

subsequent consequences of such a sin, had obviously never been taught to those wretched women.

The sad fact is that the Church is not faced with people involved in abortion who recognize their sin and try to hide it. Rather, there exists the frightening reality of people directly involved in or sanctioning and facilitating abortion while participating in the Church who believe that She is indifferent to that involvement. And worse still, most of the time they are correct in that belief. Such a situation is a terrible betrayal by those in authority of Christ and His Church.

ABORTION AND *OIKONOMIA*: THE FINAL QUESTION:

Finally, considering once again the matter of *oikonomia* and the "hard cases" and aside from the practical suspension of the canons regarding ecclesiastical penance for those who repent and return to the Church, is there any other place for *oikonomia* in the abortion situation? The answer is *no*. Where human life is present (unless that life is a direct threat to another life and/or blamelessly comes into danger as efforts are made to save that second life) no action can be taken against the first life no matter what the circumstances of the conception or the predicted quality of life after birth. Any other course is not only un-Christian, it is anti-Christian. It is a total rejection of Christ and everything He taught.

The undeniable fact is that even in cases of rape, incest or of a "defective fetus," the concept of *oikonomia* cannot be applied to sanction an abortion because abortion is a violation of the Sixth Commandment and what our Lord called the Second Great Commandment, "Love thy Neighbor as yourself." The unborn child is the most helpless of our neighbors and we may not kill him, nor may we allow the woman, also our neighbor, to endanger her mortal body and her precious soul through the sin of abortion. For that which is in the womb is a human being created in the image and likeness of God and under the protection of His Divine Love which is present from the beginning. The facts surrounding his conception or his physical and/or mental condition, do not change his worth in the eyes of God and therefore, we poor weak sinners must cherish and protect his life and at the same time, protect his mother from the snares of the Enemy.

Again, where a woman's life is threatened during pregnancy, it is permissible to take steps to save her life even when they tragically result in the unintentional death of the child within her womb. Since this has always been the understanding of the Church, there is no need for the application of *oikonomia*.

THE MISUSE OF *OIKONOMIA* IN THE ABORTION QUESTION:

Since we have determined that abortion cannot be sanctioned by *oikonomia* for reasons of rape, incest, "defective" fetus or "health" of the mother; and that the application of *oikonomia* is unnecessary in those cases where the life of the mother is actually in danger, the question which must be asked is: why would any Orthodox Christian, especially someone in a position of doctrinal authority and trust, choose to place a woman in spiritual and physical danger by counselling an abortion using the pretext of *oikonomia* (or for that matter, any other pretext)? Such a thing is analogous to deceiving a person with cancer and delaying acceptance of his condition until medical assistance is no longer efficacious. Indeed, the former situation is worse, as it places a woman's soul as well as her body in danger. Assuming that the counselor is not one who finds no problem with the solutions of the world (that is, in effect, he will not just say, "Our God is a forgiving God, go and do what you want to do.") then something must be terribly wrong when and if the abortion/*oikonomia* connection is made.

For the only true and valid description of the Church's position is well summed up in the following statement from Patrinos' Dictionary of Greek Orthodoxy:⁴⁴

"The Quinisext Ecumenical Council, by its unequivocal branding of abortion as murder and of the pregnant woman and abortionist as murderers (Canon 91), established once and for all the Church's utter disapproval of the termination of pregnancy by outside human interference. However, in practice, the Orthodox Church has tacitly condoned abortion in cases where the life of the mother is at stake."

THE ORTHODOX CHURCH'S OBLIGATION TO EMBODY AND WITNESS TRUTH:

Despite these clear, concise and absolute doctrines, the problem of the demand for and misapplication of *oikonomia* in the abortion situation still exists. This must then be

due to the inability of some, clergy as well as laity, to understand the reality of Christ and the Church. Today, most people equate Christianity with love and compassion which is correct in a limited sense. The real problem arises when many of those same people further equate love and compassion with being "nice" and "kind;" that is, doing and saying things which please people and make them "happy." Yet, Christ often said things which neither pleased nor made the people to whom He spoke, "happy." He called St. Peter an agent of Satan when the foremost Apostle attempted to prevent His Passion. He called the Pharisees "whited sepulchers" who "strain at a gnat and swallow a camel." The Lord said that He had come to "sow strife" and that He brought, not peace, "but a sword." These are not "nice," "kind" sentiments according to the wisdom of the world.

Did He speak this way because He was heartless, judgmental or lacking in compassion (charges frequently leveled against those who advocate the pro-life cause)? Or did our Lord simply say *what had to be said*. Is it so much to ask today, where there is only the sadness of personal misfortune rather than the specter of immanent death, *that our modern apostles say what has to be said*? Do we place so much stock in the World that we exchange momentary relief and comfort for a blood-stained soul to present before the Dread Judgement Seat of Christ? Will the bishop, priest or layman who sends a woman forth to murder her child take her place on the Day of Judgement? Alas, he or she will have need to look to his or her own soul who bears equal and perhaps greater blame when the Lord asks, "What happened to the Child I entrusted unto you?" Have we departed so far from the Narrow Way that we no longer behold the vision of the Judgement? Only such an attitude can explain those knowing the Church's Truth invoking *oikonomia* to permit abortion.

