



Rachel's Children

Jeremiah 3:15 & Matthew 2:17-18
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Orthodox Christians for Life Serving Christ and the Holy Orthodox Church: 1986-2003

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Archbishop Herman Elected Head of Orthodox Church in America

The Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America elected His Eminence, Archbishop Herman of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania as the new Metropolitan of the Orthodox Church in America on July 22, 2002, the opening day of the Church's 13th All-American Council.

Metropolitan Herman has been the most visible Orthodox hierarch in the pro-life movement here in the United States. During the January 1987 March for Life he walked the entire route which was covered with as much as ten inches of uncleared snow – a feat which has passed into pro-life legend. He was the first bishop (Orthodox or Roman Catholic) who ever marched the entire route, even in good weather).

The OCA Holy Synod of Bishops elected Metropolitan Herman, who has a wealth of experience on every level of the Church's life. Metropolitan Herman succeeds His Beatitude, Metropolitan Theodosius, as Primate of the Church who has also been supportive of OCLife's efforts, along with the Synod of Bishops.

Metropolitan Herman was elected to the episcopate on October 19, 1972. He was consecrated to the episcopacy at Holy Resurrection Orthodox Cathedral, Wilkes-Barre, PA on February 10, 1973 with the title of Bishop of Wilkes-Barre, serving as an auxiliary of the Diocese of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania. He was elected Bishop of Philadelphia on March 17, 1981 and Rector of Saint Tikhon Seminary the following May. In 1994 he was elevated to the rank of Archbishop by the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America. In addition to his service to the Diocese of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania, Archbishop Herman has served the Orthodox Church in America in a wide variety of capacities. He also participated in the historic conference of North America's Orthodox Bishops in Ligonier, PA in 1994.

Following his recent election, Metropolitan Herman was formally greeted as the Church's Primate by the other members of the Holy Synod of Bishops and Council participants and was formally installed into office at Saint Nicholas Orthodox Cathedral, Washington, DC on September 7-8, 2002.

God grant him many years and may we see him at the March for Life for many more!

Cultural Wars and Orthodox Christianity

By Fr John Breck

(reprinted with permission from the author -OCA website)

There is a troubling and fascinating debate going on right now that we should all be at least somewhat familiar with. It concerns our most fundamental vision of God, the world and ourselves. And it has divided Christian against Christian, and Christians against the secular, "post-modern" culture in which we live.

The debate has been expressed in clear and sharp terms in the periodical *Christian Bioethics*, edited by H. Tristram Engelhardt, a well-known Orthodox physician and bioethicist who teaches at Rice University in Houston, Texas. In a recent issue, the debate heated up considerably. What are its main points?

In overly simplified terms, they are the following. Orthodox authors of several articles that have recently appeared in the journal argue that Roman Catholic ethicists and philosophers have unwittingly succumbed to the secular, post-modern mentality they seek to combat. This is because their chief emphasis, following the lead of Pope John Paul II, is upon the shaping of a philosophical -- rather than a traditionally Orthodox spiritual/therapeutic -- approach to issues such as abortion, end-of-life medical treatment, and a single-payer (i.e., government funded) health care system.

To the eyes of the Orthodox critics, Catholic calls for such noble causes as "social justice" and "a consistent life ethic" can lead to policies that in fact do more harm than good. An example is the tragedy of abortion. If the good end of universal health care is bought at the price of a government-imposed single-payer policy, then the government -- under secularist pressure -- will inevitably require as well that physicians and other health-care personnel accept the moral perspective of the secular society, a perspective "free of religious constraints." Thus, under conditions of universal health-care funded by tax monies, physicians would be required, if not to perform abortions themselves, at least to refer patients to other professionals who will.

The same holds true for issues such as physician-assisted suicide, euthanasia and, we may presume, the procurement of vital organs from those not yet dead, including the poor, the

marginalized, the mentally ill and the cloned. Moral norms will no longer be determined by traditional religious values and perspectives. They are already determined, and will continue to be so, by a perspective that is purely "immanent," devoid of transcendent perspectives and values. Moral discourse, like today's public education, will be shaped by a vision of reality that is totally foreign to the Gospel.

