



Visit Our Internet Site: WWW.OCLife.org; e-mail: oclifehq@aol.com

This issue contains the testimony of an Orthodox woman who had an abortion

Blind Watchmen and Failed Prophets

Valerie Protopapas

“ . . . “Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. If I say to the wicked, ‘You shall surely die,’ and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way in order to save his life, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand.” [Ezekiel 3]

Being a prophet in Israel of old was not usually a matter of joy to those so chosen. One fellow even tried to escape the calling by sailing away over the sea; we all know what happened to him. Most prophets were called to address great wrongs being committed by the people and, thus, were not well-beloved by their countrymen. Furthermore, as can be seen by the witness of Ezekiel quoted above, a prophet had to fulfill his duty or the wrath of God descended not only on his wicked countrymen but on himself as well. In fact, as Ezekiel said, a failed prophet was condemned for the sins of those to whom he had failed to prophesy.

The last Prophet of the Old Testament was John the Baptist and in the minds of many, the command of God to the prophets as expressed by Ezekiel ended with the coming of Christ. But they forget that Jesus was also a prophet; He warned the people against their wickedness and, indeed, this was one of the reasons that He, like other prophets before him, suffered death at their hands. Christ is, in fact, the bridge between the prophets of the Old Covenant and the priests of The

New. The same conditions regarding the responsibility to preach to the people prevail upon those who are called to serve as bishops and priests as once prevailed upon those who were called to be prophets. If anyone doubts that fact, consider the warning written by St. John Chrysostom during his exile in which he lamented the fate of bishops in general and himself in particular at the coming of Christ

*“...how shall we endure, when we are compelled to give our account for each of those who have been entrusted to us? For our penalty is not limited to shame, but everlasting chastisement awaits us as well. As for the passage, ‘Obey them that have rule over you, and submit to them for they watch in behalf of your souls as they that shall give account;’ . . . For if for him who causes one only, and that the least, to stumble, it is profitable that ‘a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depth of the sea;’ and if they who wound the consciences of the brethren, sin against Christ Himself, what then will they one day suffer, what kind of penalty will they pay, who destroy not one only, or two, or three, but so many multitudes: For it is not possible for inexperience to be urged as an excuse, nor to take refuge in ignorance, nor for the plea of necessity or force to be put forward . . . **Because he who has been appointed to rectify the ignorance of others, and to warn them beforehand of the conflict with the devil which is coming upon them, will not be able to put forward ignorance as his excuse, or to say, ‘I have never heard the trumpet sound, I did not foresee the conflict.’ For he is set for that very purpose says Ezekiel, that he may sound the trumpet for others, and warn them of the dangers at hand. And therefore his chastisement is inevitable, though he that perishes***

happens to be but one. 'For if when the sword comes, the watchman does not sound the trumpet to the people, nor give them a sign, and the sword come and take any man away, he indeed is taken away on account of his iniquity, but his blood will I require at the watchman's hands.'"

Unfortunately, it seems that these days very few of our current "watchmen" are unduly concerned about any failure on their part to warn the Faithful about sin, especially such "politically correct" sins as abortion. On the whole, there is little and, in some cases no effort to forcefully address the moral evils prevalent in the culture but instead, the thrust of concern in our chanceries, dioceses, seminaries and parishes is limited to matters of theology and liturgy. Morality receives only the most cursory lip-service from today's "watchmen" and "prophets."

Watchmen are supposed to watch for the enemy and warn the people of attack but watchmen desiring to see only that which is bright and beautiful will cause the people to perish; they are, indeed, blind watchmen. Likewise, clergy who fail to warn the people of the consequences of their sins are failed prophets and will inherit the consequences of that failure. And what will be the fate of a Church filled with blind watchmen, failed prophets and impenitent sinners? Does not the Lord condemn the "salt" which has lost its salinity? Does He not say that it will be "ground under foot and trampled by men"? Let us pray that there is yet time for the watchmen to warn, the prophets to prophesy and the people to repent before the end.

