

# **THE EVIL OF ABORTION**

## **A PASTORAL LETTER OF THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS**

### **TO THE PEOPLE OF UGANDA**

April 1998

“The peoples of Africa respect the life which is conceived and born. They rejoice in this life. They reject the idea that it can be destroyed, even when the so-called 'progressive civilizations' would like to lead them in this direction.” (Church in Africa No. 43)

### **REASONS PUT FORWARD TO LEGALIZE ABORTION**

Many reasons are being put forward as to why the Government should legalize abortion, e.g. We mention some of the usual ones.

#### **1. To stop Criminal Abortions**

It is true that many criminal abortions are being carried out in back streets, in villages and this has risks. In order to eliminate these back-street abortions, it is proposed that abortion should be legalized, so that instead the procedure can be carried out in hospital, in well run clinics under sterile conditions. However, putting on a sterile gown or using sterile instruments does not alter the sinful nature of the act. It is the taking away of a life. It is murder. Moreover, statistics have shown that legalizing abortion has never stopped the back street, non-professional abortions, rather, it has only given them more licence to advertise their trade. Abortion, whether being carried out by medical professionals or non-professional, is still wrong.

Instead of letting the tiny baby within the womb pay the price for our misdeeds, we rather encourage a return to the cultural values of virginity and chastity among our people, and avoidance of situations that lead to unwanted pregnancies.

#### **2. To save the Life of a Mother**

In modern day medicine, it is extremely rare that such a situation arises, where a choice has to be made between a life of a mother and that of a child in her womb. There are difficult cases, needing a lot of medical expertise, needing at times complete bed rest for the duration of the pregnancy or a long stay in hospital, but with dedication and skill the life of the mother can be saved.

The doctor's responsibility is to struggle to save both lives, of the mother and baby. The doctor is not in a position to decide whose life is more important. He does not know the destiny of the baby within the womb. We wish to encourage doctors and midwives to have the utmost respect at all times for every life.

### **3: The baby may be Abnormal**

Today with modern medical equipment we can know a lot about the baby before it is born and at times defects can be detected or predicated. However, the fact that the baby may be born with an abnormality does not give anyone the right to decide to kill it. Many abnormalities can be corrected and, if not, many children with abnormalities can lead meaningful lives.

### **4. In case of Rape**

For a woman to be raped is a great violation and one out-rightly condemn. Then adding a further violence through aborting the pregnancy is not the answer. It only adds to the psychological trauma of the mother. A better way to handle such situation is to help the woman, through counselling and support, to allow the baby to be born, and then, if she wishes, to have the baby adopted. The answer one violence is not adding another violence.

### **5. Woman's Free Choice**

This is one of the most arguments being put forward, woman's choice to decide to carry the pregnancy or not. No choice allows one to sin, to take the life of another. One of the greatest gifts a woman has is to be able to nurture life. Surely it is degrading to womanhood that in the name of free choice she is now belittling that gift and choosing to kill her own baby.

A woman indeed has the right to control her fertility but this is a right that needs to be exercised before she has conceived a new Life. And in any effort to control her fertility she must be aware of the nature

## **TEN POINTS TO KNOW**

1. Human Life is sacred and comes from God.
2. Every Child is a special gift of God and has the Right to be born
3. Abortion is murder of an innocent, voiceless and defenceless Life
4. Every Child from conception is entitled to protection by Parents and Society
5. Every Child is entitled to be cared for by and know the Parents or Guardians
6. Everything done for or to Children must be in their best interests
7. Children are entitled to be protected from Economic Exploitation and anything which can be harmful to their Health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social Development

8. Every Child is entitled to medical treatment and to basic education
9. Orphans and other Vulnerable Children are entitled to special protection by the Law
10. It is the duty of every citizen of Uganda to protect Children and Vulnerable Persons against any form of abuse, harassment or ill-treatment