ABORTION - THE ULTIMATE DENIAL OF CHRIST:

Finally, to consider as an option for situations other than that of life and death the murder of a human being whose only fault is that he occupies the body of an unwilling fellow human being through no fault of his own, is to take the path of Fallen Adam who by disobeying God, chose a life apart from Him. In the same spirit of Adam's "choice," by the spilling of innocent blood through abortion whether directly - by having or performing an abortion - or indirectly - through counseling, promoting,

providing, condoning or even, yes, *ignoring* abortion - we remove ourselves from the Salvation of Jesus Christ. The Great English philosopher, Edmund Burke once said, "It is sufficient for evil to triumph when good men do nothing!"

And since *oikonomia* is correctly applied *only in an attempt to restore God's Plan of Salvation*, obviously, abortion cannot be considered as a legitimate object of *oikonomia* whatever the circumstances of pregnancy since it violates both the Sixth Commandment - "Thou shalt not murder" - and Christ's Great Commandment, "Love thy Neighbor."

Finally, once an abortion has occurred, *only true repentance combined with a sincere change of heart can reinstate the guilty party(ies) into the Community of the Church*, a relationship that leads to Eternal Life with Christ as He has promised.

THE NATURE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF CHRISTIAN LOVE:

There are those who sincerely believe that in the tragic circumstances of rape and incest, the "solution" of abortion provided by the Church through the application of *oikonomia*, represents an acceptable and even a superior expression of Christian love. However these well meaning but deluded individuals should consider the words of the great Christian writer C.S. Lewis in his essay, "Divine Goodness." In this work, the author presents a comparison between a human, perverted understanding of love and the true nature of Divine Love.⁴⁵

"By the Goodness of God we mean nowadays almost exclusively His lovingness; and in this we may be right. And by Love, in this context, most of us mean kindness - the desire to see others than the self happy; not happy in this way or in that, but just happy. What would really satisfy us would be a God who said of anything we happened to like doing, "What does it matter so long as they are contented?" We want, in fact, not so much a Father in Heaven as a grandfather in Heaven - a senile benevolence who, as they say, "liked to see the young people enjoying themselves," and whose plan for the universe was simply that it might be truly said at the end of each day, "a good time was had by all". Not many people, I admit, would formulate a theology in precisely those terms: but a conception not very different lurks at the back of many minds. I do not claim to be an exception: I should very much like to live in a universe which was governed on such lines. But since it is abundantly clear that I don't, and since I have reason to believe,

nevertheless, that God is Love, *I conclude that my conception of love needs corrections.*" (my emphasis)

Lewis goes on to say that:⁴⁶

"...love is something more stern and splendid than mere kindness..."There is kindness in Love: but Love and Kindness are not coterminous and when kindness (in the sense given above) is separated from the other elements of Love, it involves a certain fundamental indifference to its object, and even something like contempt of it...Kindness, merely as such, cares not whether its object becomes good or bad, provided only that it escapes suffering...If God is Love, He is, by definition, something more than mere kindness...though he has often rebuked us and condemned us, He has never regarded us with contempt...He has paid us the intolerable compliment of loving us, in the deepest, most tragic, most inexorable sense."

DIVINE LOVE:

It is Divine Love which Orthodox Christians must both practice and expect from one another.

It is Divine Love, which demands that we tell and be told the truth especially in matters affecting our salvation such as abortion.

It is Divine Love which insists that a woman be told that she may not murder the child within her body however much pain she must endure bringing that child to term and giving him the life which Almighty God, in Divine Wisdom and Love, has decreed.

It is Divine Love which believes a woman's salvation as well as the life of her child is more important than the momentary surcease of physical, psychological, emotional or financial distress.

It is Divine Love which is far superior to the contemptuous temporal "kindness" which prompts a counselor/confessor to offer what seems the easiest solution even where the consequences of that solution are deadly to all involved.

It is Divine Love which speaks out against abortion at all times and in every way.

It is Divine Love which placed Christ upon the Cross.

It is Divine Love which Christ had for us and that we must therefore have for one another, born and unborn, as He commanded: *"Love ye one another as I have loved you."*