The Personal Testimony of Vera Lord

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

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

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

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

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

I was going to leave out all three of the above, but I have told you about them for a very important reason: The abortion industry would cite any and all of the above as reason enough to kill my child, since they consider any "inconvenient" pregnancy abortable and, although mine was not life-threatening to me, it went far beyond "inconvenient." Those who practice abortion would have you believe that all three of these factors absolve me of guilt, and make the murder of my child perfectly all right - rather like the extraction of an impacted wisdom tooth - painful and regrettable and stressful, but totally necessary.

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

you could do - get on with your life.”

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

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

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

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

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

committed emotional and spiritual suicide.

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

During the next 17 years, there were many times when I literally did not know the person in the mirror. Self-hatred colored my every waking and sleeping moment. It was as if I had pushed an invisible self-destruct button. I divorced my husband only to enter into a disastrous marriage with a man I did not love, who I knew to be totally dependent and incapable of honest work, and proceeded to allow myself to be used by him and his family for 13 years. Deep inside, I was convinced I deserved all of it. My self-worth had totally disappeared. All the things I had loved to do in my old life were now off-limits - I would not allow myself enjoyment. Dreamless sleep was my only respite, and it did not come often. When I did pray, it was a secret prayer - I prayed to die -to simply cease. I believe in an after-life, and I knew that hell itself could not be any worse than the life I was experiencing.

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

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

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

In the fall of 1997, came the event that finally set me free. I was taken as a guest to the All-Saints Greek Orthodox Church. Although, in my youth, I had studied nearly every major religion, I had never entered an Orthodox Christian Church. Suddenly, I was home. All the pieces of my life fell into place. Although I really knew no one there except my host,

it was undeniably my home. I took instruction with my Spiritual Father for the next 10 months, and on August 28, 1998, I was chrismated. At the confession before my chrismation, I finally, after nearly two decades of wandering in hell, laid down my burden. My Spiritual Father, an Orthodox priest who can trace his priesthood in a direct line to the Apostles, in much the same ceremony performed in the Catacombs, laid his hand on my head, and, in Christ's name, forgave me of the murder of my child. I am free.

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

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

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

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

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

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

the part where I'll be asked to join some group, make my voice heard, etc., etc." Wrong.

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

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

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

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

Written by my hand and published at my request,

Vera Lord
Bethel Park, Pa

THE MARCH FOR LIFE - 1999

On January 22, 1999, about five hundred Orthodox led by Archbishop Herman of the OCA and Metropolitan Nicholas of the Carpatho-Russian Archdiocese participated in the annual March for Life in Washington, D.C. There were well over one hundred thousand other pro-lifers from across the nation present on the Ellipse. Participants listened to the pre-March rally and then pro-

tain melancholy among the Marchers. There can be no doubt that America stands in grave peril. Life becomes cheaper by the day. Now we not only kill our unborn without restrictions but we are preparing to kill the "born" among us through voluntary and involuntary euthanasia. Violence is everywhere. Children kill children; parents kill children; children kill parents; the despairing and the disenfranchised create weapons of mass destruction to kill in the name of some cause or other.



ceeded to the Supreme Court where the Orthodox contingent held a memorial service for the millions slain by abortion in this nation since 1973.

As this last year of the last century of the Second Millennium began, many of those present reflected on the state of the nation and the world and that fed a cer-

All semblance of the moral foundations of the nation are almost eroded away as our cultural institutions embrace perversion and violence while severely restricting all traditional religious moral thought from the public square.

