

Catholic Church. National Conference of Catholic
Bishops.
Declaration on abortion
AD47545

DECLARATION

on

ABORTION

**NATIONAL
CONFERENCE
OF
CATHOLIC BISHOPS**

NOVEMBER 18, 1970



DECLARATION

In fulfillment of our teaching responsibility as bishops, once again, we speak of the grave evil of abortion. Since the first centuries of the Church's existence abortion has been considered the destruction of human life. Nothing permits us to judge it differently now. Scientists tell us that, from the moment of conception, the child is a complex and rapidly-growing being, endowed with the characteristics of human life. Although dependent on a privileged environment for development, the child in the womb has a life of its own.

The fundamental principle has been solemnly recalled by the Second Vatican Council:

"For God, the Lord of life, has conferred on men the surpassing ministry of safeguarding life—a ministry which must be fulfilled in a manner worthy of man. Therefore from the moment of its conception life must be guarded with the greatest care, while abortion and infanticide are unspeakable crimes." (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, n. 51)


The function of law is to support and protect the rights of every person. The unborn child's civil rights have consistently been recognized by American law. Proposed liberalization of the present abortion laws ignores the most basic of these rights, the right to life itself.

on ABORTION

The child in the womb is human. Abortion is an unjust destruction of a human life and morally that is murder. Society has no right to destroy this life. Even the expectant mother has no such right. The law must establish every possible protection for the child before and after birth.

We remind Catholic physicians and nurses that regardless of changing laws, direct abortion is always morally wrong. Catholic hospitals and their staffs must witness to the sanctity of life by respecting and defending human life, before birth as well as afterwards. Theirs ought to be the highest standards possible in the total care both of mother and child.

The evil of abortion is not exclusively the responsibility of one person. Society is also often guilty of a lack of compassion and justice for the expectant mother. In fulfillment of its responsibility, society should do all that is possible to provide necessary medical and other assistance. We urge government and all voluntary agencies including church-sponsored institutions to intensify and broaden counseling and care for expectant mothers who otherwise may be tempted to resort to solutions contrary to God's law.





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