END NOTES

- 1] V. Rev. John Kowalczyk, *An Orthodox View of Abortion* (Light and Life Publishing Co., 1979)
- 2] *Didache*, II, 2.
- 3] *Epistle of Barnabas*, XIX, 5.
- 4] *Paedagogus*, Book II (Latin), Chapter X, 96, I.
- 5] *Letters*, CLXXXVIII, Canon 8.
- 6] *Ibid.*, Canon 2
- 7] *Letters*, CLXXXVII, Canon 8.
- 8] *On the Soul and the Resurrection*.
- 9] *Apology IX*.
- 10] *Homilies in Romans*, XXIV.
- 11] *Ibid.*
- 12] James G. Jatras & Paul Farley, Esqs., *Brief Amicus Curiae of the Holy Orthodox Church*, 1989, p.15.
- 13] *Ibid.* p.13.
- 14] *The Orthodox Church*, October, 1972.
- 15] Kowalczyk: p. 41.
- 16] *Ibid.*, p. 42.
- 17] "Seminar in Medical Ethics," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*, vol. 17, no. 3, 1973, p. 246.
- 18] *A Companion to the Greek Orthodox Church*, edited by Fotios K. Litsas
- 19] Sixth All-American Council of the Orthodox Church in America: *Resolution on Human Life*, 1980.
- 20] Rev. Stanley Harakas, *Contemporary Moral Issues Facing the Orthodox Christian*, (Light and Life Publishing Co., 1982)
- 21] *Ibid.* pg. 83
- 22] *Ibid.* pgs. 83-84
- 23] *Ibid.* pgs. 84-85
- 24] *Ibid.* p. 85
- 25] *Ibid.* pgs. 85-86

- 26] Roberts Rugh & Landrum B. Shettles, M.D., *From Conception to Birth, The Drama of Life's Beginnings*, (Harper and Row, 1971) pgs19-24
- 27] Letters, CLXXXVII, Canon 8
- 28] *California Medicine*, September 1970, 113 3. (Editorial)
- 29] Hebrews 13:8.
- 30] Rev. Stanley Harakas, *Guidelines for Marriage in the Orthodox Church*, (Light and Life Publishing Co.) f: p.16
- 31] Rev. Nicon D. Patrinos, M.A., D.Phil., *A Dictionary of Greek Orthodoxy*, (Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America) p.131-132
- 32] V. Rev. John Meyendorff. *Byzantine Theology* (Fordham University Press,1974) p.88
- 33] Ibid. p.89
- 34] Ibid. pgs. 89-90
- 35] *Abortion, A Paper for Study*, (National Council of Churches, New York, 1973) p. 13.
- 36] The incidences of pregnancy resulting from rape are limited by such considerations as: the number of naturally sterile women in the population, the fact that a woman, if fertile, is only fertile for a very short period (two or three days at the most), the fact that many rapists do not achieve penetration, the number of naturally sterile men in the population, the fact that many rapists are unable to perform, sexually, or do so insufficiently, etc. In the case of incest, the ongoing nature of the crime precludes the consideration of the fertility period. However, incestuous relationships are usually carried out with a great deal more "care" to prevent the evidence of pregnancy. Further, actual sexual intercourse may not take place or may include methods (such as anal intercourse) designed to prevent pregnancy. Also, many incestuous relationships involve young children who, perforce, cannot become pregnant.
- 37] Susan M. Stanford, Ph.D., *Will I Cry Tomorrow?: Healing Post-Abortion Trauma* (Fleming H. Revell Company, 1986)
- 38] Harakas, (*Contemporary Moral Issues*) p. 85
- 39] Ibid. p. 86
- 40] *The Zero People: Essays on Life* (Servant Books, 1983) p.71
- 41] The March of Dimes

42] In the performance of "in vitro" fertilization, an excess number of ova are fertilized. Those remaining and not used are either frozen for later use (in case the first try doesn't succeed) or used for experimentation. Again in this same process, a multiple number of ova are inserted into the uterus in hopes that one will "take." Should an undesired number of children begin to develop, selective abortions are done to reduce the pregnancy to a "manageable number." This reduction technique is also involved when fertility drugs produce multiple pregnancies. Reduction is performed by entering the uterus with a large needle and injecting a noxious chemical directly into the heart of the fetus or fetuses which the physician and patient desire removed. Thus, techniques designed to assist women to become pregnant frequently result in abortion and experimentation.

43] The list of environmental groups who have lobbied for abortion in the past and are now supporting pro-abortion legislation include: *Defenders of Wildlife, Environmental Action, Environmental Policy Institute, Friends of the Earth, Global Tomorrow Coalition, Izaak Walton League, National Audubon Society, National Parks and Conservation Association, National Wildlife Federation, National Resources Council of America, National Resources Defense Council, Renew America, The Sierra Club, The Oceanic Society, The Wilderness Society, Trout Unlimited, Union of Concerned Scientists and Zero Population Growth.* Groups which support present pro-abortion legislation but appear *unaware* of their connection with abortion include: *American Forestry Association, Audubon Naturalist Society, The Cousteau Society, National Association of State Energy Officials, National Consumers League, Public Citizen, Rainforest Action Network, Solar Energy Industries Association, Thermo Electric Corporation and World Resources Institute.* (National Right to Life News, March 9, 1989, p.5). The latter group might be persuaded to abandon support for pro-abortion legislation by concerned members as they have shown no support for abortion in the past.

44] Patrinos: p.2

45] Lewis, Clives Staples, *The Joyful Christian: 127 Readings* (Macmillan Publishing Co., 1977) p. 37

46] Ibid. p.38.

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