What distinguishes the Orthodox position from that of the secular world around us? In a word, it is its ascetic/spiritual/liturgical quest for holiness. God is holy, meaning "set apart," manifesting from His very being qualities, attributes or virtues such as goodness, justice, righteousness, beauty, love. It is by virtue of the work of the indwelling Holy Spirit, whom we receive at baptism and through the sacramental life of the Church, that the divine attributes can actually become our own. These attributes are forms of power: they radiate from God as "divine energies," communicated by the Spirit with the purpose of leading each of us along the pathway of holiness that comes to its fulfillment in the Kingdom of God, in a true and eternal participation in God's very life (referred to by Holy Tradition as theosis or "deification").

Why should we be concerned with this debate? Because Orthodox values and Christian Tradition in general are threatened, more severely than ever, by the secularizing mentality of contemporary American society and Western culture in general. These pressures stem from a mentality that exalts hedonistic values of consumerism, pleasure, self-fulfillment and autonomy, while it denigrates traditional Christian values of self-sacrifice, ascetic struggle and worship of God.

Fr. Alexander Schmemmann often pointed out that secularism is not a matter of unbelief, since many practicing Christians are profoundly secularized. Secularism is marked primarily by a rejection of worship, a refusal to acknowledge that God has created us not in the first instance as homo sapiens, but as homo adorans, persons whose ultimate purpose in life is to worship God: to offer praise, adoration, thanksgiving and supplication to the three Persons of the Holy Trinity. It is only through worship -- liturgical surrendering of our life and the world into the hands of God -- that we can establish a firm basis for social justice, appropriate health-care, and other issues, including the question of national defense in an age of terrorism.

If I call attention to this debate, it's because each of us is called to live in the "real world" around us, however great its pressures and however distorted its perspectives. We are called to be witnesses to God's presence and purpose at home, at the office, in the shopping mall or in the hospital. It is there, in the little things and inconspicuous places of everyday life, that we live out our primary vocation to pray for the world, to live and die for the world's salvation.

We are called to be holy. This does not mean that we isolate ourselves from the ambient culture, making ourselves "separate" in some physical or psychological sense. It means that we seek holiness in the midst of an unholy world, in the hope that through our faithfulness to God and our witness to Him who alone is holy, we might touch the lives of others around us and help restore the world to the One who is both its Creator and its Lord.

Staying Power: Abortion Battle May be Won Later Rather than Sooner

By Charles Colson

Source: Prison Fellowship Ministries; November 11, 2002

Is it time to give up on our battle to stop the legalized murder of unborn children? After all, *Roe v. Wade* will have been the "law of the land" for three decades this coming January. Americans are used to it. Isn't it time to move on? No.

When we get discouraged, it's time to remember the lessons of history—specifically, the lessons of eighteenth-century England. It was in 1787 that William Wilberforce, a member of Parliament and a Christian, decided he would take on one of the most entrenched moral evils of the day: the British slave trade.

Wilberforce knew from the start that this would be no easy task. The British empire depended heavily on the slave trade. Wilberforce knew that in order to succeed, he would have to go about the matter in the right way.

First he educated himself thoroughly, learning all about slavery and conditions on slave ships. Then he began working with a small but influential group of friends who were equally committed to abolition, known as the Clapham sect. They supervised government inquiries into the horrors of the slave trade and exposed it. Wilberforce and his allies then began educating the public about these horrors.

The first victory was a small one, but it proved that the slave industry was vulnerable. It was a vote in 1788 that restricted the number of slaves that a ship could be allowed to carry based on the ship's tonnage.

For the next nineteen years, Wilberforce introduced bills banning the slave trade. And year after year, his opponents found ways to defeat them, often playing dirty. As Kevin Belmonte writes in his great new book, *Hero for Humanity*, Wilberforce faced "a constant stream of false accusations and vitriol, death threats, [and] a challenge to a duel."

But after nearly two decades of hard work, it became clear that the logjam was breaking. The public would no longer tolerate commerce in human misery. This change in attitude, writes Belmonte, grew directly from "the sustained campaign to convince the public of the slave trade's immorality." Finally in 1807—twenty years after Wilberforce began his battle—the House of Commons voted by an overwhelming majority to abolish the slave trade.

What is the lesson of Wilberforce's life? Despite repeated losses, he kept working. By God's grace, his cause made incremental gains. He didn't demand all or nothing, but eventually carried the day. He then continued his labors, and eventually slavery was outlawed three days before he died in 1833.