A few short years ago, with the election of the first



ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS for LIFE · 1999 MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL FORM ==>>>

Mail to: ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS for LIFE, P.O. BOX 805, Melville, NY 11747

Yes, I wish to help OCL! Enclosed is my gift and/or donation to Amicus Brief Fund checkbox

OTHER > \$ _____ \$50.00 > _____ \$25.00 > _____ \$10.00 > _____ \$5.00 > _____ Pledge: \$ _____ per Mo. _____

New Membership in OCL > RENEWAL for _____ Extra Measure Gift > _____ Want to form OCL chapter >

[If you want to get involved in OCL please write or call OCL on how you can help c/o Mrs Valerie Protopapas (516) 271-4408]

(make check or money orders payable in US Dollars to Orthodox Christians for Life)

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

TOWN _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

Telephone (optional) _____ Jurisdiction: _____

pro-life President since *Roe*, the mood was very different. There was even speculation that the 1982 March for Life would be a victory celebration. Justice Rhenquist had been appointed Chief Justice and some of those who supported *Roe* on the Court were getting ready to retire. But after twelve years of Reagan-Bush, the only two Justices appointed during that time who stand for strict constructionism (and thus against *Roe*) are Antonin Scalia, a Reagan appointee and Clarence Thomas, appointed by President Bush. All the others have either gone over to the other side or were never strict constructionalists in the first place. In 1992 the election of a rabidly pro-abortion President further eroded whatever optimism remained in the movement after the High Court's failure to reverse or even noticeably restrict *Roe*. Finally, although abortion is still the primary social issue in the nation, it is obvious that it no longer maintains its hold upon the mind of the people. When there is little public reaction to the debate over the horror of partial-birth abortion even when pro-abortion Democrats label it infanticide, it becomes obvious that most Americans no longer see abortion as an issue at all.

The question might then be asked, if this is indeed the case, why continue to participate in the March for Life? But it is the very fact that the public has come to accept the murder of the most innocent among us as "normal" and "usual" that demands a strong, highly visible Orthodox witness at every available forum. Not only should the Orthodox be there, but we should be there in even greater numbers, proclaiming the Truth ever more forcefully. There should be five thousand, not five hundred priests and laity at the March and every patriarch, metropolitan, archbishop and bishop who can physically do so should be leading the way. We have never had the head - or even an emissary of

the head - of *any* of our jurisdictions (with the exception of Bishop Nathaniel of the Romanian Episcopate and Metropolitan Nicholas previously mentioned), nor with two exceptions, have we ever had large contingents representing our many seminaries. Ordinary men and women spend days on buses coming from distant points all over the country to attend the March. Most of our seminaries are within hours, not days, travel of D.C., but no caravans of buses depart from them filled with our future priests who will eventually bear the heavy burden of caring for the moral well-being of their flocks.

The dais of the March for Life should be overwhelmed by Orthodox hierarchs, archpriests, monks and theologians. Our ranks should be swelled by busloads of seminarians come to witness to the Church's moral doctrines. The voices of Orthodox Christians raised in holy psalmody should reverberate against the buildings lining the wide thoroughfares of our nation's capital. Time grows short. A deadly moral lethargy descends upon the nation. *Now* is the appointed hour for the Church to take a position of moral leadership in these, the last days of the Twentieth Century. But it remains to be seen when - or indeed *if* - She will do so.



1100 Hicksville Road
Seaford, NY 11783

NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 121
Massapequa, NY



About Orthodox Christians for Life

Orthodox Christians for Life (OCLife) is a non-profit religious educational Pro-Life organization consisting of members primarily from the Eastern Orthodox Church which is recognized as a fourth major faith in the United States. OCLife was founded in early 1986 by Rev. Edward Pehanich an Orthodox priest of the American Carpatho-Russian jurisdiction and John Protopapas, now a Subdeacon of the Orthodox Church in America.

It functions in cooperation with the hierarchy, clergy, and laity of the Orthodox Church regardless of jurisdiction or geographical location; and supports the doctrines and canons of the Church. The organization consists of over 800 members (including five chapters) in the United States, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Australia as of February 1998. It is also open to interested non-Orthodox Christians on an affiliate basis.

Orthodox Christians for Life is primarily a religious-educational organization and does not organize marches, demonstrations, or sit-ins; however, we do participate in such Pro-Life events as a group, or as individuals, providing they are peaceful and do not conflict with Church doctrine. We condemn all forms of violence in any effort to resolve sanctity of human life issues.

