

inviolability of human life is founded on the Creator's personal regard for every human person.

882 St. Basil the Great teaches:

The woman who destroys voluntarily a fetus incurs the pain of murder. There is with us no inquiring whether the fetus was formed or not. In these matters, justice is demanded not only for the child that was to be born, but also against her who has schemed against herself, since most of the time women die in these circumstances. To this is added the destruction of the fetus, just another murder, in the intention of those who dare to commit this sin.⁵⁴¹

883 Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky, in his pastoral letter, *Thou Shalt Not Kill*, emphasizes:

Cases of parents killing their own children are particularly abominable, horrible and unnatural. But perhaps even worse cases are those when the child has not yet come into the world. The very fact that the crime is committed by the child's own father or mother and that the child cannot defend itself... all this makes abortion a most particular kind of crime.⁵⁴²

884 From its very conception a human child is entrusted to a mother and father who care for and look after it. However, sometimes dramatic circumstances (rape, family pressure, and so forth), or selfish considerations can compel a woman to destroy the life she is carrying within her. These do not remove the mother's responsibility. However, others are also responsible for the abortion; for example, the father of the child who forces the mother to have an abortion or abandons her during her pregnancy. Accomplices in the sin of abortion are also relatives, acquaintances, and friends who sometimes pressure the woman to abort using the excuse that this can help "preserve one's good name," etc. And finally, the ultimate fault—a great one—lies with the doctors and other medical personnel who actually perform the abortion. Also, all those who defend and advocate for abortion in society are indirectly culpable.

4. The Sin of Artificial Contraception

885 Contraception is a deliberate action by which a person ruins the fecundity of the reproductive sphere and makes the conception of new human life impossible. Contraceptive actions impact the entire human person by limiting his or her ability to accept the gift of new life. The

⁵⁴¹ BASIL THE GREAT, *Letters*, 188, 2: PG 32, 671.

⁵⁴² METROPOLITAN ANDREY SHEPTYTSKY, *He yбуй* [Thou Shalt Not Kill] (November 21, 1942).

consequences of such actions can be not only the physiological but also the spiritual, moral, and psychological inability of a married couple to give birth to children. The formation of a contraceptive mentality can also become a consequence.

- 886 No medical contraceptive methods are entirely effective in preventing conception. In families where a married couple is physiologically fertile but unable to receive new life due to contraception, "unwanted children" will be conceived and "unwanted pregnancies" will arise, leading to the birth of "unwanted children" or even abortion. Therefore, the contraceptive mentality leads inexorably to an abortion mentality. Rather than reducing the number of abortions, as its defenders contend, contraception merely stimulates disordered sexual life and actually leads to an increase in the number of abortions.
- 887 Contraception is frequently a sign of an already existing crisis in family relations and destroys the unity of Christian marriage. Typically, the decision to use contraceptive methods is tied to a fear of pregnancy and a rejection of fertility. If the care of children falls entirely on only one of the spouses, then resistance to conception is usually a sort of "protest" against such solitude within marriage. Contraceptive acts are a moral evil because they eliminate the marital vocation to fatherhood and motherhood.
- 888 Contraception not only impedes the joining of male and female gametes, but also destroys the spouses' ability to cooperate with the Creator in the acceptance and introduction of new life into the world. Such a married couple rejects God's plan for themselves and reduces family life merely to the "private sphere," scorning the fact that God alone is the Master of the beginning and the end of human life.
- 889 The use of contraception deforms the natural meaning of the sexual act by ruining not only its procreative but also its unitive essence. Contraception leads to irresponsible cohabitation, the aim of which is the quest for personal gratification. This does grave damage to the true foundation of marital life, self-sacrificing love, in which spouses give of themselves and accept each other in total fullness, especially their own fertility.
- 890 Hormonal contraceptive methods have a dual action: contraceptive and abortifacient, and are therefore immoral. These methods obstruct normal physiological processes in a woman's body and render her infertile. Nevertheless, these methods do not always prevent conception of a child. Therefore, hormonal contraception is also designed to prevent the further development of the child in the mother's womb and to bring about its death at an early stage of development. Consequently, the