This is what we have to remember when we become discouraged over abortion: we're making progress. More college students now say they're pro-life than pro-abortion. Ultrasound machines in crisis pregnancy centers are leading more mothers to bear their babies instead of aborting them. Congress recently passed the Born-Alive Infants Protection Act, and we've come close to passing a ban on partial-birth abortion.

Wilberforce understood that while people may ignore the truth, they still recognize it when they see it. So he looked for ways to remind people of what they already knew in their hearts. You and I need to do the same. Gradually, slowly, we're winning the hearts and minds of the next generation. Give up on the abortion fight? Not a chance.

From the Director's Desk

January 22, 2003 will mark the 30th anniversary of the legalization of abortion-on-demand in the infamous *Roe v. Wade* decision of the U.S. Supreme Court. Since 1973 more than 50 million pre-born human beings have been murdered by abortion in the United States alone. We have the most permissive abortion laws in the world with the exception of Communist China, which has a draconian population control program. In traditional Orthodox countries such as Greece and Russia there are so many abortions that the population growth rate is below replacement levels. The sociological implications are profound.

Although the Orthodox Church unequivocally condemns abortion as murder, and many statements have been issued by the hierarchs and assemblies of all the jurisdictions in the United States, it was not until 1987 that there was a recognizable Orthodox presence on a national level witnessing to our Church's ancient and unchanging truths on the sanctity of human life. This occurred when an Orthodox bishop (Herman, OCA) and a dozen or so clergy and laity braved one of the worst snowstorms in the history of Washington DC to attend the nation's premier pro-life event — the March for Life. This event has drawn over 100,000 people each year since 1990. The number of Orthodox bishops in attendance at the March has been as high as four and the clergy and laity have, at times, numbered more than two hundred strong. In 1996 we almost numbered 600!

This year presents yet another opportunity for an evangelistic witness to our Faith because of a heightened interest in Orthodoxy as evidenced by the increasing number of converts to the Church in recent years. It is a significant sign — the vast majority of these converts identify themselves as "pro-life" and were attracted to Orthodoxy, in part, because of her teachings on the sanctity of human life. The Orthodox Church in this nation has an excellent opportunity to present its position on the sanctity of human life to the culture at large, thereby also establishing a strong visible presence among the heterodox.

This year the administration is being lead by president George W. Bush who is unabashedly pro-life. With the Republicans controlling both houses of Congress, there is an excellent chance that partial birth abortions will be outlawed: there was already a large majority on both sides of the aisle who supported this legislation. It was former president

Clinton who stopped the legislation dead in its tracks by vetoing it. This year promises an opportunity to start to turn things around.

It is especially critical this year that our Church witness its teachings on the sanctity of human life because in our culture it is perceived that silence means assent. There is a common belief among many people that abortion is purely a political issue; however, as you know, it is quintessentially a moral issue that has become politicized in recent years. We ask you to honor us with your presence and join with our hierarchs in the Orthodox witness on Monday, January 22, 2003 starting at 11:00AM in Washington, DC at the Washington Monument House. If there are any questions please contact Orthodox Christians for Life at (631) 271-4408.

With the use of the Internet as a means of communicating increasing exponentially each year as more and more people acquire computers, OCLife will be moving toward electronic distribution of our newsletter via download of a pdf file which can be universally read by Windows based or Macintosh PC's. Please consider this option for the future. It will save much time and money in the distribution of the newsletter.

Wishing you God's choicest blessings, a blessed Nativity, and a joyous New Year,



Fr. Deacon John Protopapas,
Executive Director, OCLife

Orthodox Christians for Life - National Organization

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To all the Orthodox Christian Faithful,

ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS FOR LIFE

*Requests the honor of your presence for
The Orthodox Witness on the Sanctity of Human Life at the*

YEAR 2003 MARCH FOR LIFE

mourning the legalization of abortion in 1973

Wednesday, January 22, 2003

11:30AM, (Rain, Snow, or Shine)

We start to assemble at 11:00AM

Look for the large white banner with blue lettering

-(at last year's location)-

Program Activities Start at 12:00 noon at

The Washington Monument, Washington DC

(Please Note the Change)

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