The Church and Abortion

The Orthodox Church was founded by Jesus Christ and the Apostles, and bears witness to that continuous and unbroken faith.

The precepts of the Orthodox Christian Faith mandate the protection of innocent human life, especially that of the unborn child. The Church has always regarded abortion as murder, and as such, takes a very active role in opposing legalized abortion. The personhood of the unborn is considered to exist from conception and has never been questioned in our theology. Indeed, conception has been always recognized as the time when the soul is uniquely brought into being and simultaneously united with the body

The Christian Church from its inception, to which the Orthodox Church bears living witness, expressed a distinct and fundamental horror of abortion, at whatever stage of pregnancy. It never ceased to regard abortion as abhorrent and an abomination before God, and always considered it to be the killing of a human being. The loss of the life of the unborn child was regretfully tolerated only in cases where the life of the mother was in jeopardy. With the modern advancements we have in medical technology today, this tragic situation is rarely encountered.

In the early centuries of the Church, Her moral teachings were universally embraced, holding sway over almost the whole of Europe, the Middle East, and Northern Africa; from Hadrian's Wall to the frontiers of the Persian Empire. Indeed, the Orthodox Church's teaching can be traced to the earliest Christian document, the Didache (late 1st Century) and was constantly reiterated through the following centuries in Patristic writings and Canon Law. It was finally compiled as the Photian Collection, which was adopted as the official ecclesiastical law book of the Orthodox Church in 883 A.D.

If we turn to the Orthodox liturgical cycle of feasts, the consciousness of the personhood of the unborn is striking. This is manifest in three feasts:

The first we shall consider is the celebration of the conception

of John the Baptist by St. Elizabeth (September 23). In this feast we sing:

“Rejoice, O barren one, who had not given birth; for behold you have clearly conceived the one who was about to illuminate the whole universe, blighted by blindness. Shout in joy, O Zacharias, crying in favor; truly the one to be born is a prophet of the Most High!”

Although John the Baptist was yet in the womb, he is considered a full person. The second feast to be considered is that of the Conception of the Theotokos by St. Ann (December 9). At this feast the Kondakion proclaims at vespers:

“Behold the promises of the Prophets are realized for the Holy Mountain is planted in the womb, the Divine Ladder is set up, the great Throne of the King is ready, the place for the passage of the Lord is prepared . . .”

There can be no question that although the parents of John the Baptist and the Theotokos (Virgin Mary) had no inkling of God's Great Plan for Salvation, God was involved in the conception of each; it is notable that both Saints, Elizabeth and Anna were advanced in years and barren. It is a sobering thought of how God's Plan is being affected by the countless unborn who have been aborted - never to uniquely participate in that Plan.

The quintessential feast that illustrates the consciousness of the Church on the importance of the person from the moment of conception is the Annunciation (March 25). This feast is so important that a Divine Liturgy is to be served even when falls on Great and Holy Friday! The Troparion of the day makes a profound statement:

“Today is the beginning of our salvation, the revelation of the eternal mystery! The Son of God becomes the Son of the Virgin as Gabriel announces the coming of grace...”

This is a far cry from the present cry, “who knows when life begins” or, “it is a blob of tissue” or a “product of conception.” At the Great Compline the hymnography states makes this astonishing claim:

“ . . . O marvel! God has come among men; He who cannot be contained in a womb; the timeless One enters time . . . For God empties Himself, takes flesh, and is fashioned as a creature, when the angel tells the pure Virgin of her conception. . . ”

This is not sung at the feast of our Lord's Nativity but at His conception!!! “Viability” and “quickenings” are utterly irrelevant. If we further consider the following passage in Luke 1:41 we find another astonishing image of the scriptural consciousness of the personhood of the unborn:

“And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb”

Here we have the image of the unborn John the Baptist recognizing the unborn Messiah - a fetus greeting a fetus! This is more than a literary device as some would have us believe, but illustrates the narrator's perception, or consciousness of the uniqueness of an unborn human.

Although we celebrate the birth of John the Baptist, the Theotokos, and the Lord Jesus himself, we also celebrate their conception which is their entry into time and the physical world - the “fullness of time” as called by St. Paul.

A more profound point to this all is that these feasts, especially the Annunciation, point to the Incarnation. By taking on our humanity from the moment of conception, existing in the pre-natal condition in the womb of the Theotokos, experiencing birth, living

through infancy to adulthood, and finally dying, God sanctified every moment of human existence - from conception to death.

There is more to this - God also completely identifies with us in our fallen suffering nature, and by dying for us on the cross, He expresses His solidarity with us: whether we are a zygote, embryo, fetus, infant, child, adolescent, adult, or elderly: human existence is a continuum from conception, and - yes - beyond death to life eternal in the Lord!

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

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

Today's Challenges

The primary sanctity of life issue now being debated in our society today is abortion. Since 1973, when the Supreme Court effectively made abortion legal throughout all nine months of pregnancy, over forty million (40,000,000) unborn children have been murdered by surgical or chemical abortion. This does not even consider those slaughtered by abortifacient contraceptives (i.e.: the IUD prevents implantation, and "the pill," if it does not prevent ovulation, will prevent implantation)! The position of the Orthodox Church has never wavered on the issue of abortion from the earliest days - Her theology is and always has been Pro-Life!

Our Vision

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

(1) To present and support the position of the Orthodox Church on matters of the sanctity of innocent human life to all peoples, Orthodox Christian and non-Orthodox alike. This includes not only abortion, but also euthanasia, infanticide (pediatric euthanasia), suicide, and child abuse.

(2) To initiate and encourage education and energize action on all issues of sanctity of human life in all Orthodox parishes regardless of jurisdiction.

(3) To act as a clearing house for information relating to sanctity of life issues for the Orthodox Christian community.

(4) To aid and assist all those who wish to establish sanctity of life programs or Pro-Life groups on a parish, diocesan, or archdiocesan level and to have representatives available to work with those who wish to establish such programs.

(5) To reiterate and underscore traditional Christian values such as the sanctity of marriage, the blessing of children, the holiness of chastity (both in and out of marriage), the honoring of parents, the love of one's neighbor, and of course, the sanctity of all innocent human life regardless of age or condition of health.

(6) To work in a cooperative spirit with all Pro-Life organizations, regardless of religious affiliation, providing they espouse a complimentary sanctity of life ethic. In this area we serve

as a unique witness to the teachings of the Early Christian Church.

(7) To present the Orthodox position on these issues to the secular culture.

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

The years 1989 and 1990 saw four Orthodox bishops participating in the March for Life: Bishop Herman (OCA), Bishop Nathaniel (OCA), Bishop Nicholas (Carpatho-Russian), and Bishop Maximos (Greek Archdiocese); and in 1999 there were over 500 bishops, clergy, and lay from various parts of the United States participating.

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

If you are interested in Orthodox Christians for Life write to: OCLife, P.O. Box 805, Melville, NY 11747 or Phone (516) 271-4408 (area code will change in 2000).

Orthodox Christians for Life maintains an internet site at WWW.OCLIFE.ORG where some of our resource material can be downloaded along with our Newsletter/Journal, "Rachel's Children." Our e-mail address is OCLIFEHQ@AOL.COM.

Staff

Subdeacon John Protopapas,
National Director and Co-founder

Fr. Edward Pehanich,
Spiritual Director and Co-Founder

Mrs. Valerie Protopapas,
Educational Director and Executive Secretary

V. Rev. Dr. John Kowalczyk,
Theological Consultant

Mr. James George Jatras, Esq.,
Political Analyst and Legal Adviser

Dr. Peter S. Rosi, MD
Medical Consultant

Paul A. Tish,
Internet Manager